

# Bombay And Congress Presidents

Editor : T. K. TOPE



Maharashtra State Board For Literature And Culture, Bombay

T. K. TOPE (M.A., LL.B., LL.D.) has been an academician throughout his career. He was a professor of Sanskrit for eight years (1939-47), a professor of Law, Government Law College, Bombay (1947-58). Principle, Governmet Law College, Bombay (1958-75), Vice-Chancellor, University of Bombay (1971-77), a member of the Law Commision of India (1962-68), a member of the Maharashtra State Law Commission (1977-80). He is an acknowledged authority on Constitutional Law of India. He has to his credit more than 12 books, the most important of which is the Constitutional Law of India (1982).

He has been associated with Congress from his student days (1930). He participated in Congress Movements in 1930 and in 1942.

**BOMBAY  
AND  
CONGRESS PRESIDENTS**

*Editor*

T. K. TOPE



MAHARASHTRA STATE BOARD FOR LITERATURE AND CULTURE, BOMBAY

**CONTENTS**

*First Edition:* December, 1985

*Publisher*

Shri S. D Deshmukh

Secretary,

Maharashtra State Board for Literature and Culture

Mantralaya, Bombay 400 032

© Secretary

Maharashtra State Board for Literature and Culture

*Printer*

The Manager

Government Central Press

Charni Road, Bombay 400 004

Price- Rs. 12.00

Dedicated to the memory of—  
Jagannath Shankar Sheth, Dadabhai Naoroji, Mahadeo  
Govind Ranade, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and others  
who laid the foundation of Nationalism  
in Western India

## FOREWARD

Maharashtra State Board for Literature and Culture had decided to publish some source material on history of India's struggle for independence. Perhaps no other time could be more suitable for such publications than the occasion of the centenary celebrations of Indian National Congress. The two volumes written by Dr. T. K. Tope on (1) Bombay And Congress Presidents, and (2) Bombay and Congress movement are some of these books.

It is a pride for the Board that it could persuade Dr. Tope to write these important volumes at this appropriate time. I, on behalf of the Board, am grateful to Dr. Tope for allowing us to publish his valuable works.

I am also grateful to Shri Bhanubhai Yagnik, President, Congress Centenary Committee, Bombay for agreeing to write preface to the book and to Shri Alva, Director of the Government Printing and Stationery and his workers for producing the book in a record 'time.

**S. S. BARLINGAY**

*Chairman*

*State Board for Literature and Culture*

*Bombay*

Yashodhan,

10th December 1985

## PREFACE

The city of Bombay occupies a pivotal position in the history of the Indian National Congress and India's struggle for freedom. It was in Bombay that the Indian National Congress was founded in December 1885 and its first session held. It is in the fitness of things that the concluding celebration of the Congress Centenary year should be held in Bombay by the end of this month.

Bombay provided a number of Presidents to the Indian National Congress, notably, Dadabhoj Naoroji, Badruddin Tyabji, Rehimatullah Sayani, Sir Phirozeshah Mehta and N. G. Chandavarkar. Several times during the last hundred years, the Congress held its Plenary and A. I. C. C. sessions in Bombay. Bombay's Congress House, Azad Maidan, Shivaji Park, Mani Bhavan and Bhatia Baug have their own histories in the Congress movement for freedom.

It was in Bombay that Mahatma Gandhi launched his Quit India movement on the 8th August, 1942 from August Kranti Maidan, Gowalia Tank, which spread like wildfire throughout the country. All the national leaders including Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Malana abul Kalam Azad, Baba Rajendra Prasad were arrested in Bombay at early dawn of 9th August 1942. In short, the history of the Indian National Congress and the freedom movement will be incomplete without the projection of Bombay's unique role in it.

In order to highlight Bombay's unrivalled place in the history of the Congress and the freedom movement, a History Writing Committee was set up a couple of months ago with Prof. T. K. Tope, former Principal of the Government Law College and Vice-chancellor, Bombay University, as Chairman and Shri Adam Adil and Shri Y. P. Trivedi as Hon. Secretaries.

Prof. Tope has taken pains to write the history of the part, Bombay played in all the national events. His book is indeed commendable. It is being published on the occasion of the Congress Centenary Celebrations.

I am sure, the reading public in India and abroad will benefit from Prof. Tope's book. The book deserve to be widely distributed. I deeply appreciate Prof. Tope's efforts and those of his colleagues.

B. M. YAGNIK

*President*

*Congress Centenary*

*Celebrations Committee*

*Bombay*

December 9, 1985



## ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENT***

Sometimes last year, my old friend and a colleague in Congress movement, Shri Bhanubhai Yajnik asked me to undertake the work of writing the history of the Indian National Congress from the point of view of the role the city of Bombay played in the movement. Dr. Surendra Barlinge the Chairman, Board of Literature and Culture Maharashtra, also asked me to undertake this work. I undertook the work as it enabled me to collect source material for the freedom movement in India. The first volume is being published to-day. The second volume will be published some time in February 1986.

I would like to record my sense of gratitude to Prof. A. C. Tikekar the librarian of the University of Bombay who placed at my disposal one room in the University library and made all relevant books available to me. Similarly I would like to record my thanks to Shrimati Manda Jathar and Shri Y. S. Govalkar who helped me in making available at a minute's notice any book from the library. I also thank Shri P. Raghunath who took down the dictation and prepared the press copy.

The management of the Government Printing Press deserves my special thanks for the excellent printing and record time in which the book was printed. I would specially thank Shri R. B. Alva, Director, Shri G. D. Dhond, Deputy Director, Shri V. R. Joshi, Manager, Government Central Press, who took personal interest in the printing of the book.

December, 20, 1985.

T. K. TOPE

Prathamesh

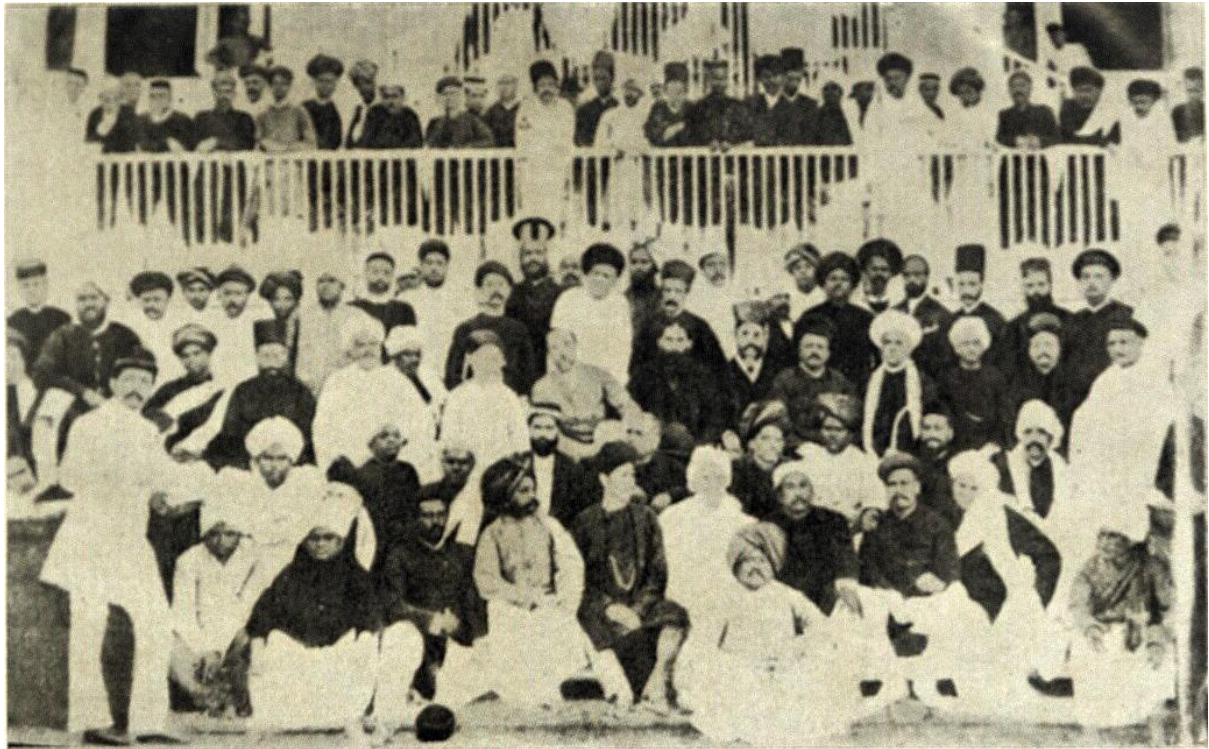
Veer Savarkar Marg

Prabhadevi

Bombay 400 025.







## CONTENTS

FOREWARD .....	6
INTRODUCTION.....	13
CHAPTER I THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS .....	22
CHAPTER II THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND THE CITY OF BOMBAY.....	29
CHAPTER III The Demand of Swaraja .....	53
CHAPTER IV SPEECH OF BADRUDDIN TYABJI .....	76
CHAPTER V Speech of Pherozeshah M. Mehta .....	80
CHAPTER VI Speech of Rahimtullah M. Sayani .....	85
CHAPTER VII Speech of Narayan Ganesh Chandravarkar .....	103
CHAPTER VIII Speech of Dinshaw Edulji Wacha .....	111
PART II CHAPTER IX FIRST SESSION OF THE CONGRESS, 1885 .....	125
CHAPTER X SECOND SESSION IN BOMBAY Speech of Sir William Wedderburn.....	130
CHAPTER XI THIRD SESSION IN BOMBAY Speech of Henry Cotton.....	134
CHAPTER XII FOURTH SESSION IN BOMBAY Speech of Sir S. P. Sinha .....	143
CHAPTER XIII FIFTH (SPECIAL SESSION) IN BOMBAY Speech of Mr. Hasan Iman.....	149
CHAPTER XIV SIXTH SESSION IN BOMBAY Speech of Babu Rajendra Prasad .....	155
CHAPTER XV SEVENTH SESSION IN BOMBAY Speech of Shri Jagjivan Ram .....	163
APPENDIX I PRESIDENTS OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS.....	167
APPENDIX II BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON SOME CONGRESS LEADERS FROM THE CITY OF BOMBAY .	171



First Session of the Indian National Congress, 1885

Congress Presidents from Bombay

	
Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji	Shri Badrudin Tyabji
	
Sir Pherozeshah Mehta	Shri Rahimtullah M. Sayani
	
Sri Narayan Ganesh Chandavakar	Shri Dinshaw E. Wachha

## INTRODUCTION

The city of Bombay has an interesting history. The island of Bombay was received by the Portuguese from Bahadur Shah of Gujarat in 1534. It was ceded to the British in 1661 and transferred to the East India Company in 1668, “to be held in free and common socage” at a rent of “Pound Sterling 10 payable on the 30th September each year.” The island made rapid progress under the British. The population of the island in 1668 was about 10,000. But by 1675 it rose to 60,000 and in 1701 to 1,50,000. The original inhabitants of the island were Koli and Bhandari, some Portuguese, Kunbis, Dhedes, Mahars and the immigrant Hindus, Muslims and one or two Parsis. As a result of encouragement to trade given by the British, a new class of weavers, artisans and merchants came to settle in the island in considerable numbers. Bombay is a good harbour. This fact added to the export and import operations from the port and Bombay made rapid progress. The introduction of English education and the establishment of the University of Bombay in 1857 helped further rapid development. Some of the Englishmen in the 19th Century also contributed richly to educational and cultural development of the city of Bombay such as Sir Erskin Perry.

The reasons for introduction of Western education was explained by Elphinston as under:

“The dangers to which we are exposed from the sensitive character of the religion of the natives : and the slippery foundation of our Government owing to the total separation between us and our subjects require adoption of some measures to counteract and the only one is to remove the prejudice and to communicate our own principles and opinions by diffusion of rational education.” [Elphinston Minute dated December 13, 1823, see Tarachand, History of the Freedom Movement in India, Vol. 2, p. 191.]

Western education prompted intellectual unity. It also produced the awareness of belonging to a community different in nature from the medieval order. The impact created political unity which transcended castes and creeds and attached itself to the notions of the common people possessing of common hope. [Trachand, *ibid.* pp. 171.]

The system of Western education created a new middle class which imbibed liberal principles from the writing of the Western authors and aspired for a similar form of Government for India. This desire in the minds of the educated Indians was expressed through various activities. One of them was the birth of Indian National Congress. Tarachand describes this event as follows:

“The Birth of Indian National Congress was an unprecedented phenomenon in the political history of India. It proclaimed the advent of a new era: the era of a political unity not



imposed from above but the expression of true will of the people. The Congress was the Central organ of the new society which had evolved as a result of the economic, social and cultural changes taking shape during the hundred years since Plassey.” [*ibid.*, page 549.]

### **Privileges of Bombay**

It was the city of Bombay that played a very prominent Part in the history of India. It was here in 1858 that two soldiers who had participated in the 1857 War were hanged at a place on Azad Maidan in front of the Bombay Municipal Corporation. It was here in Bombay that in 1885 the Congress was born. It was here in 1908 that Lokmanya Tilak was sentenced to 6 years imprisonment. It was here again that the trials of patriots like Shivram Mahadeo Paranjpe and Savarkar were held and they were sentenced to imprisonment.

It was here again in 1915 attempts were made to bring together the Indian National Congress and Muslim League. The 30th Session of the Indian National Congress was held in Bombay and the All-India Muslim League was also to meet for the first time in the history of that body at Bombay about the same time as the Congress and attempts were made to bring the two bodies together. A graphic description of the event is given by Dr. M. R. Jayakar in his “Story of my life”. [[pages 140-143](#)]

We, the younger men, were very prominent in making successful this entente between the two bodies and, as the Congress official report said, “the effect of the two bodies holding their session in Bombay was especially noteworthy in the case of the rising generations of the educated youth of the Hindu-Muslim communities.” A genuine feeling of brotherhood prevailed which manifested itself in various ways. The Congress Volunteers and the Muslim Volunteers arrived at a joint session and worked shoulder to shoulder. A joint dinner was organised by some of the younger men. As the Congress Report remarked, “it was a gratifying and inspiring sight to see the organisers wearing a brilliant badge which combined the Crescent with the Lotus, symbolizing the union of the two faiths in the service of their motherland and invoking the eye of the thinker to see therein the realisation of Akbar’s dream in the not distant future.”

While the Congress session was being held rumours were not wanting that the proposed entente between the Congress and progressive Muslims had been viewed with suspicion and dislike by some reactionary and autocratic officials of the Bombay Government who were secretly planning, chiefly with the aid of Muslims from outside Bombay, the complete dispersion of the Session of the Muslim League which was proposed to be held at the conclusion of the Congress Session to obtain Muslim support for the demands made by the Congress in the resolutions of the session. These rumours grew wilder and wilder.

Ultimately the promoters of the Muslim League session found it necessary, as a precautionary measure, to seek the help of the police officials of the Bombay Government to prevent what they thought was likely to be a violent and rowdy attack upon the Muslim League session. The police officials, it was rumoured, instead of agreeing to give help to protect the Muslim League session from outside attacks, agreed to interfere only on condition that, in the event of an outbreak of disturbance, they would proceed to disperse the entire session of the Muslim League, instead of checking the outsiders' interference with the proceedings. Ultimately the rumours proved to be true and on the fateful day when the Muslim League session was held under the Presidency of Mahzar-ul-Huq, Muslim hooligans, mostly outsiders, helped by some local reactionary Muslims, created a disturbance which necessitated an adjournment of the session and thus the threat of the Police officials to disperse the entire Session was averted. The incident was regarded as a great catastrophe and was strongly resented by the Indian public and journals. The Anglo-Indian papers of Bombay of course preserved a show of lip sympathy and fairness, finding excuses for the occurrence.

It was here in Bombay that the Swaraj Party was born in the house of Dr. M. R. Jayakar. It was in Bombay in the year 1942 that the famous Quit India Resolution was passed on 8th August of that year. It was again in Bombay that the Naval Mutiny took place in 1946 and lastly it was again in Bombay that the First Session of the Indian National Congress after the second split in the body in the year 1969, was held. Thus, Bombay has played a very memorable role in the history of Congress.

### **The First Congress**

The description of the First proceedings of the First Congress is given vividly by C. F. Andrews and Girija Mukherji in their book, "Rise and Growth of the Congress in India",—

"On the proposal of Hume and seconded by Telang and Subramania Iyer, W. C. Bonnerjee was elected President of the Congress. In his presidential speech Bonnerjee said that the objects of the Congress were:

"(i) The promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in our country's cause in these parts of the Empire.

"(ii) *The eradication by direct friendly personal intercourse of all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudice amongst all lovers of country, and the fuller development and consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that had their origin in our beloved Lord Ripon's ever memorable reign. (emphasis is added)*

“(iii) The authoritative record of the matured opinions of the educated classes in India on some of the more important and pressing of the social questions of the day.

“(iv) The determination of the methods by which during the next twelve months it is desirable for native politician to labour in the public interests.

He praised England for “the inestimable blessing of Western education” and said that “all they desired was that the basis of the government should be widened and that people should have their proper and legitimate share in it.” He also believed that the Congress would be equally advantageous to the authorities and to the people.

This was the general attitude of the first members of the Congress who met together at Bombay to discuss the future of India. One feels today, when politics dominates so much of the Indian life, that these statements are curiously out of touch with the realities of the Indian situation. But we have to remember that life was far less organised in India then. Besides, there was very little experience of public gatherings and agitations. They were, in fact, only creating precedents.

But the most impressive thing in the first Congress was the far-sighted vision of the speakers themselves. Although it was the first time that Indian leaders had met on a political platform their acquaintance with the public questions of the day appeared to be thorough. The knowledge of the administration which they exhibited in their speeches was remarkable judging from the fact that until then the Indian people had very little share in it. For example, Sir Dinsha Wacha’s speech on the Army budget showed an intimate knowledge of the Army finances, and its tone and contents reveal a capacity of high statesmanship. Amongst other speakers, Subramania Iyer, Talang, Narendranath Sen, Dadabhai Naoroji, all showed great knowledge of the administration and demonstrated how well these people were capable of running a country if they were once given a chance.

Subramania Iyer, speaking on the first resolution with regard to a parliamentary enquiry into the conditions of India, put forward a thesis which shows how closely the Indian leaders, even at that time, were following the political development of the whole country and how well they knew, the policy most advantageous to India.

“Such an enquiry,” he said, “was regularly made in the days of the East India Company. In 1773, 1793, 1813, 1833 and 1853, searching and elaborate investigations were made into the results of the Administration of the Company, as represented by the financial condition of the Government and by general progress of the people..... While the domestic and foreign policy of the Company was closely watched and subjected to periodical criticism



and reform, these enquiries furnished wholesome checks and safeguards, particularly in the administration of finance.” “In many respects.” he adds, “India has been a loser by the transfer of the government to the Crown instead of a gainer. Since that time, the condition of the people has undergone a most distressing deterioration. They have been subjected to a less sympathetic despotism, and the expenditure and indebtedness of their Government have increased in a ratio utterly disproportionate to all improvement in its financial resources.”

This criticism of the Government did not mean that the bulk of the Indian opinion at the Congress was opposed to the British rule as such. On the contrary, among the majority of the Congress leaders there was almost a childlike and pathetic belief in the fair play of the British Parliament. “We are British subjects,” said Dadabhai Naoroji. “and subjects of the same gracious Sovereign who has pledged her Royal word that we are to her as all her other subjects, and we have a right to all British institutions. If we are true to ourselves and perseveringly ask what we desire, the British people are the very people on earth who will give us what is right and just.”

Although the first Congress leaders did not set out with any very ambitious scheme of self-government, there were men who were already thinking in original terms about India's future. *Norendranath Sen, for instance, a delegate from Bengal, made the remarkable suggestion that as an alternative for a Standing Committee of the House of Commons in place of the India Council, there might be a small Parliament in India with many Indian members. Indian Political bodies should be asked to name such members and also have a voice in the formation of the existing Executive Councils.*

Thus among these Western-educated Congress leaders, who echoed the language of the British Liberals, there were some who were ready to go much farther and claim radical alterations in the Constitution. There were also others, even in the first Congress, who were already advocating a fighting programme and exhibited a strong sense of the realities of the Indian situation. In fact, it appears that the idea of a boycott of British goods as a means of wresting concessions from the British Parliament was already growing amongst the Indian leaders even in those very early days. “If goods are available in our own market”, says Mr. Girija Bhushan Mookerjee, another delegate from Bengal, “why should we—poor as we are—go to a foreign country and pay a much higher price for imported goods? Then again, the high salaries and pensions enjoyed by our civilian rulers are mostly spent out of the country. The experience, bought at such a high price, is not retained in the country for its future use, but is shipped out of the country and pretty often employed against our interest”. It is quite remarkable that this speech from Bengal was made in the very first Congress. It shows how, from the start, the economic issue loomed almost as large in some men's minds as the political demand for self-rule.”

Mrs. Annie Beasant in her book, “How India Wrought for Freedom” mentioned the names or distinguished delegates and representatives in the following passage:

“As we glance over the lists of those who were present, how many we see who became famous in the annals of India’s struggle for Freedom. Among those who could not act Representative— for the reason given above—we note the Reformer, I Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunath Rao, Deputy Collector of Madras, the Hon. Mr. Mahadev G. Ranade, then member of the Legislative Council and Small cause court Judge of Poona, later to be a Judge of the High Court of Bombay, and leader honoured and trusted; Lala Baijnath of Agra was there, to be known as scholar and writer later on; and Professors K. Sundararaman and R. G. Bhandarkar. Among the Representatives may be noted editors of well-known Indian papers, of The Dnyan Prakash. The Quarterly Journal of the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha, The Maratha, The Kesari, The Nababibhakar, the Indian Mirror, the Nassin, the Hindusthani, The Tribune, The Indian Union, The Indian Spectator, The Indu Prakash, The Hindu, The Crescent. How many names shine out, familiar and honoured : Mr. A. O. Hume is there from Simla; W. C. Bannerji and Norendranath Sen from Calcutta; W. S. Apte and G. G. Agarkar from Poona; Gangaprasad Varma from Lucknow; Dadabhai Naoroji, K. T. Telang, Pherozechah M. Mehta— then, as now, leader of the Bombay Corporation—D. E. Wacha, B. M. Malabari, N. G. Chandavarkar from Bombay; P. Rangish Naidu, President of the Mahajana Sabha, S. Subramania Iyer, P. Ananda Charlu, G. Subramania Aiyar, M. Vijayaraghavachariar from Madras; P. Kesava Pillai from Anantpur.”

During the last hundred years altogether there were 80 sessions of the Indian National Congress. Out of these, two were special sessions. Surat session of 1907 was continued the next year at Madras also. Therefore, though the Congress met at Surat and Madras in 1907 and 1908, still, that is considered only as one session. Out of the 80 sessions 7 sessions were held in the city of Bombay and leaders from Bombay presided over eight sessions. Dadabhai Naoroji presided over 3 sessions, and the others who presided over Congress sessions were Sir Pherozechah Mehta, Dinsha Wacha, Badruddin Tyabji. Sir Rahimtollah M. Sayani and Narayan Ganesh Chandavarkar.

I would like to divide the history of Congress into following periods:

*First Period : 1885 to 1907.*—The period of representations to the British Government along with awakening among the Indians for political rights. At the end of this period, the first split in the Congress took place at Surat.

*Second Period : 1907 to 1920.*—The period of Constitutional reforms and Congress involvement in the reforms along with Constitutional agitation for more rights.

*Third Period : 1920 to 1935.*—With 1920 the Gandhian era begins. This period is a period of non-violent agitation.

*Fourth Period : 1935 to 1947.* The period of intense agitation and participation in the work of the Constituent Assembly.

*Fifth Period : 1947 to 1969.*—The period when the Constitution was framed, the Congress worked in the Government and the second split in Congress in 1969.

*Sixth Period : 1969 to 1978.*—The period of challenges and determination of Congress to meet these challenges.

*Seventh Period : 1978 to 1985.*—Third split in Congress in 1978 and the period of still more challenges to Congress Government.

From 1885 to 1915, the Congress was practically dominated by the leaders from Bombay. Though Dadabhai Naoroji was not in India throughout this period, his influence on the Congress was supreme. The actual control of the Congress during this period was in the hands of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta who was rightly described as ‘the Lion of Bombay’. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta died in the year 1915 and the dominance of Bombay over Congress practically came to an end. However, Bombay continued to be the main centre of Congress activity though the headquarters of Congress were not in Bombay.

The First Volume of “Bombay and the History of Indian National Congress” consists of two parts. Part I consists of the passages from the speeches of Congress Presidents who came from the city of Bombay. The Second part consists of the speeches of the Presidents of the Congress when the sessions were held in the city of Bombay. An appendix to this Part gives a list of all sessions of the Congress, the places where they were held, the years in which they were held and the persons who presided over those sessions. The Second Volume of the History will contain a narrative of the Congress movement in Bombay in chronological order. It will also include an account of participation of various sections of the society in Bombay in the Congress movement such as students, women, workers, journalists, business community, etc I would like to conclude this Introduction with an invocation which Rabindranath Tagore recited at the Calcutta Session of the Congress in the year 1917 under the Presidentship of Mrs. Annie Beasant. The invocation is as follows :

Thou hast given us to live  
Let us uphold this honour with all our strength and will,  
For Thy glory rests upon the glory that we are.

Therefore, in Thy name, we oppose the power  
that would plant its banner upon our soul.  
Let us know that Thy light grow dim in the  
heart that bears its insult of bondage.  
That the life, when it becomes feeble, timidly  
yields Thy throne to untruth.  
For weakness is the traitor who betrays our soul.  
Let this be our prayer to Thee—  
Give us power to resist pleasure where it enslave us,  
To lift our sorrow up to Thee as the summer  
holds its midday sun,  
Make us strong that our worship may flower in  
love and bear fruit in work.  
Make us strong that we may not insult the weak and the fallen,  
That we may hold our love high where all things around us are wooing the dust.  
They fight and kill for self-love, giving it Thy name,  
They fight for hunger that thrives on brother's flesh,  
They fight against Thine anger and die.  
But let us stand firm and suffer with strength  
for the true, for the Good, for the Eternal in man,  
for Thy Kingdom which is in the union of hearts,  
for Thy Freedom which is of the soul.  
Our voyage is begun, Captain,  
We bow to Thee !  
The storm howls and the waves are wicked and wild,  
but we sail on.  
The menace or danger waits in the way to yield to  
Thee its offering of pain.  
And a voice in the heart of the tempest cries;  
“Come to conquer fear!”  
Let us not linger to look back for the laggards, or  
benumb the darkening hours with dread and doubt.  
For Thy time is our time and Thy burden is our own  
and life and death are but Thy breath  
playing upon the eternal sea of Life.  
Let us not wear our heart away in picking small  
help and taking slow count of friends.  
Let us know more than all else that Thou art with  
Us and we are Thine for ever.”

Bombay University Library,  
Bombay.  
26th July 1985.

*T. K. TOPE*

# CHAPTER I

## THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

### Background and Birth

1857 is a significant year in the history of modern India. This year witnessed two events which changed the destiny of India. The first was the revolt of the Army called as “War of Independence” by Barrister V. D. Savarkar and the other was the establishment of three Universities at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. The first did not only indicate to the Government of the East India Company the growing unrest among the Indians but also ultimately resulted in the winding of the East India Company and taking over its territorial possession by the crown in England. The establishment of the Universities resulted in the rise of young educated Indian youths who had imbibed the cultural values of the Western education and also the liberal spirit of English education. It brought the young Indians in close contact with great minds as John Stuart Mill, Spenser and other liberal writers. As a matter of fact the words of Lord Macaulay in the House of Commons on July 10, 1833 proved prophetic. Macaulay observed—

“The destinies of our Indian Empire are covered with thick darkness. It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system: that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for a better government, that having become instrumental in the European knowledge they may, in some future age demand European institutions. Whether such a day would ever come, I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or retard it. Whenever it comes, it will be proudest day in English history.” (speech on India Bill 1833).

The darkness referred by Macaulay was felt by Indians even before 1857 and liberal minded Indians had started public activities to ventilate their grievances. The establishment of the Students Literary Scientific Society on 4 August 1849 opened a new chapter in the history of Western India. Dadabhai Naoroji was the moving spirit behind the Society along with Jagannath Shankar Shet. [\[It was difficult in those days to get girl students to come to school. R. P. Masani in his biography of Dadabhai remarks as follows:—](#)

[When asked by his grandchildren to tell them stories of his early days he \(Dadabhai\) often narrated to them how when he was a college student, he used to go from house to house with a friend to persuade parents and guardians to allow them to sit on their varandahs and to teach the three Rs to their girls, how some of them had taken advantage to throw them down the steps for making such a preposterous proposal.’ \(R. P. Masani ‘Dadabhai Naoroji’ p. 14\).\]](#) The work of the schools established by the Society was supplemented by Dnyan Prakash Mandal a society for promotion of knowledge. The Mandal had Gujarati and Marathi branches. Lectures on various

subjects for the general awakening and enlightenment of the adult population were arranged. Within a few years, almost every topic of popular science was dealt with accompanied by demonstration.

First political association was formed in Bombay on August 26, 1852 at a meeting of the citizen of Bombay held in the Elphinstone Institute. The initiative was taken by Dadabhai Naoroji and Jagannath Shankar Shet. The organization was called 'Bombay Association'. [In Bengal the British Indian Association was started in 1851. Under this Association Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra and Mr. Ram Gopal Ghosh carried on public work for decades. Later on in 1876 the Indian Association was founded. Surendra Nath Bannerji was the moving spirit behind this Association and Anand Mohan Bose was the first Secretary. In the South, public life was inaugurated by the 'Hindu', Messrs. M. Veeraraghavachariar, Rangiah Naidy, G. Subramania Aiyer and N. Subbray Pantalu were some of the founders of the Hindu. In Pune, Sarvajanik Sabha sprang at the same time as the 'Hindu' and Messrs K. L. Nulikar and S. H. Chiplonkar were carrying on its work.] Dadabhai Naoroji made his maiden speech on political reform at that meeting. It is significant to note the following sentence from his speech. "The real grievances that I am aware of are those relative to the state of the Kunbis (Peasants) in the interior and the judicial and revenue system." It shows that the cause of the peasantry became dear to men working in political field early as 1852. The work of the Association was carried on by men like Sir Mangaldas Nathubhai and Mr. Naoroji Furdunji. The Association drew up a petition for submission to the British Parliament for an enlightened system of government and admission of Indians to Civil Services. The petition was ridiculed by the Anglo-Indian Press. However several British friends including John Bright and Joseph Hume supported the demands in the petition. Dadabhai also started a journal named 'Rast Goftdar' on November 15, 1851 to combat the forces of ignorance and fanaticism. Rast Goftdar means 'Truth Teller'. The Bombay Association was later superseded by the East India Association in the Seventies.

The echoes of awakening in Bombay and Calcutta were heard all over India though feebly. By 1877 there as many as 475 newspapers mostly in regional languages all over India. In 1877 there was a Darbar of Princess held in Delhi at which Surendra Nath Bannerji who had left the I.C.S. by that time was present. "It is believed that the idea of organizing a vast political gathering was first conceived by Surendra Nath Bannerji under the inspiration furnished by the vast gathering of the Princess and people of India in 1877. By 1877 there was a change in the British Administration in India. The reactionary Lord Lytton, the Viceroy of India was succeeded by Lord Ripon who introduced a new era in Indian administration. He promoted local self-government, repealed the Vernacular Press Act and introduced the Ilbert Bill. The object of the Bill was to remove the bar against the Indian Magistrate trying European and American offenders. [Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya 'The History of the Indian National Congress,' Vol. I. (Henceforth referred to as the 'History of the Congress') p. 10.] These provisions were resented by the Anglo-Indians some of whom entered into conspiracy to overpower the sentries of the Government House and to put the Viceroy on board a steamer at Chand Pal Ghat and send him to England via

Cape”. The original Bill was almost abandoned in 1883 in favour of a bare recognition of the principle in case of District Magistrates and Sessions Judges only. [*ibid.* p. 10-11.]

In 1883, a political conference was held at Calcutta. Both S. N. Bannerji and Anand Mohan Ghosh were present at the conference. Bannerji referred to the Delhi assemblage of Princess and suggested that the assemblage should be a model for a similar political organization intended to espouse the country's case. In Madras, the Madras Mahajan Sabha was established in 1881 and a political conference was held under its auspices. It is suggested that in Madras in December 1884, after the Theosophical convention a private meeting of seventeen men was held at which the idea of an all India organization was conceived.

Bombay had the distinction of carrying on political activists both in India and in England. Dadabhai went to England in 1855. He started in collaboration with W. C. Bannerji the London Indian Society with a view to bringing Englishmen and Indians together for exchange of views on subjects connected with India. Later on, a more broad based society was established on December 1, 1866. The name of the society was the East India Association. Its membership was thrown open to all. A large number of eminent English politicians, statesmen, ex-Governors etc. became its members. The first President of the Association was Lord Lyveden. He was born in Calcutta as his father Robert Smith was the Advocate-general of Bengal.

It is interesting to note that James Mackintosh, the philosopher-lawyer of Bombay, described that the fame of Robert Smith was 'greater than that of any Pandit since the days of Manu'. Dadabhai became the Secretary of this Association. He read many papers under its auspices. On May 2, 1867, he read a paper on 'England's Duties to India'. Dadabhai's approach to Indian problems was very wide. He concentrated on poverty in India and unnecessary expenditure incurred by the British Government out of Indian treasury. Sir Arther Cotten read a paper on Irrigation on Water Transit in India on June 11, 1867. The paper was a severe condemnation of the authorities in India for its apathy towards irrigation. Dadabhai himself placed before the Association a note on December 8, 1868 giving a survey of devastating famines which periodically affected Indian population. Dadabhai came to India on May 5, 1869 and later founded the Bombay Branch of the East India Association. Dadabhai read a paper on 'poverty in India', Under the auspices of this Association in 1876. In February 1882, Dadabhai published a monthly journal in England called 'The Voice of India'. Similarly another monthly journal corresponding to 'Public Opinion' in England was published in Bombay.

An important event in Bombay in 1885 was the establishment of the Bombay Presidency Association on 31st January of that year. The founders of the Association were the famous trimurti viz. Sir Pherozshah Mehta, K. T. Telang and Badruddin Tyabji.



Another organization was formed by Mr. Allan Octavian Hume. It was known as Indian National Union. Hume was a member of civil service. He knew the extent of the political discontent in the country particularly in the Deccan where agrarian riots took place on account of famine. He therefore resolved to open a safety valve for this unrest and the idea of a national organisation was conceived. Hume addressed a soul-stirring letter to the graduates of the Calcutta University on 1st March 1883 in which he asked for fifty men good and true men of unselfishness, moral courage, self-control and active spirit of benevolence. If only fifty men, good and true can be found to join as founders, the thing can be established and further development will be comparatively easy'. And what was the idea placed before these men 'A democratic constitution, freedom from personal ambitions and the dictum that 'he that is greatest among you let him be your servant'. Hume did not mince matters at all but frankly told them that 'If they cannot remove personal ease and pleasure, then at present at any rate all hopes of progress are at an end and India truly neither desires nor deserves any better Government that she enjoys [*ibid.* p. 8-9].

Hume's idea was that this national organisation should concentrate on social questions, leaving political questions to the then existing provincial organisations. Hume consulted Lord Dufferin the then Viceroy of India. Dufferin did not agree with Hume that the proposed organisation should discuss only social questions. Dufferin pointed out, 'There was nobody or persons in this country who performed the functions which Her Majesty's opposition did in England .....it would be very desirable in their interest as well as the interest of the ruled that Indian politicians should meet yearly and point out to the Government in what respects, the administration was defective and how it could be improved [*ibid.* p. 15]. Dufferin said 'Let them attack the Government and administration. Let them attack the Revenue Policy and let them attack everything. We shall then know their mind and be benefitted by them [*Shrinivasa Shastri Life & Times of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, p. 28.* ] Hume placed both the ideas—his own and Dufferin's before his friends and they accepted Dufferin's idea. This is why Lord Dufferin is described as a part-father of the Indian National Congress. Hume thereafter proceeded to England and consulted among others Lord Ripon. There he started a body which became the nucleus of the Indian Parliamentary Committee later and an Indian Telegraph Union.

What were the forces that persuaded Hume to take initiative in establishing an All-India body of the nature of the Indian National Congress ? Following points may be considered in this behalf :—

(1) Hume personally saw the famine conditions in India and the human tragedy that followed the famines It is likely that he was moved by humanitarian spirit. Did he anticipate political upheaval as a result of the famine? This question becomes pertinent in view of the 1857 revolt and attempts in different parts of India at armed revolt.

(2) Lord Lytton had launched Afgan war in 1879 and won a big victory. Major Cavangnari, Lytton's political agent dictated terms of most humiliating subsidiary alliance to Amir Yakub Khan and moved in Kabul to teach the Afgan a proper lesson. On September 2, 1879 he called 'All Well' to Lytton but next day every English-man in Kabul was attacked by angry mob of tribals. In 1880 the war proved to be equally costly. Hence in the next general election in England Disraeli was outsted by the electorate who brought Gladstone back to power. Were these incidents also responsible to Some extent in persuading Hume to take the initiative?

(3) Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858 contained the following promise—

“We hold ourselves bound to the native's of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our other 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 should be able to enjoy the equal and impartial protection of law.....

.....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 services, the duties of which they may be qualified, by their education, ability and integrity duly to discharge.”

But this promise was not fulfilled. Surendra Nath Bannerji (1848-1926) had gained entry in the Indian Civil Service but was soon required to leave it. He was also denied permission to enter the Bar. He said publicly, 'The personal wrong done lo me was an illustration of helpless impotence of our people.' Did Hume and Dufferin see the seeds of unrest in this utterance?

### **Birth of the Congress**

First session of the Congress was to be held in Poonn on behalf of the Sarvajanic Sabha on Christmas day. However a few days before the Christmas some sparodic cases of cholera occurred. Hence, the venue was shifted to Bombay. Thus, Bombay got the unique honour of being the birth place of the Congress. The venue was the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College building, [\[At present there is the Mathuradas Vissanji Hall—a public hall managed by a trust for holding public functions including wedding receptions.\]](#) at the Gowalia Tank. The Trustee (Mr. Telang was one of the trustees) of the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College and Boarding House placed the whole of their fine building at the disposal of the Congress and all was ready by the morning of the 27th December 1885 for the reception of the representatives of the Indian Nation. Bombay representative included Dadabhai Naoroji, K. T. Telang (he was also the Secretary of the

Reception Committee), Pherozshah Mehta, D. E. Wacha, B. M. Malbari and N. G. Chandvarkar.

First National Congress met at 12 noon on December 28, 1885 in the hall of the Gokuldas Tujpal Sanskrit College. Seventy-two delegates attended the session. The first President of the Congress was W. C. Bannerji a lawyer by profession. His name was proposed, seconded and supported by A. O. Hume, S. Subramania Aiyer and K. T. Telang respectively. [It may be mentioned that Hume asked Lord Dufferin the Viceroy whether the then Governor of Bombay should be asked to preside over the first session. Dufferin replied 'No'. I do not like that the movement which I would like to be entirely unofficial, an official should be asked to be a Chairman'. Bannerji made a very short speech, and he made it so well and in such business like Bannerji's brief and to the point with just so many words as were required to make the case and no more. Shrinivas Shastri 'Life and Times of Sir Pherozshah Mehta', p. 30).] Thus, was born the great Institution which played most important role in freedom struggle. Under its banner quite a few died for the motherland. Thousands, courted arrest and imprisonment. Congress fought battles on the floor of legislatures also. It participated in Round Table Conferences in London and a few months before gaining independence it started its participation in the Constituent Assembly for India. The Congress was mainly instrumental in gaining freedom and giving the country a constitution which has been governing the destiny of Indian people for the last thirty five years. One wonders whether these wise, respected and selfless sons of India and man like A. O. Hume who met on 28th December 1885 dreamt that they were going to be pioneers of a great and unique revolution not only in the history of India but in the history of the world.

The objects of the Indian National Congress as adopted in the first session were as under:—

(1) The promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in our country's cause in the various parts of the Empire.

(2) The eradication by direct friendly personal intercourse of all possible race, creed or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of our Country and the fuller development and consolidation of these sentiments of national unity that had their origin in our beloved Lord Ripon's ever memorable reign.

(3) The authoritative record, after this has been carefully elicited by the fullest discussion of the matured opinion of the educated classes in India on some of the more important and pressing social questions of the day.

(4) The determination of the lines upon and methods by which during the next twelve months it is desirable for Native politicians to labour in the public interests.

The second object is still relevant today as it was in the year 1885. The reference to the Lord Ripon as our beloved Lord Ripon was perfectly justified at that time as he was the one Viceroy who administered India in a benevolent manner. He was called 'Ripon the Righteous'. The Congress session formulated India's demand and adopted nine resolutions :

(1) The first resolution asked for appointment of a Royal Commission to enquire into the working of India's administration.

(2) The second resolution asked for the abolition of India Council.

(3) The third resolution pointed out the defect of the Legislative Council established by the Act of 1962(1) and asked for admission of elected members, for the right of interpellation etc. and for a standing committee in the House of Commons to consider formal protests from majorities in the Councils.

(4) The fourth resolution prayed for simultaneous examination for the I.C.S. in India and in England and for raising the age of the candidates.

(5) and (6) The fifth and sixth resolutions dealt with Military expenditure.

(7) The seventh protested against the annexation of upper Burma and the proposed incorporation of it with INDIA. (Burmah was a part of Indian Empire till 1935).

(8) The eighth resolution ordered the sending of the resolution to political Associations in India so that they may discuss.

(9) The ninth resolution fixed the next congress at Calcutta on 28th December 1886.

The resolutions might appear to be very modest. However it is to be remembered that even the origin of great rivers like Ganga is only a small and modest stream. The main point to be noted is that the visionaries who met in 1885 emphasised the need for development of sentiments of national unity. For the first time an all India body representing different sections of Indian people was created. It is true that the first session did not emphasis social problems as it did other problems. Still in course of time, the Congress considered all aspects of Indian life.

## CHAPTER II

# THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND THE CITY OF BOMBAY

### Congress President from Bombay

The city of Bombay which is the birthplace of the Indian National Congress gave to the Congress six Presidents from 1885 to 1915. They were : (1) Shri Dadabhai Naoroji, (2) Sir Pherozshah M. Mehta, (3) Shri Dinshaw Edulji Wacha, (4) Shri Badruddin Tyabji, (5) Sir Rahimtulla M. Sayani, (6) Justice Narayan Ganesh Chandavarkar. Out of these, *Shri Dadabhai Naoroji presided over was the Second session of the Congress which was held at Calcutta in the year 1886 (December 27 to 30). In his Presidential address he referred to many topics.* One of them was the need of social reform. In his brief address he also referred to the importance of the Congress, Advantages of British Rule. The Relation between the Indians and the Rulers, The Jubilee of Queen-Empress, Lord Dufferin and Public Service Commission, Royal Proclamation, Representation in Parliament, Poverty in India, etc. Following are some of the important passages from the speech of Shri Dadabhai Naoroji:

#### *Advantages of British Rule*

‘Well, then, what is it for which we are now met on this occasion? We have assembled to consider questions upon which depends our future, whether glorious or inglorious. It is our good fortune that we are under a rule which makes it possible for us to meet in this manner. It is under the civilising rule of the Queen and people of England that we meet here together, hindered by none, and are freely allowed to speak our minds without the least fear and without the least hesitation. Such a thing is possible under British rule and British rule only. Then I put the question plainly : Is this Congress a nursery for sedition and rebellion against the British Government? (cries of ‘no, no’); or is it another stone in the foundation of the stability of that Government? (cries of ‘Yes, yes’). There could be but one answer, and that you have already given, because we are thoroughly sensible of the numberless blessings conferred upon us, of which the very existence of this Congress is a proof in a nutshell. Were it not for these blessings of British rule, I could not have come here, as I have done, without the least hesitation and without the least fear that my children might be robbed and killed in my absence; nor could you have come from every corner of the land, having performed within a few day journeys which in former days would have occupied as many months. These simple facts bring home to all of us at once some of those great and

numberless blessings which British rule has conferred upon us. But there remain even greater blessing for which we have to be grateful.

It is to British rule that we owe the education we possess; the people of England were sincere in the declaration made more than half a century ago that India was a sacred charge entrusted to their care by Providence, and that they were bound to administer it for the good of India, to the glory of their own name, and the satisfaction of God. When we have to acknowledge so many blessings as flowing from British rule—and I could descant on them for hours, because it would simply be recounting to you the history of the British empire in India—is it possible that an assembly like this, every one of whose members is fully impressed with the knowledge of these blessings, could meet for any purpose inimical to that rule to which we owe so much?

#### *Relation between Ourselves and Our Rulers*

Let us speak out like men and proclaim that we are loyal to the backbone; that we understand the benefits English rule has conferred upon us; that we thoroughly appreciate the education that has been given to us, the new light which has been poured upon us, turning us from darkness into light and teaching us the new lesson that kings are made for the people, not people for their kings; and this new lesson we have learned amidst the darkness of Asiatic despotism only by the light of free English civilisation. But the question is, do the Government believe us? Do they believe that we are really loyal to them; that we do truly appreciate and rely on British rule; that we veritably desire its permanent continuance; that our reason is satisfied and our sentimental feelings gratified as well as our self-interest? It would be a great gratification to us if we could see, in the inauguration of a great movement like this Congress, that what we do really mean and desire is thoroughly and truly understood by our rulers. I have the good fortune to be able to place before you testimony which cannot be questioned, from which you will see that some at least of the most distinguished of our rulers do believe that what we say is sincere; and that we do not want to subvert British rule; that our outspoken utterances are as much for their good as for our good. They do believe as Lord Ripon said, that what is good for India is good for England. I will give you first the testimony as regards the educated classes, which was given 25 years ago by Sir Bartle Frere. He possessed an intimate knowledge of the people of this country, and with regard to the educated portion of them, he gave this testimony. He said :

‘And now wherever I do I find the best exponents of the policy of the English Government, and the most able co-adjutors in adjusting that policy to the peculiarities of the natives of India among the ranks of the educated natives.’

This much at least is testimony to our sincerity, and strongly corroborates our assertion that we, the educated classes, have become the true interpreters and mediators between the masses of our countrymen and our rulers. I shall now place before you the declaration of the Government of India itself, that they have confidence in the loyalty of the whole people, and do appreciate the sentiments of the educated classes in particular. I will read their very words. They say in a despatch addressed to the Secretary of State (8th June, 1880):

‘But the people of India accept British rule without any need for appeal to arms, because we keep the peace and do justice, because we have done and are doing much material to the country and the people, and because there is not inside or outside India any power that can adequately occupy our place.

Then they distinctly understand that we do believe the British power to be the only power that can, under existing circumstances, really keep the peace and advance our future progress. This is testimony as to the feeling of the whole people. But of the educated classes, this despatch says:

‘To the minds of at least the educated among the people of India—and the number is rapidly increasing—any idea of the subversion of British power is abhorrent from the consciousness that it must result in the wildest anarchy and confusion.’

We can, therefore, proceed with the utmost serenity and with every confidence that our rulers do understand us; that they do understand our motives and give credit to our expressions of loyalty, and we need not in the least care for any impeachment of disloyalty or any charge of harbouring wild ideas of subverting the British power that may be put forth by ignorant, irresponsible or ill-disposed individuals or cliques. We can, therefore, quietly, calmly and, with entire confidence in our rulers, speak as freely as we please, but of course in that spirit of fairness and moderation which becomes wise and honest men, and in the tone which every gentleman, every reasonable being, would adopt when urging his rulers to make him some concession. Now, although, as I have said, the British Government have done much, very much for us, there is still a great deal more to be done if their noble work is to be fitly completed. They say this themselves; they show a desire to do what more may be required, and it is for us to ask for whatsoever, after due deliberation, we think that we ought to have.”

## Congress and Social Reform

It has been asserted that this Congress ought to take up questions of social reform and our failure to do this has been urged as a reproach against us. Certainly no member of this National Congress is more alive to the necessity of social reform than I am; but, Gentlemen, for everything there are proper times, proper circumstances, proper parties and proper places; we are met together as a political body to represent to our rulers our political aspirations, not to discuss social reforms, and if you blame us for ignoring these, you should equally blame the House of Common for not discussing the abstruser problems of mathematics or metaphysics. But, besides this, there are here Hindus of every caste, amongst whom, even in the same province, customs and social arrangements differ widely—there are Mohammedans and Christians of various denominations, Parsis, Sikhs, Brahmos and what not—men indeed of each and all of those numerous classes which constitute in the aggregate the people of India. How can this gathering of all classes discuss the social reforms needed in each individual class? What do any of us know of the internal home life, of the customs, traditions, feelings, prejudices of any class but our own? How could a gathering, a cosmopolitan gathering like this, discuss to any purpose the reform needed in any one class? Only the members of that class can effectively deal with the reforms therein needed. A National Congress must confine itself to questions in which the entire nation has a direct participation, and it must leave the adjustment of social reforms and other class questions to class congresses. But it does not follow that, because this national, political body does not presume to discuss social reforms, the delegates here present are not just as deeply, nay in many cases far more deeply, interested in these questions than in those political questions we do discuss, or that those several communities, whom those delegate represent, are not doing their utmost to solve those complicated problems on which hinges the practical introduction of those reforms. Any man who has eyes and ears open must know what struggles towards higher and better things are going on in every community; and it could not be otherwise with the noble education we are receiving. Once you begin to think about your own actions, your duties and responsibilities to yourself, your neighbours and your nation, you cannot avoid looking round and observing much that is wrong amongst you; and we know, as a fact, that each community is now doing its best according to its lights, and the progress that it has made in education. I need not, I think, particularise. The Mohammedans know what is being done by persons of their community to push on the education their brethren so much need; the Hindus are everywhere doing what they can to reform those social institutions which they think require improvement. There is not one single community here represented of which the best and ablest men do not feel that much has to be done to improve the social, moral, religious status of their brethren, and in which, as a fact, they are not striving to effect gradually those needful improvements; but these are essentially matters too delicate for a stranger's handling—matters which must be left to the guidance of those



who alone fully understand them in all their bearings, and which are wholly unsuited to discussion in an n assemblage like this in which all classes are intermingled.

### **Trust in England**

I shall now refer briefly to the work of the former Congress. Since it met last year about this time some progress, I am glad to say, has been made, and that is an encouragement and a proof that, if we do really ask what is right and reasonable, we may be sure that sooner or later the British Government will actually give what we ask for. We should, therefore, persevere, having confidence in the conscience of England and resting assured that the English nation will grudge no sacrifice to prove the sincerity of their desire to do whatever is just and right.

Our first request at the last Congress was for the constitution of a Royal Commission. Unfortunately, the authorities in England have not seen their way to grant a Royal Commission. They say it will upset the authorities here; that it will interfere with the prestige and control of the Government here. I think that this is a very poor compliment to our rulers on this side. If I understand a man like Lord Dufferin of such vast experience in administration, knowing, as he does, what it is to rule an Empire, it would be impossible for him to be daunted and frightened by a Commission making enquiries here. I think this argument very poor one, and we must once more say that to the inhabitants of India, a Parliamentary Committee taking evidence in England alone can never be satisfactory for the simple reason that what the Committee will learn by the ear will never enable them to understand what they ought to see with their eyes, if they are to realise what the evidence of the witnesses really means. Still, however, it is so far, satisfactory that, notwithstanding the change of Government and the vicissitudes which this poor Parliamentary Committee has undergone, it is the intention of Parliament that under any and all circumstances a Committee shall be appointed. At the the same time, this Committee in future ties the hands of the authorities here to a large extent and prevents us from saying all we do really want.”

### **Royal Proclamation**

We next passed through a time of trouble, and the British arms were triumphant. When they had completely vanquished all their adversaries, the English nation came forward, animated by the same high and noble resolves, as before, and gave us that glorious Proclamation which we should for ever praise in reverence as our Magna Charta, greater even than Charter of 1833. I need not repeat that glorious Proclamation now, for it is engraven on all your hearts; but it constitutes such a grand and glorious charter of our liberties that I think every child, as it begins to gather intelligence and to lipd its mother-tongue, ought to be

made to commit it to memory. In that Proclamation, we have again a confirmation of the policy of 1833, and something more. In it are embodied the germs of all that we aim at now, of all that we can desire hereafter. We have only to go before the Government and the Commission now sitting and repeat it, and say that all we want is only what has already been granted to us in set terms by that Proclamation and that all we now ask for is, that the great and generous concessions therein made to us in words shall actually be made ours by deeds. I will not, however, enter into further details, for it is a subject on which I should be led into speaking for hours, and even then I should fail to convey to you an adequate idea of all that is in my heart. I have said enough to show our rulers that our case is complete and has been made out by themselves. It is enough for me, therefore, to stop at this point.

### **Enlargement of Legislative Councils**

Another Resolution is the improvement and enlargement of the Legislative Councils, and the introduction into them of an elective element, but that is one on which my predecessor in the chair has so ably descanted that I do not think I should take up more of your time with it. I need only say that in this matter we hope to make further advance, and shall try to place before our rulers what we consider a possible scheme for the introduction of an elective element into the Legislative Councils. I need not say that if this representation is introduced, the greatest benefit will be conferred upon the Government itself, because at present whatever Acts they pass that do not quite please us, we, whether rightly or wrongly, grumble and grumble against the Government, and the Government only. It is true that we have some of our own people in Councils. But we have no right to demand any explanation even from them; they are not our representatives, and the Government cannot relieve themselves from any dissatisfaction we may feel against any law we don't like. If our own representatives make a mistake and get a law passed, which we do not want, the Government at any rate will escape the greater portion of the consequent unpopularity. They will say: 'Here are your own representatives; we believe that they represented your wishes, and we passed the law.' On the other hand, with all the intelligence, all the superior knowledge of the English officials, let them come as angels from heaven, it is impossible for them to enter into the feelings of the people, and feel as they feel, and enter into their minds. It is not any disparagement of them, but in the nature of things it cannot be otherwise. If you have therefore your representatives to represent your feelings, you will then have an opportunity of getting something which is congenial and satisfactory to yourself; and what will be satisfactory to you must also be satisfactory to and good for the Government itself.

## **Representation in Parliament**

This brings me also to the point of representation in Parliament. All the most fundamental questions on which hinge the entire form and character of the administration here are decided by Parliament. No matter what it is, Legislative Councils or the Services—nothing can be reformed until Parliament moves and enacts modifications of these existing Acts. Not one single genuine Indian voice is there in Parliament to tell at least what the native view is on any question. This was most forcibly urged upon me by English gentlemen who are in Parliament themselves; they said they always felt it to be a great defect in Parliament, that it did not contain one single genuine representative of the people of India.

## **Poverty of India**

One of the questions which will be placed before this Congress and will be discussed by them, is the deep sympathy which this Congress feels for the poverty of the people. It is often understood and thought that, when we struggle for admission into the Services, it is simply to gratify the aspirations of the few educated. But if you examine the question thoroughly, you will find that this matter of the Public Services will go far to settle the problem of the poverty of the Indian people. One thing I congratulate myself upon. I don't trouble you with any testimony about the poverty of India. You have the testimony of Sir Evelyn Baring given only a couple of years ago, who told us in plain terms that the people of India were extremely poor, and also of the present Finance Minister who repeats those words. But amongst the several causes which are at the bottom of our sufferings, this one, and that the most important cause is beginning to be realised by our rulers, and that is a step of the most hopeful and promising kind. In the discussion about the currency, the Secretary of State for India, in a letter to the Treasury of the 26th January 1886, makes certain remarks which show that our rulers now begin to understand and try to grapple with the problem; and are not ostrich-like, shutting their eyes to it. I was laughed at when I first mooted the question of the poverty of India, and assigned as one of its causes the employment of an expensive foreign agency. But now the highest authority emphasizes this view. The Secretary of State, in the letter just referred to, said :

‘The position of India in relation to taxation and the sources of the public revenues is very peculiar, not merely from the habits of the people and their strong aversion to change, which is more specially exhibited towards new forms of taxation, but likewise from the character of the Government, which is in the hands of the foreigners, who hold all the principal administrative offices and form so large a part of the Army. The impatience of new taxation which would have to be borne wholly in consequence of the foreign rule imposed on the country, and virtually to meet additions to charges arising outside of the country, would

constitute a political danger, the real magnitude of which, it is to be feared, is not at all appreciated by persons who have no knowledge of, or concern in, the Government of India, but which those responsible for that Government have long regarded as one of the most serious orders.’

We may be sure that the public conscience of England will ask why the natives of India, after a hundred years of British rule, are so poor; and as John Bull, in a cartoon in which he is represented as doing, will wonder that India is a beggar when he thought she had a mint of money.

### **India's Fabulous Wealth**

Unfortunately, this idea of India's wealth is utterly delusive, and if a proper system of representation in the Council be concerned, our representatives will then be able to make clear to these Councils and to our rulers those causes which are operating to undermine our wealth and prosperity, and guide the Government to the proper remedies for the greatest of all evils—the poverty of the masses. All the benefits we have derived from British rule, all the noble projects of our British rulers, will go for nothing if after all the country is to continue sinking deeper and deeper into the abyss of destitution. At one time I was denounced as a pessimist; but now that we have it on the authority of our rulers themselves that we are very poor, it has become the right as well as the duty of this Congress to set forth its convictions both as to this widespread destitution and the primary steps need full for its alleviation. Nothing is more dear to the heart of England—and I speak from actual knowledge—than India's welfare; and if we only speak out loud enough, and persistently enough, to reach that busy heart. we shall not speak in vain.

### **Conclusion**

There will be several other questions brought before the Congress at their Committee meetings during the next three days, and I am sure from the names of the delegates, as far as I am informed, that they will prosecute their deliberations with all possible moderation. I am sure that they will fully appreciate the benefits of the rule under which they live, while the fact that our rulers are willing to do whatever we can show them to be necessary for our welfare, should be enough to encourage all in the work. I do not know that I need now detain you with any further remarks. You have now some idea of what progress has been made in respect of the matters which were discussed last year. I hope we may congratulate ourselves next year that we have made further progress in attaining the objects alike of the past year's resolutions and those we may this year pass. I, for one, am hopeful that if we are only true to ourselves, if we only do justice to ourselves and the noble education which has been given to us by our

rulers and speak freely, with the freedom of speech which has been granted to us, we may fairly expect our Government to listen to us and to grant us our reasonable demands.

I will conclude this short address by repeating my sincere thanks to all of you for having placed me in this honourable position and by again returning thanks to our Bengal brethren on behalf of all the delegates whom they have so cord ally welcomed here.”

## II

**Shri Dadabhai presided over the 9th Session of the Indian National Congress held at Lahore on December 27 to 30, 1893.** In his Presidential address, Shri Dadabhai referred to various topics such as Recent Higher Appointments to Indians; Death of Justice Telang; Indian Budget Debate; Indian Representation in Parliament; Poverty; Indian Loyalty; Costly Army and Civil Service; Costly Indian Administration; Indian Military Expenditure; Separation of the Executive and Judicial functions; Currency Question; Fellow Feeling and Common Nationality and Moral Force, the True Basis of British Strength in India. Following are some of the important passages from his speech :

### **“Death of Justice Telang**

It is our melancholy duty to record the loss of one of our greatest patriots, Justice Kashinath Trimbak Telang. It is a heavy loss to India; you will all know a high place he held in our estimation for his great ability, learning, eloquence, sound judgment, wise counsel and leadership. I have known him and worked with him for many years, and I have not known any one more earnest and devoted to the cause of our country’s welfare. He was one of the most active founders of this Congress, and was its first hard-working Secretary in Bombay. From the very first he had taken a warm interest and active part in our work, and even after he became a Judge, his sound advice was always at our disposal.”

### **“Recent Higher Appointment to Indians**

I am glad Mr. Mahadev Govind Ranade is appointed in his place. It does much credit indeed to Lord Harris for the selection, and I am sure Mr. Ranade will prove himself worthy of the post. I have known him long, and his ability and learning are well known. His sound judgment and earnest work in various ways have done valuable services to the cause of India. I am also much pleased that an Indian, Mr. Pramada Charan Bannerji, succeed Mr. Justice Mahmud at Allahabad.

I feel thankful to the Local Government and the Indian Government for such appointments, and to Lord Kimberley for his sanction of them, among which I may include also the decision about the Sanskrit Chair at Madras. I feel the more thankful to Lord Kimberley for I am afraid, and I hope I may be wrong, that there has been a tendency of not only not loyally carrying out the rule about situations of Rs. 200 and upwards to be given to Indians, but that even such posts as have been already given to them are being snatched away from their hands. Lord Kimberley's firmness in not allowing this is therefore so much the more worthy of praise and our thankfulness.

Lord Kimberley also took prompt action to prevent the retrograde step in connection with the Jury systems in Bengal for which Mr. Paul and other friends interested themselves in Parliament; and also to prevent the retrograde interference with the Chairmanship of Municipalities at the instance of our British Committee in London. I do hope that in the same spirit Lord Kimberley will consider our representations about the extension of the Jury system.

### **Indian Budget Debate**

Amongst the most important work of the Councils is the Budget. What is the condition of the Budget debate both here and in England? The House of Commons devotes week after week for supply of the English Budget, when every item of expenditure is discussed or may be altered; and not only that, but the conduct of the department during the year is brought under review, which becomes an important check to any arbitrary, unjust or illegal action. But what is the Indian Budget debate or procedure? Here the Financial Statement is made by the Finance Minister. Then a week or so after, a few speeches are made to no practical effect, no practical motion or resolution, and the whole thing is over. Somewhat similar is the fate of the Indian Budget in the House of Commons, with the advantage of proposing any amendments and, at least, of having one amendment with practical effect of a division or vote. But there is also the important advantage of bringing in any Indian measure or motion in the course of the Session in accordance with the rules and orders of the House like any other measure or motion. I felt thankful that at the last Budget debate, though there was the usual additional agony of the last day of the Session, yet there was not also the agony of scanty attendance, thanks to the increasing interest in the House in Indian matters and to the friends of India. In both places no practical check on any waste, extravagant or unnecessary expenditure. I am not at present discussing the merits of such Councils and restriction of powers, but that such matters will require your attention and consideration, that even in this one matter of Legislative Councils you have yet to secure Mr. Gladstone's 'real living representative voice of the people' being heard upon every detail of the Government of British India.

## Indian Representation in Parliament

There is, however, another important matter—I mean the direct representation from India in the Imperial Parliament. As all our Imperial questions and relations between India and the United Kingdom, all amendments of Parliamentary Act already passed and existing, or all important Acts that may be and can be only passed hereafter in Parliament, and all our ultimate appeals can be settled in ‘Parliament alone, it is of extreme importance that there should be some reasonable direct representation from India in the House of Commons and the representatives may be Indians or Europeans as long as they are the choice directly of Indian Constituencies, just as you have delegates to this Congress of Indians or Europeans.

Central Finsbury has been generous to us; other constituencies may also extend to us such generous consideration and help, but it is not fair that we should be left to depend upon the generosity of English Constituencies. Under present circumstances we have a right to have direct representation. I hope the time is not very distant when we may successfully appeal to Parliament to grant us the true status of British political citizenship. I do not overlook that several matters will have to be considered, and I am not at present placing before you a cut-and-dry scheme. My only object is to draw your attention to this vital subject.

But the greatest question before you, the question of all questions, is the poverty of India. This will be, I am much afraid, the great future trouble both of the Indian people and of the British rulers. It is the rock ahead. In this matter we are labouring under one great disadvantage. This poverty we attribute to the system, and not to the officials who administer that system. But unfortunately for us, for themselves and the British people, the officials (with clear-sighted exceptions of course) make the matter personal, and do not consider impartially and with calmness of judgment this all important subject. The present Duke of Devonshire has well put this state of the official mind, which is peculiarly applicable in connection with this subject. He said :

‘The Anglo-Indian, whatever may be his merits, and no doubt they are just, is not a person who is distinguished by an exceptionally calm judgment.’

Mr. Gladstone also lately, in the Opium debate remarked :

‘That it was a sad thing to say, but unquestionably it happens not infrequently in human affairs, that those who ought from their situation to know the most and the best, yet from prejudice and prepossessions knew the least and the worst.’

This has been our misfortune with officials. But there have been and are some thoughtful officials who know the truth, like Lord Lawrence and others in the past, and in the present times like the latest Finance Ministers, Lord Cromer, Sir Auckland Colvin, and Sir David Barbour, who have perceived and stated the terrible truth that British India is extremely poor. Among other officials several have testified to the sad fact in “Confidential Reports”, which Government do not publish—and this after a hundred years of the work of these officials under the present unnatural system. The system being unnatural, were the officials the very angels themselves, or as many Gladstones, they cannot prevent the evils of the system and cannot do much good. When Mr. Bayley and I moved for a Royal Commission of Inquiry, it was said that I had not produced evidence of poverty, it was not so; but it is difficult to make those see who would not see. To every member of the House, I had previously sent my papers of all necessary evidence on the annual income and absolute wants of the people of India. I do not know whether any of those who opposed us had taken the troubles to read this, and it was unfair to expect that in making out a *prima facie* case for our motion. I should reiterate, with the necessary waste of some hours of the precious time of the House, all the evidence already in their hands.”

### **“Returns Wanted**

You remember my papers on the Poverty of India and I have asked for Returns to bring up information to date, so that a fair comparison of the present with the past may enable the House to come to a correct judgement. I am sorry the Government of India refuses to make a return of a Note prepared so late as 1881 by Sir David Barbour, upon which the then Finance Minister (Lord Cromer) based his statement in his speech in 1882 about the extreme poverty of the mass of the people. I do not see why the Government of India should refuse. The Note, I am told, is an important document. Government for its own sake should be ready to give it. In 1880, the present Duke of Devonshire, then Secretary of State for India, readily gave me some statistics and information prepared by Mr. F. Danvers, though I did not know of their existence. This enabled me to point out some errors and to explain some points which had been misunderstood. Such information is extremely necessary, not merely for the sake of the exceedingly poor masses of the people, but for the very stability of the British power itself.

The question of the Poverty of India should be fully raised, grappled with and settled. The Government ought to deal boldly and broadly with it. Let there be a return in detail, correctly calculated, made every year of the total annual income of all British India, per head of population, and of the requirements of a labourer to live in working health, and not as a starved beast of burden. Unless such complete and accurate information is given every year in detail, it is idle and useless to make mere unfounded assertions that India is prospering.



It must also be remembered that Lord Cromer's annual average of not more than Rs. 27 per head is for the whole population, including the rich and all classes, and not what the great mass of the population can or do actually get. Out of the total annual income of British India, all that portion must be deducted which belongs to European Planters, Manufacturers and Mineowners, and not to the people of British India, excepting the poor wages they receive, to drudge to give away their own country's wealth, to the benefit of a foreign people. Another portion is enjoyed in and carried out from the country on a far larger share per head by many who are not the children of the soil— official and non-official. Then the upper and middle classes of the Indians themselves receive much more than their average share. The great mass of the poor people therefore have a much lower average than even the wretched 'not more than Rs. 27' per head.

You know that I had calculated the average of the income as being Rs. 20 per head per annum, and when Lord Cromer's statement of Rs. 27 appeared, I requested him to give me his calculations but he refused. However, Rs. 20 or 'not more than Rs. 27' — how wretched is the condition of a country of such income, after a hundred years of the most costly administration, and can such a thing last?

It is remarkable that there is no phase of the Indian problem which clear-headed and fair-minded Anglo-Indian have not already seen and indicated. More than a hundred years ago, in 1787, Sir John Shore wrote these remarkable, far-seeing and prophetic words :

'Whatever allowance we may make for the increased industry of the subjects of the State, owing to the enhanced demand for the produce of it (supposing the demand to be enhanced), there is reason to conclude that the benefits are more than counter-balanced by evils inseparable from the system of a remote foreign dominion.'

And these words of prophecy are true to the present day. I pass over what has been said by other European officials at different times during the hundred years. I come to 1886, and there is a curious and complete response after a hundred years by the Secretary of State for India. In a Despatch (26th January, 1886) to the Treasury, he makes a significant admission about the consequences of the character of the Government of the foreign rule of Britain, He says :

'The position of India in relation to taxation and the sources of the public revenues is very peculiar, not merely from the habits of the people and their strong aversion to change which is more specially exhibited to new forms of taxation, but likewise from the character of the Government, which is in the hands of foreigners, who hold all the principal administrative offices and form so large a part of the Army. The imposition of new taxation which would have

to be borne wholly as a consequence of the foreign rule imposed on the country and virtually to meet additions to charges arising outside of the country would constitute a political danger, the real magnitude of which, it is to be feared, is not at all appreciated by persons who have no knowledge of or concern in the Government of India, but which those responsible for that Government have long regarded as of the most serious order.'

What a strange confirmation, fulfilment and explanation of the very reason of the prophecy of a hundred years ago, and admission now that because the character of the present Government is such that 'It is in the hands of the foreigners who hold all the principal administrative offices and form so large a part of the Army,' the consequence of it is a 'political anger', the real magnitude of which it is 'of the most serious order'.

Need I, after this declaration even, despair that some of our Anglo-Indian friends would not take a lesson from the Secretary of State and understand the evil of the system under which India is suffering? Have I ever said anything clearer or stronger than this despatch has done? It gives my whole fear of the future perils to the people of India, and political danger to the British power, in a nutshell. This shows that some of our Anglo-Indian authorities have not been, nor are, so dull and blind as not to have seen before or see now the whole peril of the position, and the un-natural and suicidal system of administration.

Yes, figures are quoted by some of what they call 'increase of trade', 'balance of trade in favour of India', 'increase of industry', 'hoarding of treasure in British India', etc., etc.; but our misfortune is that these people, with bias and prejudices and prepossessions, and apparently having not very clear ideas of the principles, processes, and details of commercial and banking operations and transactions, and of the perturbations of what Sir John Shore called 'the evils of a distant foreign dominion', are not able to understand and read aright these facts and figures of the commercial and economic conditions of British India. These people do not realize or seem to understand that what are called 'the trade returns of British India' are misleading, and are not the trade returns of British India. A good portion of both the imports and exports of both merchandise and treasure belong to the Native States and to countries beyond the borders, and not to British India. A separate return must be made of the imports and exports of the non-British India may be given by itself and then there should be some statement of the exports which are not trade exports at all, but only political and private European remittances and then, only will it be seen how wretched this British Indian true trade is, and how fallacious and misleading the present returns are. A return is made every year called, "The Material and Moral Progress of India". But that part regarding "Material Progress", to which I am confining my observations, is very imperfect and misleading. As I have already said, nothing short of a return every year of the average annual income per head of population of British India, and of the absolute necessities of life for a healthy labourer, in

detailed calculation can give any correct idea of the progress or otherwise of the material condition of the people of British India. I ask for 'detailed calculation' in the returns, because some of the officials seem to have rather vague notions of the Arithmetic of Averages, and though the foundation figures may be correct, they bring out results far from truth. I have pointed out this with instances in my papers. I have communicated with the Secretary of State for India, and he has communicated with the Government of India. But I do not know how far this correction has been attended to by those who calculate averages.

What is grievous is that the present unnatural system as predicted by Sir John Shore, is destructive to us, with a partial benefit to the United Kingdom with our curse upon it. But were a natural system to prevail, the commercial and industrial benefits aided by perfect free-trade that exists between India and the United Kingdom will be to both countries of an extent of which we can at present form no conception.

But here is an inexhaustible market of 221,000,000 of their own civilised fellow-citizens with some 66,000,000 more of the people of the Native States, and what a great trade would arise with such an enormous market, and the United Kingdom would not far a long time hear anything about her 'unemployed'. It is only some people of the United Kingdom of the higher classes that at present draw all the benefit from India. The great mass of the people do not derive that benefit from the connection with India which they ought to get with benefit to both countries. On the other hand it is with the Native States that there is some comparatively decent trade. With British India, as compared with its population, the trade of the United Kingdom is wretched indeed after a century of a very costly administration paid for by the poverty stricken people.

Truly has Macaulay said emphatically :

'To trade with civilised man is infinitely more profitable than to govern savages; that would indeed be a doing wisdom, which, in order that India might remain a dependency, would make it a useless and costly dependency which would keep a hundred millions (now really 221,000,000) of men from being our customers in order that they might continue to be our slaves.'

**“Should this dotting wisdom continue?”**

It is impossible for me to explain in this address all the misapprehensions. I have already explained my views as fully as possible in my papers. These views were at first ridiculed and pooh-poohed till the highest financial authorities, the latest Finance Ministers

themselves, admitted the extreme poverty of India. Lord Cromer summed up the situation in these remarkable words in 1882.

‘It has been calculated that the average income per head of population in India is not more than Rs. 27 a year. In England the average income per year per head of population was Pound Sterling 33; in France it was Pound Sterling 23; in Turkey, which was the poorest country in Europe, it was Pound Sterling 4 a head.’

Comment is unnecessary. Let us and the Government not live in a fool’s paradise. Or time may bring disasters to both when it is too late to stop them. This poverty is the greatest danger both to us and the rulers. In what shapes and varieties of forms the disease of poverty may attack the body-politic, and bring out and aggravate other evils, it is difficult to tell or foresee, but that there is danger of ‘most serious order’, as the Secretary of State declares, nobody can deny.”

### **“Indian Loyalty**

We, the Congress, are only desirous of supporting Government, and having this important matter of poverty grappled with and settled, we are anxious to prevent ‘the political danger’ of the ‘most serious order’, declared to exist by the Secretary of State himself. We desire that the British connection should endure for a long time to come for the sake of our material and political elevation among the civilised nations of the world. It is no pleasure or profit to us to complain unnecessarily or wantonly about this poverty.”

### **“Costly Army and Civil Services**

The next subject to which I desire to draw your attention is this. We have large costly European Army and European Civil Services. It is not to be supposed that in these remarks I accept the necessity for them. I take at present the situation as it is. I now submit to the calm consideration of the British people and Government these questions. Is all this European service entirely for the sole benefit of India? Has the United Kingdom no interest or benefit in it? Does not the greatness of, and the greatest benefit to, the United Kingdom arise from its connection with India? Should not the cost of such greatness and great benefits be shared by the United Kingdom in proportion of its means and benefit? Are not the European services especially imposed upon us on the clearly admitted and declared ground of maintaining the British power? Let us see what our rulers themselves say.”

## **British Views on the Costly Indian Administration**

Lord Beaconsfield said :

‘We had to decide what was the best step to counteract the efforts Russia was then making, for though war had not been declared, her movements had commenced in Central Asia, and the struggle has commenced which was to decide for ever which power should possess the great gates of India, and that the real question at issue was whether England should possess the gates of her own great Empire in India, and whether the time had not arrived when we could no longer delay that the problem should be solved and in a manner as it has been solved by Her Majesty’s Government’. Again he says :

‘We resolved that the time has come when this country should acquire the complete command and possession of the gates of the Indian Empire. Let me at least believe that the Peers of England are still determined to uphold not only the Empire but the honour of this country.’

Can any words; be more emphatic show the vast and most vital stakes, honour and interests of the United Kingdom?

### **Lord Kimberley, the Secretary of State for India, tell us :**

‘We are resolutely determined to maintain our supremacy over our Indian Empire ..... that among other things, he says, ‘that supremacy rests also upon the maintenance of our European Civil Service’, that we rest upon the magnificent European Force which we maintain in that country.’

This again is another emphatic declaration of the vast stakes and interests of the United Kingdom for which the European are maintained entirely at our expenses.

I shall give one more authority only :

‘See what a man like Lord Reverts, the symbol of physical force admits. He says to the London Chamber of Commerce : ‘I rejoice to learn that you recognise how indissolubly the prosperity of the United Kingdom is bound up with the retention of that vast Eastern Empire.’”

And again he says at Glasgow :

‘That the retention of our Eastern Empire is essential to the greatness and prosperity of the United Kingdom.’

Now, I ask again, that with all such deep, vast and great interest, and the greatness and prosperity of the United Kingdom, essentially depending on the Eastern Empire and indissolubly bound up with it; is it reasonable, is it just and fair, is it British that all the cost of such greatness, glory, and prosperity of the United Kingdom should be entirely to the last farthing, thrown upon the wretched Indians, and if the only relations existing between the United Kingdom and India were not of mutual benefit, but of mere masters and slaves as Macaulay pointed out to be deprecated.

### **Indian Military Expenditure**

There is a strange general misapprehension among the people of the United Kingdom. They do not know that they have not spent a single shilling in the formation of British Indian Empire or in its maintenance, all money coming from Indians, with the only exemption in my knowledge that Mr. Gladstone with his sense of justice allowed Pound Sterling 5,000,000 towards the last Afghan War, which, without having any voice in it, cost India Pound Sterling 21,000,000. I cannot blame the people of the Kingdom generally for this mistake, when well informed papers give utterances to this most unfortunate fallacy. As for instance a paper like the Statist, in the extract which my friend Mr. Dinshaw E. Wacha gave you last year, says : ‘Whatever may happen, we must defend India to our last shilling and our last man’, while the fact is that they have not spent even their first shilling or any shilling at all but on the contrary derived benefits in various ways from India of millions on millions every year. Nor have the fighters in creating and maintaining the BRITISH Indian Empire been only the British soldier to ‘the last man’. Indian soldiers have done the main work, and if India can be made prosperous and contented as it can be by true statesmanship, the Indian soldier will be ready to fight to ‘the last man’ to defend British power.

Britain in fact cannot send to India ‘to its last man.’ The very idea is absurd; on the contrary she can draw from India for her European purpose in inexhaustible strength.

Again, the Statist says : ‘We are at this moment spending large sums of money in preparing against a Russian attack.’ Not a farthing of the British money? Every farthing of these ‘large sums’, which are crushing us, is ‘imposed’ upon the people of British India. Such misleading statements are often made in the English press to our great injury.

I repeat, then, that we must submit to the just consideration of the British people and Parliament whether it is just and right that they should not pay a fair share, according to their

stakes and means, towards all such expenditure as is incurred for the benefit of both India and the United Kingdom, such expenditure, and the respective share of each, being settled on a peace footing, any extraordinary expenditure against any foreign invasion being also further fairly shared.

Before closing this subject, I may just remark that while leaving necessarily the highest offices of power and control, such as Viceroy and Governors to Europeans, I regard the enormous European Services as a great political and imperial weakness, in critical political times to the British power, as well as the cause, as the present Duke of Devonshire pointed out, of the insufficiency of an efficient administration of the country; and also the main cause of the evils foretold by Sir John Shore, and admitted by the Secretary of State for India, after a hundred years, as a political danger of “a most serious order” and of the poverty of India.

### **“Separation of Executive Judicial Functions**

Passing on to the other subjects, I hope the separation of Executive and Judicial functions will receive attention as its necessity has been recognised. We have to persevere for this as well as for other parts of our programme, bearing in mind one great difficulty we have to contend with. Unfortunately the Indian authorities when they determine to do or not to do a thing under the notion of preserving prestige and strength, as if any false prestige can be a strength, disregard even Resolutions or Acts of Parliament itself, and resort to every device to carry their own point of view. We cannot expect Parliament to watch Indian affairs from day to day, and therein lies the impunity and immunity of the Indian administration.

I shall refer to only two instances : First the case of the misleadingly called ‘the Statutory Service’, and what in reality was created out of, and as a part and parcel of the Covenanted Civil Service. I can speak with some authority, for I was the very proposer of the Memorial of the East India Association to Sir Stafford Northcote which resulted in the Clause of the Act of 1870. But the Indian authorities would not have it. They moved heaven and earth to thwart it; it is a long and a sad story for the good name of Britain, and they never rested till they made the Statute a dead letter, though it still stands on the Statute Book of the Imperial Parliament. However, I hear with pleasure, and I hope it is true, that a disposition has arisen, for which I understand Lord Kimberley is to be thanked, to redress this glaring and unfortunate wrong—unfortunate, for British prestige, for British honour and British good faith, and I do hope that the Government would do this redress ungrudgingly, with good grace, completeness and generosity, This instance illustrates another unfortunate phase of the administration.”

## The Currency Question

On the currency question I need not dwell much. My views are known to you. Now that the Sherman Law is repealed by the United States, we may hope to see a settled condition in time. No amount of currency, jugglery or devices in this country could have any influence (except that of creating troubles in the country itself, as has happened) on the loss in the remittances to England for home charges which must be paid in gold, and will fluctuate with the rise of full or gold in the United Kingdom. As if this crushing loss was not enough for the wretched taxpayers, further burdens were laid to make things agreeable and comfortable with other people's money, as Lord Kimberley would say, of high exchange to the European officials, and the further most unwarranted payment of Pound Sterling 138,000 to the banks, with whose transactions in profits or loss the taxpayer has no connection whatever. Some strange precedents are made in this matter to silence opposition and to support banks at the expense of the taxpayers, which will lead to serious troubles in future. Should not the millowners and other concerns also claim compensation for the dislocation of their industry or transactions by the currency action of the Government, as Government itself admits to have caused such dislocation? Would the British Exchequer have paid any such money to the British banks? Such a thing would never have been thought of. The utmost that is done in any crisis is allowing the Bank of England to issue more notes under strong restrictions. Had the banks made profits instead of loss, would they have handed them to the taxpayers? Then it would have been called the reward of shrewdness, foresight, enterprise, etc., etc.

The whole currency troubles from which India is suffering and which are so peculiar to India and so deplorable to the Indian taxpayers, and from which no other silver-using country suffers, is one of the best illustrations and object-lessons, and proof of the soundness of Sir John Shore's prophecy about the evil consequences of the present unnatural system of remote foreign dominion, or as the Secretary of State called the danger of 'a most serious order.'

The currency muddle will necessitate new taxation. The usual easy and unchecked resource of putting off the evil day by borrowing is already resorted to, and in the spirit of keeping things agreeable and comfortable to those who have votes in Parliament, there is danger of increase in the salt tax. I do hope that Government will have some moral courage and some mercy upon the wretched tax-payer, and reduce even the salt tax by reimposing the cotton duties. Not that by this means India will be saved a pie from the addition of burdens, but that a little better able shoulders will have to bear them, or, as Lord Salisbury once coolly put it, that as India must be bled, the lancet should be directed to the parts where there was at least sufficient blood not to those which are already feeble from the want of it.



## **Fellow-Feeling and Common Nationality**

Anyone who has watched my public career must have seen that my main underlying principle and the desire of my heart is to promote, as far as I can, good fellow-feeling among all my countrymen. And I have no doubt that all the educated and thinking men and all true friends of our own country will continue to do all that lies in their power to bring about stronger and stronger friendly ties of common nationality, fellow-feeling and due deference to each other's views and feelings amongst the whole people of our country.

Government must be firm and just in case of any unfortunate differences; as far as Government are concerned their duty is clearly to put down with a strong hand any lawlessness or disturbance of the peace, no matter who the parties concerned may be. They can only stand, as they ought, on the only sure and right foundation of evenhanded justice to all, and cannot allow anyone to take the law into his own hands; the only wise policy is to adhere to their declared policy of strict neutrality and equal protection and justice to all creeds.

I was much pleased to read in the papers that cordial conference had been held between Mohammedans and Hindus in various places to devise means to prevent any deplorable occurrences happening in the future.

Looking back to the past as my own personal experience of my life, and as far back as I know of earlier days, at least on my side of India, I feel a congratulation that all associations and societies of members of all creeds have worked together in harmony and union, without any consideration of class or creed in all matters concerning our common national public and political interests. No doubt, latterly, even in such common matters, differences of views have arisen and will arise, but such differences of views, when genuine, are healthy, just as in the case in the United Kingdom itself with its two political parties.

What makes me still more gratified and look forward hopefully in the future is that our Congress has not only worked so far in the union and concord of all classes and creeds but has taken care to provide that such harmony should continue in the future. As early as in the Congress at Allahabad of 1888 you passed this Resolution (XIII) : 'That no subject shall be passed for discussion by the Subject Committee, or allowed to be discussed at any Congress by the President thereof, to the introduction of which the Hindu or Mohammedan delegates as a body object unanimously or nearly unanimously; and that if, after the discussion of any subject which has been admitted for discussion, it shall appear that all the Hindu or all the Muslim delegates as a body are unanimously or nearly unanimously opposed to the Resolution which it is proposed to pass thereon. such Resolution shall be dropped:

provided that this rule shall refer only to subjects in regard to which the Congress has not already definitely pronounced an opinion.

As I have already said, the highest wish of my heart is that all the people of India should regard and treat each other as fellow countrymen, with fellow-feeling for the good of all.

### **Interest of all Indians are Identical**

We may, I am convinced, rest fully assured that whatever political or national benefit we may acquire will in one or other way benefit all classes, the benefit of each taking various forms. The interests of us all are the same. We are all in the same boat. We must sink or swim together. Government cannot but treat us all alike. It is unreasonable for us to expect from them, and unjust and unwise for them to show, any undue favour to any particular class or community. The only solid foundation for them is justice and impartiality, and the only just demand from us also can only be justice and impartiality.

### **Prosperous Country is Good for all**

If the country is prosperous, then if one gets scope in one walk of life, another will have in another walk of life. As our Indian saying goes : 'If there is water in the well it will come to the cistern. 'If we have the well of prosperity we shall be able to draw each our share from it. But if the well is dry we must all go without any at all.

### **Moral Force—The True Basis of British Strength in India**

A word for the basis on which the strength of British power stands. Britain can hold India, or any one country can hold another. by moral force only. You can build up an empire by arms or ephemeral brute physical force, but you can preserve it by the eternal moral forces only. Brute force will, some time or other, break down; righteousness alone is everlasting. Well and truly has Lord Ripon said that the British power and influence rests upon the conviction of our good faith more than upon the valour of our soldiers or the reputation of our arms.' Mr. Gladstone says : 'It is the predominance of that moral force for which I heartily pray in the deliberations of this House and the conduct of our whole public policy, for I am convinced that upon that predominance depends that which should be the first object of all our desires, as it is of all our daily official prayers, namely, that union of heart and sentiment which constitutes the truest basis of strength at home, and therefore, both of strength and good fame throughout the civilized world.'

And here is a remarkable instance cited by Mr. Gladstone of a people of a different race becoming attached even to the much despised Turkish rule. How much more will the people of India, if contented and prosperous, become attached to the rule of such a people as the British? Referring to Lebanon, Mr. Gladstone said : ‘Owing to the wise efforts of Lord Dufferin and others about thirty years ago local management was established, since which the province has become contented and attached to the Turkish empire.’

Lord Roberts, the apostle of British strong arm to maintain British power, and though much imbued with many of the prejudices against the progress of the Indians, as a true soldier admits without hesitation what he considers a the only solid foundation upon which British strength must for ever rest. He says : “But however efficient and well equipped the army of India may be, were it indeed absolute perfection and were its numbers considerably more than they are at present, our greatest strength must ever rest on the firm base of a united and contented India.”

Truer and more statesmanlike words could not be uttered. Permit me to give one more extract. Mr. Gladstone, referring to Irish Home Rule said : “There can be no nobler spectacle than that which we think is now drowing upon us, the spectacle of a nation deliberately set on the removal of injustice, deliberately determined to break, not through terror and not in haste, but under the sole influence of duty and honour, determined to break with whatever remains still existing of an evil tradition, und determined in that way at once to pay a debt of justice and to consult by a bold, wise, and good act its own interest and its own honour.”

Am I at all unreasonable in hoping that such noble statesmanship, honour, and good faith of the British people will, in fulness of time, also extend to India similar justice? I shall hope as long as I live.”

### **Indians above Everything**

Let us always remember that we are all children of our mother country. Indeed., I have never worked in any other spirit than that I am an Indian, and owe duty to my country and all my countrymen. Whether I am a Hindu, a Mohammedan, a Parsi, a Christian, or any other creed, I am above all an Indian. Our country is India; our nationality is Indian.”

### **Self-sacrifice—Example of British People**

I desire now to impress upon my countrymen with all the earnestness I am capable of to prepare themselves for sacrifices. We observe every day what sacrifices the British people

make for attaining any object, great or small, and how persistently they stick to it; and among the lessons which we are learning from them let us learn this particular one, with the double advantage and effect of showing that Indians have public spirit and love of their country, and also proving that they are earnest in what they are asking.”

### **Our Fate and Our Future**

Our fate and our future are in our own hands. If we are true to ourselves and to our country and make all the necessary sacrifices for our elevation and amelioration, I, for one have not the shadow of a doubt that in dealing such justice-loving, fair-minded people as the British, we may rest fully assured that we shall not work in vain. It is this conviction which has supported me against all difficulties. I have never faltered in my faith in the British character and have always believed that the time will come when the sentiment of the British nation and our Gracious Sovereign proclaimed to us in our Great Charter of the Proclamation of 1858 will be realized, viz. ‘In their prosperity will be our strength, in their contentment our best reward.’ And let us join in the prayer that followed this hopeful declaration of our Sovereign : ‘My 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.’

My last prayer and exhortation to the Congress and to all my countrymen is-Go-on united and earnest, in concord and harmony, with moderation, with loyalty to the British rule and patriotism towards our country, and success is sure to attend our efforts for our just demands, and the day I hope is not distant when the world will see the noblest spectacle of a great nation like the British holding out the hand of true fellowcitizenship and of justice to the vast mass of humanity of this great and ancient land of India with benefits and blessing to the human race.”

## CHAPTER III

### The Demand of Swaraja

Shri Dadabhai presided for the last time over the 22nd Session of the Indian National Congress held at Calcutta from December 26 to 29, 1906. His Presidential speech was one of the most important speeches delivered by Presidents of Indian National Congress. He referred to various topics in his speech. Following is the full text of the speech of Shri Dadabhai Naoroji :

“I thank you most sincerely for honouring me for the third time with the Presidentship of the Indian National Congress. I hope I shall have your cordial help and support.

I may here express my deep sorrow at the loss India has suffered in the deaths of Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee, Justice Badruddin Tyabji, Mr. Anand Mohan Bose and Mr. Veeraraghava Chariar.

I offer my sincere thanks to the ‘Parliament Branch of the United Irish League,’ the Breakfast Meeting, the North Lambeth Liberal and Radical Club and the National Democratic League for their enthusiastic and cordial godspeed to me.

This is the first Congress after its having come of age. It is time that we should carefully consider what the position of the Indians is at present and what their future should be.

In considering this important matter I do not intend to repeat my lamentations over the past. I want only to look to the future.

The work of the Congress consists of two parts :

First and most important is the question of the policy and principles of the system of Government under which India ought to be governed in the future.

Second is to watch the operation of the administration as it now exists, to propose from time to time any reforms and changes that may be deemed necessary to be made in the various departments, till the present system of government is radically altered and based upon right principle and policy in the accomplishment of the first part mentioned above.

I desire to devote my address mainly to the first part of the work of the Congress, viz., the policy and principles which ought to govern India in future.

What position do the Indian hold in the British Empire? Are they British citizens or not is my first question? I say we are British citizens and are entitled to and claim all British citizen's rights. I shall first lay before you my reasons for claiming that we are British citizens.

### **Reason I. The Birthright**

The acknowledgement of this birthright was declared on the very first occasion when England obtained the very first territorial and sovereign possession in India. The British statesmen of the day at once acted upon the fundamental basis of the British Constitution and character that anyone who came howsoever and wheresoever, Under the British flag was a free British citizens as 'if born and living in England.'

The fundamental basis in the words of the present Prime Minister is : 'Freedom is the very breath of our life.... We stand for liberty, our policy is the policy of freedom.' In the words of Mr. Morley : 'Yes, gentlemen, the sacred word 'free' which represents as Englishmen have always thought until today, the noblest aspiration that can animate the breast of man.' This birthright to be 'free' or to have freedom is our right from the very beginning of our connection with England we came under the British flag.

When Bombay was acquired as the very first territorial possession; the government of the day in the very first grant of territorial rights to the East India Company declared thus :

(Extract from the "Grant to the First East India Company of the Island of Bombay" dated 27th March 1669).

'And it is declared that all persons being His Majesty's subjects inhabiting within the said Island and their children and their posterity born within the limits thereof shall be deemed free denizens and natural subjects as if living and born in England.'

And further all the terms of the first grant are extended in it to all future British territorial acquisitions. Thus, is the claim of Indians to be 'free' and to all the rights of British natural subjects as 'if living and born in England' are distinctly acknowledged and declared from the very first political connection with England.

Having given the declaration made some two and a half centuries back in the 17th century that the moment we Indians came under the British flag we were 'free' citizens I next

give you what two of the prominent statemen of this, the 20th century have said. When the Boers were defeated and subjugated and came under the British flag. the present Prime Minister said (14th June 1901) :

‘These people with whom we are dealing are not only going to be our fellow-citizens, they are our fellowcitizens already.’

Sir William Harcourt at the same time said : ‘This is the way in which you propose to deal with your fellow-citizens.’

Thus the moment a people came under the British flag they are ‘free’ and British ‘fellow-citizens.’ We Indians have been free British citizens as our birthright, as ‘if, born and living in England’ from the first moment we came under the British flag.

The Boer war cost British more than two hundred millions and 20,000 dead, and 20,000 wounded. India, on the other hand, has enriched Britain instead of costing anything—and the blood that was shed was largely Indian blood—and yet this is a strange contrast. The Boers have already obtained self-government in a few years after conquest, while India has not yet received self-government though it is more than 200 years from the commencement of the political connection.

All honour and glory to the British instincts and principles and to the British statesmen of the 17th century. The Liberals of the present day and the Liberal Government have every rights to be proud of those ‘old principles’, and now that a happy and blessed revival of those sacred old principles has taken place, the present government ought fairly to be expected to act upon those old principles, and to acknowledge and give effect to the birthright of Indians as ‘if living and born in England.’ England is bound to do this. Our British rights are beyond all question. Every British Indian subject has franchise in England as a matter of course, and even to become a Member of Parliament. Nobody in England dreams of objecting to it Once in my case, from party motives, an objection was sggested to entering my name on the register as an elector, and the revising barrister at once brushed aside the objection for, that as an Indian, I was a British citizen.

## **Reason II : Pledged Rights**

The grant to the first East India Company cited in Reason I is both a declaration of the rights of Indians as British citizens as well as a pledge of those rights by that declaration.

Queen Victoria, in her letter to Lord Derby asking him to write the Proclamation himself, said :

‘And point out the privileges which the Indians will receive in being placed on an equality with the subjects of the British Crown and prosperity flowing in the train of civilization.’

Thereupon the proclamation then declared and pledge unreservedly and most solemnly calling God to witness and bless :

‘We hold ourselves bound to the Natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to our other subjects, and these obligations by the blessing of Almighty God we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil.’

Can there be a more sacred and solemn pledge before God, and Man?

On the occasion of the Proclamation of the Queen as Empress of India, she sent a telegram to Lord Lytton which he read in the open Durbar consisting of both Princes and People. In this telegram the Queen Empress said :

‘That from the highest to the humblest all may feel that under our rule, the great principles of liberty, equity and justice are secured to them, and that to promote their happiness, to add to their prosperity and advance their welfare are ever present aims and objects of our Empire.’

And it is clear that this object of promoting our happiness etc., etc., can only be attained by our enjoyment of the principles of liberty, equity and justice, i.e. we must have the British liberty of governing ourselves.

On the occasion of the Jubilee of 1887, the Queen Empress again pledged and emphasised the pledges of the Proclamation thus :

‘Allusion is made to Proclamation issued on the occasion of my assumption of the direct government of India as the Charter of the liberties of the Princes and people of India. It has always been and will be continued to be my earnest desire that the principles of that Proclamation should be unswervingly maintained.’

We are now asking nothing more or less than the liberties of our Charter,—our rights of British citizenship.



The present King-Emperor has pledged :

‘I shall endeavour to follow the great example of the first Queen-Empress to work for the general well-being of my Indian subjects of all ranks.’

Again the King-Emperor in his speech on 19th February 1906, said :

‘It is my earnest hope that in these Colonies as elsewhere *throughout my dominions* (the italics are mine) the grant of free institutions will be followed by an increasing prosperity and loyalty to the Empire.’

And the Prime Minister clinches the whole that ‘good government could never be a substitute for government by the people themselves.’

How much less is then an economically evil government not constitutionally an unconstitutional despotic government, a substitute for self-government and how much absolutely necessary it is to produce ‘increasing prosperity and loyalty to the Empire, by ‘the grant of free institutions.’

With the solemn pledges I have mentioned above, we have every right to claim an honourable fulfilment of all our British pledged rights. And so we claim all British rights as our birthright and as our solemnly pledged rights. Britain's duty, humanity, honour, instincts and traditions for freedom, solemn pledges, conscience, righteousness, and civilization demand the satisfaction to us of our British rights.

### **Reason III : Reparation**

All our sufferings and evils of the past centuries demand before God and Man a reparation, which we may fairly expect from the present revival of the old noble British instincts of liberty and self-government. I do not enter into our past sufferings as I have already said at the outset.

### **Reason IV : Conscience**

The British people would not allow themselves to be subjected for a single day to such an unnatural system of government as the one which has been imposed upon India for nearly a century and a half. Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman has made a happy quotation from Mr. Bright : ‘I remember John Bright quoting in the House of Commons on one occasion two lines of a poet with reference to political matters :

‘There is on Earth a yet diviner thing,  
Veiled though it be, than Parliament of King.’

Then Sir Henry asks : ‘What is that diviner thing? it is the human conscience inspiring human opinion and human sympathy.’ I ask them to extend that human conscience. ‘The diviner thing,’ to India in the words of Mr. Morley :

‘It will be a bad day indeed if we have one conscience for the Mother Country and another conscience for all that vast territory over which your eye does not extend.’

And now the next question is—What are the British rights which we have a right to ‘claim’?

This is not the occasion to enter into any details or argument. I keep to broad lines.

(1) Just as the administration of the United Kingdom in all services, departments and details is in the hands of the people themselves of that country, so should we in India claim that the administration in all services, departments and details should be in the hands of the people themselves of India.

This is not only a matter of right and matter of the aspirations of the educated—important enough as these matters are—but it is far more an absolute necessity as the only remedy for the great inevitable economic evil which Sir John Shore pointed out a hundred and twenty years ago, and which is the fundamental cause of the present drain and poverty. The remedy is absolutely necessary for the material, moral, intellectual, political, social, industrial and every possible progress and welfare of the people of India.

(2) As in the United Kingdom and the Colonies all taxation and legislation and the power of spending the taxes are in the hand of the representatives of the people of those countries, so should also be the rights of the people of India.

(3) All financial relations between England and India must be just and on a footing of equality i.e. whatever money India may find towards expenditure in any department— Civil or Military or Naval—to the extent of that share should Indians share in all the benefits of that expenditure in salaries, pension, emoluments, materials, etc., as a partner in the Empire, as she is always declared to be. We do not ask favours. We want only justice. Instead of going into any further divisions or details of our rights as British citizens, the whole matter can be comprised in one word—‘*Self-Government or Swaraj like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies.*’

Mr. Morley says very truly and emphatically (Banquet, King's Hall, Holborn, 4<sup>th</sup> June 1901) :

“But this I do say that political principles are, after all the root of our national greatness, strength and hope.”

So, for India also, there can be no national greatness, strength and hope except by the right political principles of self-government.

Now the next important question is, whether it is practicable to grant these rights of self-government at once or when and in what way? Nobody would, I think, say that the whole present machinery can be suddenly broken up at once and the rights which I have defined of self-government can be at once introduced.

### **Right No. 1 : Employment in the Public Services**

The right of placing all administration in every department in the hands of the people of India, has the time arrived to do anything loyally, faithfully and systematically as a beginning at once, so that it may automatically develop into the full realisation of right of self-government?

I say, .... yes. Not only has the time fully arrived, but had arrived long past, to make this beginning. The statesmen of nearly three quarters of a century ago not only considered the point of making a beginning, not merely made a pious declaration, but they actually passed an Act of Parliament for the purpose. Had that Act been honourably and faithfully fulfilled by the Government from that time to this, both England and India would have been in the position, not of bewailing the present poverty, wretchedness and dissatisfaction of the Indian people, but of rejoicing in the prosperity of India and of still greater prosperity of England herself.

In the thirties of the last century, England achieved the highest glory of civilization by its emancipations of the body and soul of man—by abolishing slavery and by freedom of conscience to enjoy all the rights of British citizenship. During these glorious days of English history, the statesmen of the time did not forget their duty to the people of India. They specially and openly considered the question of self-government of India, not only in connection with Britain, but even with the result of entire independence from Britain. When the Act of 1833 was passed Macaulay made that memorable speech about the duty of Britain towards India of which Britain shall for ever be proud. I cannot quote that whole speech here. Every word of it is worth study and consideration from the statesmen of the day. I shall give only a few extracts. He first said : ‘I must say that, to the last day of my life, I shall be proud of having

been one of those who assisted in the framing of the Bill which contains that Clause'.....  
'It would be on the most selfish view of the case far better for us that the people of India were well-governed and independent of us than ill-governed and subject to us.'..... 'We shall never consent to administer the pousa (a preparation of opium) to a whole community—to stupify and paralyse a great people, whom God has committed to our charge, for the wretched purpose of rendering them more amenable to our control.' We are free, we are civilized, to little purpose, if we grudge to any portion of the human race an equal measure of freedom and civilization'.... 'I have no fears. The path of duty is plain before us and it is also the path of wisdom, of national prosperity, of national honour.' .... 'To have found a great people sunk in the lowest depths of slavery and superstition, to have so ruled them as to have made them desirous and capable of all the privileges of citizens, would, indeed, be a title to glory all our own.'

Such was the glorious spirit in, and auspices under, which was enacted in Macaulay's words 'that wise, that benevolent, that noble clause :'

'That no native of the said territory, nor any natural born subjects of His Majesty resident therein, shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent colour or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the said Company.'

I would not repeat here what I have often stated about this clause. Sufficient to say that simultaneous examinations in India have been declared authoritatively as the only honourable fulfilment of the clause.

Here is, then, the beginning that can be made at once not as a new thing but as one fully considered and settled by Act of Parliament 73 years ago. The power is ready in the hands of the Secretary of State for India to be put into execution at once without the necessity of any reference to Parliament or any authority.

And, in connection with this step, I would earnestly urge upon the Secretary of State to retrace the pernicious step which has lately been taken in India of abolishing competition for the services to which admission is made directly in India. In England competition is the basis of all first admissions in all the services and the same must be the basis in India as the fairest and most in accordance with justice.

This beginning will be the key, the most effective remedy for the chief economic and basic evil of the present system.

Mr. Morley has truly said : ‘But if you muddle wrongly with economic things, gentlemen, be very sure you are then going to the very life, to the heart, to the core of our national existence. A three-fold wrong is inflicted upon us, *i.e.* of depriving us of wealth, work and wisdom, of every thing, in short, worth living for. And this beginning will begin to strike at the root of the muddle. The reform of the alteration of the services from European to Indian is the keynote of the whole.

On the score of efficiency also foreign service can never be efficient or sufficient. Sir William Hunter has said : ‘If we are to govern the Indian people efficiently and cheaply we must govern by means of themselves.’ The Duke of Devonshire, as, Indian Secretary, has said (23rd August 1883) : ‘There can in my opinion be very little doubt that India is insufficiently governed.’ In the very nature of things it cannot be otherwise.

After the simultaneous examinations are carried on for some years, it will be time to transfer the examinations altogether to India to complete the accomplishment of the rights. (No. 1) of self-government without any disturbance in the smooth working of the administration.

Co-ordinating with this important beginning for right (No. 1) it is urgent to expedite this object that education must be most vigorously disseminated among the people—free and compulsory primary education, and free higher education of every kind. The Indian people will hail with the greatest satisfaction any amount of expenditure for the purpose of education. It was free education that I had at the expense of the people that made me and others of my fellow-students and subsequent fellow-workers to give their best to the service of the people for the promotion of their welfare.

*Education on the one hand, and actual training in administration on the other hand, will bring the accomplishment of self-government far more speedily than many imagine.*

Heavy expenditure should be no excuse. In fact if financial justice, to which I shall refer hereafter, is done in the relations between England and India, there will be ample provision—even from the poor revenues of India and—with every addition of Indians in place of Europeans, the resources of India for all necessary purposes will go on increasing.

## **Right No. 2 : Representation**

In England itself Parliamentary Government existed for some hundreds of years before even the rich and middle classes and the mass of the people had any voice or vote in it.

Macaulay pointed out in 1831 that the people living in the magnificent palaces surrounding Regent's Park and in other such places were unrepresented. It is only so late as 1832 that the middle classes obtained their vote, and it is only so late as 1885 that most of the mass of the people obtained their franchise. Women have no vote. Adult franchise is yet in struggle.

It is no use telling us, therefore, that a good beginning cannot be made now in India for what Mr. Gladstone called 'living representation'. The only thing needed is the willingness of the Government. The statesmen at the helm of the present government are quite competent and able to make a good beginning—such a systematic beginning as that it may naturally in no long time develop itself into full legislatures of self-government like those of the self-governing colonies. I need not go into any details here of the scope and possibilities of representation. The educated and thinking classes in India who have attended English schools and colleges are not the only people to be reckoned with. There is a large body who now are informed of the event of the world and of all British institutions by the vernacular press and literature in their own language.

The peasants of Russia are fit for and obtained the Duma from the greatest autocrat in the world, and the leading statesman, the Prime Minister of the free British Empire, proclaimed to the world 'the Duma is dead, long live the Duma! Surely the fellow-citizens of that statesman and the free citizens of that Empire by birthright and pledged rights are far more entitled to self-government, a constitutional representative system, than the peasants of Russia, do not despair. It is futile to tell me that we must wait till all the people are ready. The British people did not so wait for their Parliament. We are not allowed to be fit for 150 years. We can never be fit till we actually undertake the work and the responsibility. While China in the East and Persia in the West of Asia are awakening and Japan has already awakened and Russia is struggling for emancipation—and all of them despotisms—can the free citizens of the British Indian Empire continue to remain subject to despotism—the people who were among the first civilizers of the world? Modern world owes no little gratitude to the early civilizers of the human race. Are the descendants of the earliest civilizers to remain, in the present times of spreading emancipation, under the barbarous system of despotism, unworthy of British instincts, principles and civilization?

### **Right No. 3 : Just Financial Relations**

This right requires no delay or training. If the British Government wills to do what is just and right, this justice towards self-government can be done at once.

First of all take the European Army expenditure. The Government of India in its despatch of 25th March 1890 says :

‘Millions of money have been spent on increasing the Army in India, on armaments, and on fortifications to provide for the security of India, not against domestic enemies or to prevent the invasions of the warlike peoples of adjoining countries, but, to maintain the supremacy of British Power in the East.’

Again the Government of India says :

‘It would be much nearer the truth to affirm that the Imperial Government keeps in India and quarters upon the revenues of that country as large a portion of its army as it thinks can possibly be required to maintain its dominion there, that it habitually treats that portion of its army as a reserve force available for imperial purposes; that it has uniformly detached European regiments from the garrison of India to take part in imperial wars whenever it has been found necessary or convenient to do so; and more than this that it has drawn not less freely upon the native army of India towards the maintenance of which it contributes nothing to aid it in contests outside of India with which the Indian Government has had little or no concern.’

Such is the testimony of the Government of India that the European Army is for Imperial purposes.

Now I give the review taken in the India Office itself.

Sir James Peile was a member of the Council of the Secretary of State for India, and represented the Indian Secretary on the Royal Commission (Welby's) on Indian expenditure. Sir James Peile, in a motion, after pointing out that the military policy which regulated Indian Military expenditure was not exclusively for India, urged that :

‘It is worthy of consideration how far it is equitable to charge on a dependency the whole military cost of that policy, when that dependency happens to be the only part of the Empire which has a land frontier adjacent to the territory of a great European power.’

Here then these extracts of the Government of India and the India Office show that the European Army expenditure is entirely for British imperial purpose and yet with flagrant injustice the burden is thrown by the Treasury upon the helpless Indian people.

In the some way all the Government expenditure in England which entirely goes to the benefit of the people in England, and which is for British purposes, is imposed on the Indian people while the Colonies do not pay any portion for similar expenditure in England. This expenditure should in common justice not be imposed on India. It is unjust. Here then, if we are relieved of burdens which ought not in common justice to be imposed upon us, our revenues, poor as they are at present, will supply ample means for education and many other reforms and improvements which are needed by us. This question is simply a matter of financial justice. I have put it on a clear just principle and on that principle India can be quite ready to find the money and its own men for all her own needs—military, naval, civil or any other. For imperial expenditure we must have our share in the services in proportion to our contribution.

These just financial relations can be established at once. They require no delay or preparation. It only needs the determination and will of the British Government to do justice. Lastly as to self-government. If the British people and statesmen make up their mind to do their duty towards the Indian people they have every ability and statesmanship to devise means to accord self-government within no distant time. If there is the will and the conscience there is the way.

Now I come to the most crucial question—particularly crucial to myself personally.

I have been for some time past repeatedly asked whether I really have, after more than half a century of my own personal experience, such confidence in the honour and good faith of British statesmen and government as to expect that our just claim to self-government as British citizens will be willingly and gracefully accorded to us with every honest effort in their power, leaving alone and forgetting the past.

Ladies and gentlemen, I shall give you a full and free answer.

In 1853, when I made my first little speech at the inauguration of the Bombay Association, in perfect innocence of heart influenced by my English education into great admiration for the character, instincts and struggles for liberty of the British people, I expressed my faith and confidence in the British Rulers in a short speech from which I give a short extract :

‘When we see that our Government is often ready to assist us in everything calculated to benefit us, we had better than merely complain and grumble, point out in becoming manner what our real wants are.’ And I also said :



‘If an association like this be always in readiness to ascertain by strict enquiries the probable good or bad effects of any proposed measure and, whenever necessary, to memorialise Government on behalf of the people with respect to them, our kind Government will not refuse to listen to such memorials.’

Such was my faith. It was this faith of the educated of the time that made Sir Bartle Frere make the remarks which Mr. Fawcett quoted, viz., that he had been much struck with the fact that the ablest exponent of English policy and our best coadjutors in adapting that policy to the wants of the various nations occupying Indian soil were to be found among the Natives who had received a highclass English education. And now, owing to the non-fulfilment of solemn pledges, what a change has taken place in the mind of the educated!

*Since my early efforts, I must say that I have felt so many disappointments as would be sufficient to break any heart and lead one to despair and even, I am afraid, to rebel.*

My disappointments have not been of the ordinary kind but far worse and keener. Ordinarily a person fights—and if he fails he is disappointed. But I fought and won on several occasions, but the executive did not let us have the fruit of those victories—disappointments quite enough, as I have said, to break one’s heart. For instance, the ‘statutory’ Civil Service, Simultaneous Examinations. Lord Lawrence Scholarships Royal Commission, etc. I am thankful that the repayment from the treasury of some unjust charges has been carried out, though the Indian Secretary’s salary is not yet transferred to the Treasury as it was hoped.

But I have not despaired. Not only that I have not despaired, but at this moment, you may think it strange, I stand before you with hopefulness. I have not despaired for one reason—and I am hopeful for another reason.

I have not despaired under the influence of the good English word which has been the rule of my life. That word is ‘Persevere.’ In any moment, great or small, you must persevere to the end. You cannot stop at any stage, disappointments notwithstanding, or you lose all you have gained and find it far more difficult afterwards even to begin again. As we proceed we may adopt such means as may be suitable at every stage, but persevere we must to the end. If our cause is good and just, as it is, we are sure to triumph in the end. So I have not despaired.

Not the reason of my hopefulness which I feel at this moment after all my disappointments. and this also under the influence of one word ‘Revival’—the present ‘revival’ of the true old spirit and instinct of liberty and free British institutions in the hearts of the leading statesmen of the day. I shall now place before you the declarations of some of the

leading statesmen of the day and then you will judge that my faith and hope are well-founded, whether they will be justified or not by future events.

Here, I give a few of those declaration—but I give an appendix A of some of these declarations out of many

### **Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman**

‘We believe in self-govrnment. We treat it not as an odious necessity, not as a foolish theory to which unfortunately the British Empire is committed. We treat it as a blessing and a healing, a sobering and a strengthening influence.’ (Bradford, 15-5-1901).

‘I remain as firm a believer as ever I was, in the virtue of self-government’. (Ayr, 29-10-1902)

‘But here is another—Self-Government and popular controller and we believe in that principle.’

### **Mr. John Morley**

‘Yes, gentlemen, the sacred word ‘free’ which represented, as Englishmen have always thought until today the nobblest aspirations that can animate the breast of man.’ (Palmerston Club, 9-6-1900)

‘In his view the root of good government was not to be found in bureaucracy or pedantocracy. They must seek to rouse up the free and spontaneous elements lying deep in the hearts and minds of the people of the country.’ (Arbroath, 23-10-1903).

The study of the present revival of the spirit, instincts and traditions of Liberty and Liberalism among the Liberal statesmen of the day has produced in my heart full expectation that the end of the evil system, and the dawn of a Righteous and Liberal policy of freedom and self-government, are at hand for India. I trust that I am justified in my expectations and hopefulness.

*Ladies and gentlemen, we have all the powerful moral forces of justice, righteousness and honour of Britain, but our Birthright and pledged right and the absolute necessity and humanity of ending quickly all the sufferings of the masses of the people, from poverty, famine, plagues, destitution and degradaton etc. On our side if we use those moral forces, which are very effective on a people like the British people, we must, we are bound to win.*

What is wanted for us is to learn the lesson from Englishmen themselves to agitate most largely and most perseveringly, by petitions, demonstration and meeting, all quite peacefully but enthusiastically conducted. Let us not throw away our rights and moral forces which are so over-whelming on our side. I shall say something again on this subject.

With such very hopeful and promising views and declarations some of the leaders of the present Government, we have also coming to our side more and more Parliament, press and platform. We have some 200 members in the Indian Parliamentary Committee. The Labour Members, Irish the Nationalist Members, and the Radicals are sympathetic with us. We have several Liberal papers such as 'The Daily News,' 'The tribune,' 'The Daily Chronicle,' 'Justice,' 'Investors,' 'Review' 'Reynolds,' 'New Age,' and several others taking a juster view of India's rights and needs. We must make 'India' a powerful organ. We have all sections of the Labour and Democratic Party, the British Nationalist Party, the Radicals and Liberals generally taking larger interest in India matters. The large section of the British people to whom conscience and righteousness are above every possible worldly thing, are also awakening to a sense of their duty to the vast population of India in their dire distress and poverty, with all its dreadful consequences. When I was in Parliament and the only Indian, I had the support of the Irish, Radical and Labour Members. I never felt helpless and alone, and I succeeded in several of my efforts. We must have many Indian Members in Parliament till we get self-government. Under such favourable circumstances let us not fail to make the most of our opportunity for our political emancipation. Let us, it is true, at the same time do, what is in our power, to advance our Social and Industrial progress. But for our political emancipation, it will be a great folly and misfortune for us to miss this good fortune when it has at last come to us, though I fully admit we had enough of disappointments to make us lose heart and confidence.

I base my hope upon the 'revival' of the old British love of liberty and self-government, of honour for pledges, of our rights of fellow British citizenship. Within the short life, that may yet be vouchsafed to me, I hope to see a loyal, honest, honourable and conscientious adoption of the policy for self-government for India and a beginning made at once towards that end.

I have now expressed to you my hopes and reasons for such hopes for ourselves. But as the Moral Law, the greatest force of the universe, has it, in our good, will be England's own greatest good. Bright has wisely said : 'The good of England must come through the channels of the good of India .....In order that England may become rich, India itself must become rich.' Mr. Morley has rightly said : 'No gentlemen, every single right thing that is done by the Legislature, however moderate be its area, every single right thing is sure to lead to the doing of a great number of unforeseen right things.' (Dundee, 9-12-1889). If India is allowed

to be prosperous by self-government, as the Colonies have become prosperous by self-government, what a vista of a glory and benefits open up for the citizens of the British Empire, and for mankind, as an example and proof of the supremacy of the moral law and true civilization.

While we put the duty of leading us on to self-government in the heads of the present British statesmen, we have also the duty upon ourselves to do all we can to support those statesmen by, on the one hand, preparing our Indian people for the right understanding, exercise and enjoyment of self-government and on the other hand, of convincing the British people that we justly claim and must have all British Rights. I put before the Congress my suggestions for their consideration. To put the matter in right form, we should send our 'Petition of Rights' to His Majesty the King-Emperor, to the House of Commons and to the House of Lords. By the British Bill of Rights of 1689—by the 5th Clause—the subjects have the right to present petitions to the Sovereign.

The next thing I suggest for your consideration, is that the well-to-do Indians should raise a large fund of patriotism. With this fund we should organise a body of able men and good speakers, to go to all the nooks and corners of India and inform the people in their own languages of our British rights and how to exercise and enjoy them. Also to send to England another body of able speakers, and to provide means to go throughout the country and by large meetings to convince the British people that we justly claim and must have all British rights of self-government. By doing that I am sure that the British conscience will triumph and the British people will support the present statesmen, in their work of giving India responsible self-government in the shortest possible period. *We must have a great agitation in England, as well as here.* The struggle against the Corn Laws cost, I think, two millions, and there was a great agitation. Let us learn to help ourselves in the same way.

I have said at the beginning that the duties of this Congress are two fold. And of the two, the claim to a change of present policy leading of self-government is the chief and most important work.

The second part of the work is the vigilant watch over the inevitable and unnecessary defects of the present machinery of the administration as it exists and as long as it exists. And as the fundamental principles of the present administration are unsound there are inherent evils, and others are naturally ever arising from them. These the Congress has to watch and adopt means to remedy them, as far as possible, till self-government is attained, though it is only when self-government is attained that India will be free from its present evils and consequent sufferings. This part of the work, the Congress has been doing very largely during all the past twenty-one years and the Subjects-committee will place before you various

resolutions necessary for the improvement of the existing administration, as far as such unnatural and uneconomic administration can be improved. I would not have troubled you more but that I should like to say a few words upon some topics connected with the second part of the work of the Congress—Bengal Partition and Swadeshi movement.

In the Bengal Partition, the Bengalees have a just and great grievance. It is a bad blunder for England. I do not despair but that this blunder, I hope, may yet be rectified. This subject is being so well threshed out by the Bengalees themselves that I need not say anything more about it. But in connection with it we hear a great deal about agitators and agitation. Agitation is the life and soul of the whole political, social and industrial history of England. It is by agitation and English have accomplished their most glorious achievements, their prosperity, their liberties and, in short, their first place among the nations of the world.

The whole life of England, every day, is all agitation. You do not open your paper in the morning but read from beginning to end it is all agitation—Congresses and Conferences—Meetings and Resolutions—without end, for a thousand and one movements local and national. From the Prime Minister to the humblest politician, his occupation is agitation for everything he wants to accomplish. The whole Parliament, Press and Platform is simply all agitation. *Agitation is the civilized, peaceful weapon of moral force, and infinitely preferable to brute physical force when possible.* The subject is very tempting. But I shall not say more than that the Indian journalists are mere Matriculators while the Anglo-Indian journalists are Masters of Arts in the University of British Agitators. The former are only the pupils of the latter, and the Anglo-Indian journalists ought to feel proud that their pupils are doing credit to them. Perhaps a few words from an English statesman will be more sedative and satisfactory.

Macaulay has said in one of his speeches :

‘I hold that we have owed to agitation a long series of beneficent reforms which could have been effected in no other way..... the truth is that agitation is inseparable from popular government..... Would the slave-trade ever have been abolished without agitation? Would slavery ever have been abolished without agitation?’

For every movement in England—hundreds, local and national—the chief weapons are agitation by meetings, demonstrations and petitions to Parliament. These petitions are not any begging for any favours any more than that the conventional ‘Your obedient servant’ in letters makes a man an obedient servant. It is the conventional way of approaching higher authorities. The petitions are claims for rights or for justice or for reforms, — to influence and put pressure on Parliament by showing how the public regard any particular matter. The fact that we have more or less failed hitherto, is not because we have petitioned too much but that

we have petitioned too little. One of the factors that carries weight in Parliament is the evidence that the people interested in any question are really in earnest. Only the other day Mr. Asquith urged as one of his reasons against women's franchise, that he did not see sufficient evidence to show that the majority of the women themselves were earnest to acquire the franchise. We have not petitioned or agitated enough at all in our demands. In every important matter we must petition Parliament with hundreds and thousands of petitions—with hundreds of thousand of signatures from all parts of India. Taking one present instance in England, the Church party has held till the beginning of October last 1,400 meetings known, and many more unknown, against the Education Bill and petitioned with three-quarters of a million signatures and many demonstrations. Since then they have been possibly more and more active. *Agitate, agitate over the whole length and breadth of India in every nook and corner—peacefully of course*—if we really mean to get justice from John Bull. Satisfy him that we are in earnest. The Bengalees, I am glad, have learnt the lesson and have led the march. All India must learn the lesson—of sacrifice of money and of earnest personal work.

Agitate; agitate means inform. Inform, inform, the Indian people what their rights are and why and how they should obtain them, and inform the British people of the rights of the Indian people and why they should grant them. If we do not speak they say we are satisfied. If we speak, we become agitators! The Indian people are properly asked to act constitutionally while the government remains unconstitutional and despotic.

Next about the 'settled fact.' Every Bill defeated in Parliament is a 'settled fact.' Is it not? And the next year it makes its appearance again. The Education Act of 1902 was a settled fact. An Act of Parliament, was it not? And now within a short time what a turmoil is it in? And what an agitation and excitement has been going on about it and is still in prospect! It may lead to a clash between the two Houses of Parliament. There is nothing as an eternal 'settled fact.' Times change, circumstances are misunderstood or changed, better light and understanding or new forces come into play, and what is settled today may become obsolete tomorrow.

The organizations which I suggest, and which I may call a band of political missionaries in all the Provinces, will serve many purposes at once—to inform the people of their rights as British citizens, to prepare them to claim those rights by petitions and when the rights are obtained, as sooner or later they must be obtained, to exercise and enjoy them.

'Swadeshi' is not a thing of today. It has existed in Bombay as far as I know for many years past. I am a free-trader, I am a member, and in the Executive Committee of the Cobden Club for 20 years, and yet I say that Swadeshi is a forced necessity for India in its unnatural economic muddle. As long as the economic condition remains unnatural and

impoverishing by the necessity of supplying every year some Rs. 20,00,00,000 for the salary, pension, & c, of the children of a foreign country at the expense and impoverishment of the children of India, to talk of applying economic laws to the condition of India is adding insult to injury. I have said so much about this over and over again that I would not say more about it here—I refer to my book. I ask any Englishmen whether Englishmen would submit to this unnatural economic muddle of India for a single day in England, leave alone 150 years? No, never. No, ladies and gentlemen, England will never submit to it. It is, what I have already quoted in Mr. Morley's words, it is the meddling wrongly with economic thing that is going to the very life, to the very heart, to the very core of our national existence.'

Among the duties which I have said are incumbent upon the Indians, there is one, which, though I mention last, is not the least. I mean a thorough political union among the Indian people of all creeds and classes. I make an appeal to all—call it mendicant if you like—*I am not ashamed of being a mendicant in any good cause and under necessity for any good cause*. I appeal to the Indian people for this, because it is in their own hands only just as I appeal to the British people for things that are entirely in their hands. In this appeal for a thorough union for political purposes among all the people I make a particular one to my friends, the Mohammedans, They are a manly people. They have been rulers both in and out of India. They are rulers this day both in and out of India. They have the highest Indian Prince ruling over the largest Native State, viz. H. H. the Naizam. Among other Mohammedan Princes they have Junagad, Radhanpur, Bhopal and others.

Notwithstanding their backward education, they have the pride of having had in all India the first Indian Barrister in Mr. Badruddin Tyabji and first Solicitor in Mr. Kamrudin Tyabji, two Mohammedan brothers. What a large share of Bombay commerce is in the hands of Mohammedans is well known. Their chief purpose and effort at present must be to spread education among themselves. In this matter among their best friends have been Sir Syed Ahmed and Justice Tyabji in doing their utmost to promote education among them. Once they bring themselves in education in a line with the Hindus, they have nothing to fear. They have in them the capacity, energy and intellect, to hold their own and to get their due share in all the walks of life—of which the State Services are but a small part. State services are not everything.

Whatever voice I can have I wish Government would give every possible help to promote education among the Mohammedans. Once self-government is attained then will there be prosperity enough for all, but not till then. The thorough union, therefore, of all the people for their emancipation is an absolute necessity.

All the people in their political position are in one boat. They must sink or swim together. Without this union all efforts will be vain. There is the common saying but also the best commonsense “United we stand divided we fall.”

There is one other circumstance, I may mention here. If I am right, I am under the impression that the bulk of the Bengalee Mohammedans were Hindus by race and blood only a few generations ago. They have the tie of blood and kinship. Even now a great mass of the Bengalee Mohammedans are not to be easily distinguished from their Hindu brothers. In many places they join together in their social joys and sorrows. They cannot divest themselves from the natural affinity of common blood. On the Bombay side, the Hindus and Mohammedans of Gujarat all speak the same language, Gujarati, and are of the same stock, and all the Hindu and Mohammedans of Maharrastic Annan—all speak the same language, Marathi and are of the same stock—and so I think it is all over India, excepting in North India where there are the descendants of the original Mohammedan invaders, but they are now also the people of India.

Sir Syed Ahmed was a nationalist to the backbone, I will mention an incident that happened to myself with him. On his first visit to England, we happened to meet together in the house of Sir C. Wingfield. He and his friends were waiting and I was shown into the same room. One of his friends recognising me introduced me to him. As soon as he heard my name himself he embraced me in strong embrace and expressed himself very much pleased. In various ways, I knew that his heart was in the welfare of all India as one nation. He was a large and liberal-minded patriot. When I read his life some time ago I was inspired with respect and admiration for him. As I cannot find my copy of his life I take the opportunity of repeating some of his utterances which Sir Henry Cotton has given in India of 12th October last.

‘Mohammedans and Hindus were’, he said, ‘the two eyes of India’. ‘Injure the one and you injure the other’. We should try to become one in heart and soul and act in unison; if united, we can support each other, if not, the effect of one against the other will tend to the destruction and downfall of both.’

He appreciated when he found worth and freely expressed it. He said : ‘I assure you that the Bengalees are the only people in our country whom we can properly be proud of, and it is only due to them that knowledge, liberty and patriotism have progressed in our country. I can truly say that they are really the head and crown of all the communities of Hindustan. In the word ‘nation’ I include both Hindus and Mohammedans, because that is the only meaning which I can attach to it.



Such was the wise and patriotic counsel of that great man and our Mohammedan friends will, I hope, take it to heart. I repeat once more that our emancipation depends upon the thorough union of all the people of India without any obstruction.

I have often read about the question of a constitution for the Congress. I think the gentlemen who raise this question would be the proper persons to prepare one like a Bill in the House of Commons in all its details. The Congress then can consider it and deal with it as the majority may decide.

Let every one of us do the best he can, do all in harmony for the common object of self-government.

*Lastly, the question of social reforms and industrial progress—each of them needs its own earnest body of workers. Each requires for it separate devoted attention. All the three great purposes—Political, Social and Industrial—must be set working side by side. The progress in each will have its influence on the others. But, as Mr. Morley truly and with deep insight says : ‘political principles are, after all, the root of our national greatness, strength and hope’, and his other important utterance which I repeat with this one sums up the whole position of the Indian problem. He Says : ‘The meddling wrongly with economic things, that is going to the very life, to the very heart, to the very core of our national existence.’*

This meddling wrongly with economic things is the whole evil from which India suffers—and the only remedy for it is— ‘political principles are, after all, the root of our national greatness, strength and hope’. And these political principles are summed up in self-government. Self-government is the only and chief remedy. In self-government lies our hope, strength and greatness.

I recommend to your serious notice the treatment of British Indians in South Africa.

I give a small Appendix ‘B’ of some facts and figures which I need not read now.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, I have finished my task. I do not know what good fortune may be in store for me during the short period that may be left to me, and if I can leave a word of affection and devotion for my country and countrymen, I say : be united, persevere, and achieve self-government so that the millions now perishing in poverty, famine and plague, and the score of million that are starving on scanty subsistence may be saved and India may once more occupy her proud position of yore among the greatest and civilized nations of the world. [\[Emphasis at various places added by the editor.\]](#)

This session is an important milestone in the history of the Congress from the point of view of some of the resolutions passed at this session. Altogether 17 resolutions were passed, out of which resolution numbers 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 are very important and they are reproduced below :—

#### “VI. THE PARTITION OF BENGAL

Resolved that this Congress again records its emphatic protest against the Partition of Bengal, and regrets that the present Government, while admitting that there were errors in the original plan, and that it went wholly and decisively against the wishes of the majority of the people of Bengal, is disposed to look upon it as a settled fact, in spite of the earnest and persistent protest of the people, and their manifest disinclination to accept it as final :

That this Congress, composed of representative from all the Provinces of this country, desires earnestly to impress upon the British Parliament and the present Liberal Government that it will be not only just, but expedient, to reverse or modify the Partition in such a manner as to keep the entire Bengali-speaking community under one undivided administration, and thus restore contentment to so important a Province as Bengal.”

#### “VII. BOYCOTT MOVEMENT

Resolved that having regard to the fact that the people of this country have little or no voice in its administration, and that their representations to the Government do not receive due consideration, this Congress is of opinion that the Boycott movement inaugurated in Bengal, by way of protest against the partition of that province was, and is, legitimate.”

#### “VIII. SWADESH MOVEMENT

Resolved that this Congress accords its most cordial support to the Swadeshi movement, and calls upon the people of the country to labour for its success, by making earnest and sustained efforts to promote the growth of indigenous industries and to stimulate the production of indigenous articles by giving them preference over imported commodities even at some sacrifice.”

#### IX. SELF-GOVERNMENT

Resolved that this Congress is of opinion that the system of Government obtaining in the self-governing British Colonies should be extended to India, and that, as steps leading to it, it urges that the following reforms should be immediately carried out :

(a) All examinations held in England only should be simultaneously held in India and in England, and that all higher appointments which are made in India should be by competitive examination only :

(b) The adequate representation of Indians in the Council of the Secretary of State and the Executive Councils of the Viceroy, and of the Governors of Madras and Bombay;

(c) The expansion of the Supreme and Provincial Legislative Councils, allowing a larger and truly effective representation of the people and a larger control over the financial and executive administration of the country :

(d) The powers of local and municipal bodies should be extended and official control over them should not be more than what is exercised by the Local Government Board in England over similar bodies.”

#### “X. EDUCATION

Resolved that this Congress repeats its protest against the policy of the Government in respect of higher and secondary education, as being one of officialising the governing bodies of the Universities, and restricting the spread of education. The Congress is of opinion that the Government should take immediate steps for (1) making Primary Education free and gradually compulsory all over the country; (2) assigning larger sums of money to Secondary Education (special encouragement being given, where necessary, to educationally backward classes); (3) making the existing Universities more free from official control, and providing them with sufficient means to take up the work of teaching; and (4) making adequate provisions for Technical Education in the different Provinces, having regard to local requirements.”

#### “XI. NATIONAL EDUCATION

Resolved that in the opinion of this Congress the time has arrived for the people all over the country earnestly to take up the question of National Education for both boys and girls and organise a system of Education Literary Scientific and Technical—suited to the requirements of the country, on national lines and under national control.”

## CHAPTER IV

### SPEECH OF BADRUDDIN TYABJI

The Third Session of the Indian National Congress was held at Madras in 1887. Mr. Badruddin Tyabji presided over this Session. Following are some of the important passages from his Presidential speech :

“Gentlemen, from the proceedings of the past two Congress I think we are fairly entitled, I hope that the proceedings of this present Congress will not only be marked by those virtues, but by that moderation and by that sobriety of judgment which is the off-spring of political wisdom and political experience. Gentlemen, all the friends and well-wishers of India, and all those who take an interest in watching over the progress and prosperity of our people, have every reason to rejoice at the increasing success of each succeeding Congress. At the first Congress in Bombay, in 1885, we had less than 100 representatives from the different parts of India, in the second Congress, at Calcutta in 1886, we had as many as 440 representatives, while at this Congress, I believe, we have over 600 delegates representing all the different parts and all the different communities of this great empire. I think, then, gentlemen, that we are fairly entitled to say that this is a truly representative national gathering. Indeed, if that tentative form of representative institutions which has so often been asked for from Government were granted to us. I have not the smallest doubt but that many of the gentlemen I now have the honour of addressing, would be elected by their respective constituencies to represent their interests.”

#### **Congress and Musalmans**

Gentlemen, it has been urged in derogation of our character, as a representative national gathering, that one great and important community—the Musalman community—has kept aloof from the proceedings of two last Congresses. Now, gentlemen, in the first place, this is only partially true, and applies only to one particular part of India, and is moreover due to certain special, local, and temporary causes, and in the second place, no such reproach can, I think, with any show of justice, be urged against this present Congress and Gentlemen, I must honestly confess to you that one great motive which has induced me, in the present state of my health, to undertake the grave responsibilities of presiding over your deliberations, has been an earnest desire, on my part, to prove, as far as in my power lies, that I, at least, not merely in my individual capacity but as representing the Anjuman-i-Islam of Bombay do not consider that there is anything whatever in the position or the relations of the different communities of India—be they Hindus, Musalmans, Parsis or Christians—which

should induce the leaders of any one community to stand aloof from the others in their efforts to obtain those great general reforms, those great general rights, which are for the common benefit of us all and which, I feel assured, have only to be earnestly and unanimously pressed upon Government to be granted to us.

Gentlemen, it is undoubtedly true that each one of our great Indian communities has its own peculiar social, moral, educational and even political difficulties to surmount, but so far as general political questions affecting the whole of India—such as those which alone are discussed by this Congress—are concerned, I, for one, am utterly at a loss to understand why Musalmans should not work shoulder to shoulder with their fellow-countrymen of other races and creeds, for the common benefit of all. Gentlemen, this is the principle on which we, in the Bombay Presidency, have always acted, and from the number, the character, the position, and the attainments of Musalman delegates from the Bengal Presidency and from the Presidency of Madras, as well as from the North-West Provinces and the Punjab, I have not the smallest doubt that this is also the view held, with but few, though, perhaps, important, exceptions, by the leaders of the Musalman communities throughout the whole of India.

### **A Congress of Educated Natives**

Gentlemen, it has been urged as a slur upon our loyalty that this Congress is composed of what are called the educated natives of India. Now, if by this it is intended to be conveyed that we are merely a crowd of people with nothing but our education to commend us, if it is intended to be conveyed that the gentry, the nobility, and the aristocracy of the land kept aloof from us, I can only meet the assertion by the most direct and the most absolute denial. To any person who made that assertion, I should feel inclined to say : ‘Come with me into this Hall and look around you, and tell me where you could wish to see a better representation of the aristocracy, not only of birth and of wealth, but of intellect, education, and position, than you see gathered within the walls of this Hall.’ But, Gentlemen, if no such insinuation is intended to be made, I should only say that I am happy to think that this Congress does consist of the educated natives of India.

Gentlemen, I, for one, am proud to be called not only educated but a ‘native’ of this country. And, gentlemen, I should like to know, where among all the millions of Her Majesty’s subjects in India are to be found more truly loyal, nay, more devoted friends of the British Empire than among these educated natives. Gentlemen, to be a true and a sincere friend of the British Government, it is necessary that one should be in a position to appreciate the great blessings which that Government has conferred upon us, and I should like to know who is in a better position to appreciate these blessings—the ignorant peasants or the educated

natives? Who, for instances, will better appreciate the advantages of good roads, railways, telegraphs and post offices, schools, colleges and universities, hospitals, good laws and impartial courts of justice? —the educated natives or the ignorant peasants of this country? Gentlemen, if there ever were to arise—which God forbid—any great struggle between Russia and Great Britain for supremacy in this country—who is more likely to judge better of the relative merits of the two empires? Again I say, gentlemen, that in these matters it is the educated natives that are best qualified to judge, because it is we, who know and are best able to appreciate, for instance, the blessings of the right of public meeting, the liberty of action and of speech, and high education which we enjoy under Great Britain, whereas probably, under Russia, we should have nothing but a haughty and despotic Government whose chief glory would consist in vast military organization, aggression upon our neighbours, and great military exploits.

### **Are the Educated Natives Disloyal?**

No, gentlemen, let our opponents say what they please, we, the the educated natives, by the mere force of our education, must be the best appreciators of the blessings of a civilized and enlightened Government and, therefore, in our own interests, the best and staunchest supporters of the British Government in India. But, gentlemen, do those who charge us with disloyalty stop for a moment to consider the full meaning and effect of their argument,—do they realise the full import and significance of the assertion they make? Do they understand that, in charging us with disloyalty, they are, in reality, condemning and denouncing the very Government which it is their intention to support. For, Gentlemen, when they say that the educated natives of India are disloyal, what docs it mean? It means this : that in the opinion of the educated natives,—that is to say, of all the men of light and leading, all those who have received a sound, liberal and enlightened education, all those who are acquainted with the history of their own country and with the nature of the present and past Government , that in the opinion of all these—the English Government is so bad that it has deserved to forfeit the confidence and the loyalty of the thinking part of the population. Now, gentlemen, is it conceivable that a more frightful and unjust condemnation of the British Government can be pronounced than is implied in this charge of disloyalty against the educated natives of India? Gentlemen, if this charge were brought by some bitter enemies of Great Britain, if it were brought by the Ruasians, for example, I could understand it. But it is almost beyond my comprehension that it should come, not from enemies, but from the supposed friends of the British Government, not from the Russians, but from Englishmen who presumably want, not to destroy, but to support their Government ! I say it surpasses my comprehension. Gentlemen, just consider for a moment the effect of this reckless allegation upon the uneducated millions of the inhabitants of this country, upon the hordes of the Russians in the North, and upon the enlightened nations of Europe! I say, therefore, that the

conduct of those who thus recklessly charge us with disloyalty resembles the conduct of the foolish woodman who was lopping off the very branch of the tree upon which he was standing, unconscious that the destruction of the branch meant the destruction of himself.

Happily, however, gentlemen, this allegation is as absurd as it is unfounded. It is as unjust to us as it is unjust to the Government it impeaches. But, though, gentlemen, I maintain that the educated natives, as a class, are loyal to the backbone, I must yet admit that some of our countrymen are not always guarded, not always cautious, in the language they employ. I must admit that some of them do sometimes afford openings for hostile criticisms, and I must say that I have myself observed in some of the Indian newspapers and in the speeches of public speakers, sentiments and expressions which are calculated to lead one to the conclusion that they have not fully realised the distinction between license and liberty; that they have not wholly grasped the lesson that freedom has its responsibilities no less than its privileges. And, therefore, gentlemen, I trust that not only during the debates of this Congress, but on all occasions, we shall ever bear in mind and ever impress upon our countrymen that, if we are to enjoy the right of public discussion, the liberty of speech, and liberty of the Press, we must so conduct ourselves as to demonstrate by our conduct, by our moderation, by the justness of our criticisms, that we fully deserve these—the greatest—blessings which an enlightened Government can confer upon its subjects.”

### **Subject Before the Congress**

Gentlemen, I do not, at present at least, propose to say anything upon the various problems that will be submitted to you for your consideration. I have no doubt that the questions will be discussed in a manner and in a spirit that will reflect credit upon us all. I will only say this : ‘Be moderate in your demands, be just in your criticism, be accurate in your facts, be logical in your conclusions, and you may rest assured that any propositions you may make to our rulers will be received with that benign consideration which is the characteristic of a strong and enlightened Government’. And now, gentlemen, I fear, I have already trespassed too long upon your time. Before I sit down, I will once more offer to you my thanks from the very bottom of my heart for the very great honour you have done me, and I pray to God that I may be enabled, in some measure at least, to deserve your approbation and justify the choice you have made and the confidence you have reposed in me. Gentlemen, I wish this Congress and all succeeding Congresses every success and every prosperity.”

## CHAPTER V

### Speech of Pherozeshah M. Mehta

The Sixth Session of the Indian National Congress was held at Calcutta in 1890. Mr. Pherozeshah M. Mehta presided over the session. Following are some of the important passages from his Presidential address :

#### Indian Political Progress

I have ventured, gentlemen, to ascribe to the, Congress the credit of making an epoch in Indian political progress. A very brief survey of the incidents of the twelve months that have elapsed since we last met will amply justify our title to that distinction. In the admirable address which was delivered by my predecessor in this chair at Allahabad, Mr. Yule pointed out that all movements of the kind in which we are concerned pass through several phases as they run their course. The first is one of ridicule. That is followed, as the movement progresses, by one of abuse, which is usually succeeded by partial concession and misapprehension of aim, accompanied by warnings against taking ‘big jumps into the unknown’. The final stage of all is a substantial adoption of the object of the movement, with some expression of surprise that it was not adopted before. Well, gentlemen, we have pretty well passed the first two stages. We have survived the ridicule, the abuse, and the misrepresentation. We have survived the charge of sedition and disloyalty. We have survived the charge of being a microscopic minority. We have also survived the charge of being guilty of the atrocious crime of being educated, and we have even managed to survive the grievous charge of being all Babus in disguise.

#### What Indian really want

The question of our loyalty is set at rest for ever. In the debate on Lord Cross’s India Reform Bill in the House of Lord, ex-Viceroy after ex-Viceroy bore emphatic testimony to the loyal and peaceful character of our aims and efforts. Within the last few days the voice of no less a personage than one of our former Secretaries of State has confirmed this testimony. Lord R. Churchill—it is to no less distinguished a public man that I refer—has publicly declared that :

“He could sincerely remark that no one will rejoice more than himself if the deliberations of the Indian National Congress shortly to be resumed were to contribute effectually to the progress and the welfare of the Indian people.”



Then, gentlemen, it is made clear that we have not learnt the lessons of history so badly as to demand the introduction of the full-blown representative institutions which, in England, have been the growth of centuries. It is made clear that we have not asked for even such a modicum as was enjoyed by the English people even before the time of Simon de Montfort, more than five centuries ago, nay, that we have not asked even for representative institutions, of a governing or ruling character at all. Indeed, so far as this historical argument is concerned, we have not been guilty of disregarding it, but we have been successful in turning the tables upon our adversaries. We have shown that it is they who defy the lessons of history and experience, when they talk of waiting to make a beginning till the masses of the people are fully equipped with all the virtues and all the qualifications which adorn the citizens of Utopia, in fact, till a millennium has set in, when we should hardly require such institutions at all. We have shown that people who indulge in such vain talk have never understood the laws of human progress which, after all, is a series of experiments, in which men and institutions react upon each other for their mutual improvement and perfection.”

### **Mohammedans and the Congress**

Then, gentlemen, our right to the designation of a national body has been vindicated. It is so admirably set forth in an article which appeared in a Conservative Review—The National—from the pen of a Conservative who, however, speaks from the fulness of intimate knowledge, that cannot resist the temptation of borrowing from it :

“The supposed rivalry”, says the writer, “between Musalmans and Hindus is a Convenient decoy to distract attention and to defer the day of reform. I do not wish to affirm that there is no antagonism between the adherents of the two faiths; but I do most positively assert that the antagonism has been grossly exaggerated. Every municipal improvement and charitable work finds members of the two faiths working together and subscribing funds to carry it out. Every political paper in the country finds supporters from believers in both creeds. Just the same is witnessed in the proceedings of the Congress. The members of the Congress met together as men, on the common basis of nationality, being citizens of one country, subjects of one power, amenable to one code of laws, taxed by one authority, influenced for weal or woe by one system of administration, urged by like impulses to secure like rights and to be relieved of like burdens. If these are not sufficient causes to weld a people together into one common alliance of nationality, it is difficult to conceive what would be sufficient. It is for the reason the organisation has been called the Indian National Congress : not because, as many besides Mr. Keane have assumed that it claims a non-existent unity of race, but because it deals with rights and interests which are national in character and matters in which all the inhabitants of the Indian peninsula are equally concerned.”

I think we may take it, gentlemen, that we have passed through the first two stages, and that the loyalty, the moderation, the propriety, and the constitutional and national character of our mission, are now established beyond a doubt. But, however arduous and however provoking some of the experiences of the trial through which we have passed, they should not leave any trace of bitterness behind. For let us not imagine that they were devoid of chastening and beneficial effects upon ourselves. Let us frankly acknowledge that they also must have had their share in contributing to add clearness to our thoughts, sobriety to our methods, and moderation to our proposals. If, I might use a proscribed, but not unscriptural, phrase, we must give even the devil his due.”

### **Congress Voice : A Cry in the Wilderness**

It has been said that our united voice is the voice only of a certain portion of the people and not of the masses; and that it is even then the voice of indifference, and not of urgency of excitement. These remarks are intended to be cast as matters of reproach against the Congress; properly understood they constitute its chief glory. If the masses were capable of giving articulate expression to definite political demands, then the time would have arrived, not for consultative Councils but for representative institutions. It is because they are still unable to do so that the function and the duty devolve upon their educated and enlightened compatriots to feel, to understand, and to interpret their grievances and requirements, and to suggest and indicate how these can best be redressed and met. History teaches us that such has been the law of widening progress in all ages and in all countries, notably in England itself. That function and that duty, which thus devolve upon us, is best discharged, not in times of alarm and uneasiness, of anger and excitement, but when the heart is loyal and clear and reason unclouded. It is, I repeat, the glory of the Congress that the educated and enlightened people of the country seek to repay the debt of gratitude, which they owe for the priceless boon of education, by pleading and pleading temperately for timely and provident statesmanship.

### **Faith in England**

I have no fears but that English statesmanship will ultimately respond to the call. I have unbounded faith in the living and fertilizing principles of English culture and English civilization. It may be that, at times, the prospect may look dark and gloomy. Anglo-Indian opposition may look fierce and uncompromising. But my faith is large, even in Anglo-Indians. As in the whole universe, so in Individuals, in communities, there is a perpetual conflict going on between the higher and lower passions and impulses of our nature. Perhaps some of you have read a little novel, called, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, the plot of which hinges on the conflict between the two sides of a man's nature, the higher and the lower, embodied each,

for the time being, in a separate and distinct individuality. If the lower tendencies are sometimes paramount in the Hydes of Anglo-Indian society, if, as our last President, Sir W. Wedderburn said, the interests of the services are antagonistic to and prevail over the interests of the Indian people, it is still the oscillation of the struggle; it is still only one side of the shield. They cannot permanently divest themselves of the higher and nobler nature, which, in the end, must prevail, and which has prevailed in so many honourable, distinguished and illustrious instances. They are after all a part and parcel of the great English nation, bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh, and they must even work along the main lines of that noble policy which Great Britain has deliberately adopted for the government of this country. When, inscrutable dispensation of Providence, India was assigned to the care of England, one can almost imagine that the choice was offered to her as to Israel of old :

“Behold, I have placed before you a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye will obey the commandments of the Lord your God; a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but go after other gods whom ye have not known.”

All the great forces of English life and society, moral, social, intellectual political, are if slowly, yet steadily and irresistibly declaring themselves for the choice which will make the connection of England and India a blessing to themselves and to the whole world, for countless generations. Our Congress asks but to serve as a modest handmaiden to that movement, asks but to be allowed to show the pits and the falls, asks but to be allowed to join in the blessing which England will as surely earn as there is an ‘eternal that maketh for righteousness.’

### **Sir Charles Dilke on the Congress**

I appeal to all true Englishmen—to candid friends as to generous foes—not to let this prayer go in vain. It may be that we sometimes speak in uncouth and outlandish ways; it may be that we, sometimes stray in some confusion of thought and language; still it is the prayer of rising, growing and hopeful nation. I will appeal to them to listen to the sage counsel of one of the most careful and observant of their modern politicians, who, like the prophet Balaam, called I will not say, exactly to curse us, has however, blessed us utterly. In his ‘Problems of Greater Britain’, Sir Charles Dilke thus sums up his views on the Congress :

“Argument upon the matter is to be desired, but not invective, and there is so much reason to think that the Congress movement really represents the cultivated intelligence of the country, that those who ridicule it do harm to the imperial interests of Great Britain, bitterly wounding and alienating men who are justified in what they do, who do it in reasonable and cautious form, and who ought to be conciliated by being met half-way. The official class

themselves admit that many of the natives who attack the Congress do so to ingratiate themselves with their British rulers and to push their claims for decorations. Our first duty in India is that of defending the country against anarchy and invasion, but our other greatest duty is to learn how to live with what is commonly called the Congress movement, namely, with the development of that new India which we have ourselves created. Our past work in India has been a splendid task, splendidly performed, but there is a still nobler one before us, and one larger even than that labour on the Irish problem to which our public men on both sides seem too much inclined to give their whole attention.”

So careful an estimate of the work and spirit of the Congress movement cannot but commend itself to thoughtful minds.

However, that may be, our duty lies clear before us to go on with our work firmly and fearlessly, but with moderation, and above all, with humility. If we might be permitted to adopt those noble words of Cardinal Newman, we may say :

“Lead kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,  
Lead thou me on!  
The night is dark and I am far from home,  
Lead thou me on.  
Keep thou my feet, I do not ask to see  
The distant path, one step's enough for me.”

## CHAPTER VI

### Speech of Rahimtullah M. Sayani

The Twelfth Session of the Indian National Congress was held at Calcutta in 1896. Mr. Rahimtullah M. Sayani presided over the Session. Following are some of the important passages from his speech :

#### Declarations of the Congress Leaders

The following is a brief analysis of the declarations of the Congress leaders :—

(a) To remember that we are all children of our mothercountry, India, and that as such we are bound to love and respect each other and have common fellow-feeling for each other, and that each one of us should regard as his own the interests of the rest of us.

(b) That we should endeavour to promote personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the great communities of India, to develop and consolidate sentiments of national growth and unity, to weld them together into one nationality, to effect a moral union amongst them, to remove the taunt that we are not a nation, but only a congeries of races and creeds which have no cohesion in them, and to bring about stronger and stronger friendly ties of common nationality.

(c) That we should endeavour specially to promote personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the earnest workers in the cause of India, to eradicate by direct friendly personal intercourse all possible racial or provincial prejudices amongst all Jlovers of India, and to develop and consolidate sentiments of national unity, to effect a moral union amongst them which may stand as a solid bulwark against all external elements likely to divide or separate.

(d) That we should work together for our common elevation; that we should work in the spidit that we are Indians and owe a duty to our country and to all our countrymen; that we should all work with a singleness of purpose for the amelioration of our country.

(e) That in carrying out our work, we should take care that no questions should be decided without full previous preparation and detailed discussion of it all over the country; that no point should be pressed unless there prevails an absolute or an almost absolute unanimity of opinion amongst the thinking and educated clnsore of our countrymen.

(f) That we should confine our attention to these questions only in which the entire nation has a direct participation; that we should pass only such resolutions as are not the issue of the brain of a single individual but are the result of the best thoughts of many minds during a long period; that we should give due deference to the views and feelings of each other amongst the whole people of our country; that we should deal with those questions alone on which the whole of the educated and thinking portion of British India is substantially agreed.

(g) That we should conduct our proceedings with moderation and dignity so as to disarm all adverse criticism; that every member should be afforded an opportunity of maturely and gravely considering each question in all its bearings; that we should conduct our proceedings in such a way that whenever any resolution or decision has been come to, it should proceed from the Congress with authority and be received outside with respect; that we should conduct our proceedings in such a way that we may acquire and maintain a character for moderation, sagacity, and practical good sense; that we should be moderate in our language, and in our demands; that we should remember that it is only by patience, perseverance, and long effort that we can hope to succeed.

(h) That we should remember that right and truth must ever prevail in the end; that it is not by violence or by noise that great things are achieved, nor by ambition or self-seeking; that it is by calm, indomitable reliance on that moral force, which is the supreme reason, that a nation's life can be regenerated; that we should avoid taking jumps into the unknown.

(i) That the best interests of the Indian taxpayer lie in peace, economy and reform; that his motto should be peace, loyalty and progress. That the first most essential requisite for his happiness is the assurance of permanent peace and the rigid maintenance of law and order.

(j) That our business is to represent to Government our reasonable grievance and our political disabilities and aspirations.

The following is a brief summary of the subjects discussed by the various Congresses held up to date :

Working of Indian Administration, the Council of the Secretary State for India, Legislative Councils, Simultaneous Examinations, Annexation of Upper Burma, Poverty of India, Public Service, Trial by Jury, Separation of Executive and Judicial Functions, Volunteering, Education, Industrial Condition of India, Arms Act, Police Administration, Abkari, State Regulation of Vice, Permanent Settlement, Plate Duties, Salt Duty, Forest

Laws, Currency, Military and Civil Expenditure, Medical Service, Compensation Allowance, Forced Labour, Cotton Duty, Financial Condition of India, Recruitment of Higher Judicial Service, Freedom of the Press, Water Cess, South Africa, Legal Practitioners Bill, and Grievances of Railway Passengers.

### **Congress and Mohammedans**

With a record of illustrious Presidents before me, and coming, as I had to do, immediately after one of the most eloquent modern Indian orators and lending spirits of the wealthy and educated province of Bengal, I naturally felt diffident of my ability to discharge the onerous and responsible duties devolving upon the occupant of this chair, but counting, as I have already stated, upon your indulgence, forbearance, and generosity, your sympathy and support, I consented to preside, resolved to follow the example of my esteemed friend, Justice Badruddin Tyabji, who has had the benefit of eight years' residence in England, is a gentleman of manifold experience, moderate and considerate views on public affairs, and who has been eminently successful, but is nevertheless an orthodox Musalman commanding the confidence and respect of his co-religionists. The one great object-lesson which his example teaches, is, that Musalmans, with benefit to themselves, and consistently with Musalman interests, even assuming that Musalman interests, as unthinkingly alleged, are in conflict with the interests of the rest of the Indians, can and ought to take part in this national movement.

### **Congress Programme**

I now proceed to point out how far in unison with the declared policy of Great Britain and British statesmen is the programme of the Indian National Congress. From the following few extracts it will be seen that the practically Congress is doing nothing but nobly endeavouring to practically pursue the very policy which the statesmen, whose views I give in these extracts, laid down for the better government of India during the best part of the present century.

### **Elphinstone in 1823**

It is difficult to imagine an undertaking in which our duty, our interest and our honour are more immediately concerned. It is now well understood that in all countries the happiness of the poor depends in a great measure on their education. It is by means of it alone that they can acquire those habits of prudence and self-reliance from which all other good qualities spring, and if ever there was a country where such habits are required, it is this. We have all often heard of the ills of early marriages and over-flowing population, of the savings of a life

squandered on some one occasion of festivity, of the helplessness of the ryots which renders them a prey to money-lenders, of their indifference to good clothes or houses which has been used on some occasions as an argument against lowering the public demands on them, and finally of the vanity of the laws to protect them when no individual can be found who had spirit enough to take advantage of those enacted in their favour; there is but one remedy for all this, which is education. If there be a wish to contribute to the abolition of the horrors of self-immolation and of infanticide, and ultimately to the destruction of superstition in India, it is scarcely necessary now to prove that the only means of success lies in the diffusion of knowledge.

### **Sir John Malcom**

Sir John Malcolm in 1828

“One of the chief objects, I expect, from diffusing education among the natives of India, is our increased power of associating them in every part of the administration. This I deem essential on grounds of economy, of improvement, and of security. I further look to the employment of the natives in such duties of trust and responsibility as the only mode in which we can promote their improvement; and I must deem the instruction we are giving them dangerous instead of useful, unless the road is opened wide to those, who receive it to every prospect of honest ambition and honourable distinction.”

### **Views of the Court of Directors**

*The Court of Directors in 1830*

“In the meantime we wish you to be fully assured, not only of our anxiety that the judicial offices to which natives are at present eligible should be properly filled, but of our earnest wish and hope to see them qualified for situations of higher importance and trust. There is no point of view in which we look with greatest interest at the exertions you are now making for the instruction of the natives than being calculated to raise up a class of persons qualified, their intelligence and morality for high employments in Civil administration of India. As the means of bringing about this desirable object, we rely chiefly on their becoming through a familiarity with European literature and science, imbued with the ideas and feelings of civilised Europe, on the general cultivation of their understanding, and specifically on their instruction in the principles of moral and general jurisprudence. We wish you to consider this as our deliberate view of the scope and end to which all our endeavours with respect to the education of the natives should refer. And the active spirit of benevolence, guided judgment, which has hitherto characterised your exertions, assures us of your ready and jealous cooperation towards an end which we have so deeply at heart.”



“The improvements in education, however, which most effectually contribute to elevate the moral and intellectual condition of a people, are those which concern the education of the higher classes, of the persons possessing leisure and important influence over the minds of their countrymen. By raising the standard of instruction among the classes you would eventually produce a much greater and more beneficial change in the ideas and feelings of the community than you can hope to produce by acting directly on the more numerous class.”

“You are, moreover, acquainted with our anxious desire to have at our disposal a body of natives qualified by their habits and acquirements to take a large share and occupy higher situations in the Civil administration of their country than has hitherto been the practice under our Indian Governments.”

### **Lord Macaular in 1831**

“It would be far better for us that the people of India were well-governed and independent of us than ill-governed and subjects to us; that they were ruled by their own kings and wearing our broadcloth, and working with our cutlery, than that they were performing their salams to English Collectors and English Magistrates, but were too ignorant to value, or too poor to buy, English manufactures. To trade with civilised men is infinitely more profitable than to govern savages. That would indeed be a doting wisdom which would keep a hundred millions of men from being our customers in order that they might continue to be slaves.”

### **Lord Ripon, in 1882**

“The document (Her Majesty’s Proclamation) is not a treaty, it is not a diplomatic instrument, it is declaration of principle of Government, which if it is obligatory at all, is obligatory in respect to all to whom it is addressed. The doctrine, therefore, to which Sir Fitz James Stephen has given the sanction of his authority, I feel bound to repudiate to the utmost of my power. It seems to me to be inconsistent with the character of my Sovereign and with the honour of my country, and if it were free to be received and acted upon by the Government of England, it would do more harm than anything else could possibly do to strike at the very root of our power and to destroy our just influence, because that power and that influence rest upon the conviction of our good faith more than upon any other foundation, aye, more than upon the valour of our soliders and the reputation of our armies.”

“My study of History has led me to the conclusion that it is not by force of her armies or by the might of her soldiery that a great empire is permanently maintained, but it is by the righteousness of her laws, by her respect for the principle of her justice.”

### **Congress and Musalmans**

“It is imagined by some person that all, or almost all the Musalmans of India, are against the Congress movement. That is not true. Indeed, by far the largest part do not know what the Congress movement is. Education of any sort or kind is conspicuous by its absence amongst them, and their habitual apathy has kept them from understanding the movement at all. In fact they are blissfully ignorant. What the causes of such ignorance and apathy are, will be presently inquired into. It will be sufficient here to state—that one infinitely small class of persons who have received liberal education through the medium of the English language, and another equally infinitely small class of persons who have received no education whatever through the medium of the English language, but who have acquired a smattering or what they are pleased to consider education through the Hindustani language, have considered it a fashionable thing to abuse the Congress and Congressmen as such.”

### **Alleged Mohammedan Objections to the Congress**

“The following appear to be the objections of the Musalmans to the Congress :—

1. That it is against their religion to join the Congress, as by joining the Congress they will be joining the Hindus who are not Musalmans.

2. That it is against their religion to join the Congress as by joining the Congress they will be joining a movement opposed to Government, a thing which is opposed to their religion, which directs obedience and loyalty to Government, albeit Government may not be treating them properly.

3. That it is against their religion to learn the English language.

4. That the success of the Congress would weaken the British Rule, and might eventually end in the overthrow of British Power and the substitution of Hindu Rule.

5. That Government is against the Congress movement; that in addition to the duty of loyalty, the Musalmans owe the duty of gratitude to Government for giving them a liberal education; therefore by joining the Congress, the Musalmans would be guilty of the sin of ingratitude towards Government.

6. That the Congress does not adequately represent all the races of India.
7. That the motives of the persons constituting the Congress are not honest.
8. That the aims and objects of the Congress are not practical.
9. That the Congress is not important enough to deal satisfactorily with the subjects it takes up.
10. That the modes of Government prevailing in the West, namely, examination, representation, and election, are not adopted to India.
11. That such modes are not adopted to Musalmans.
12. That the result of the application of Western methods to India would be to place all offices under Government in the power of the Hindus, and the Musalmans would be completely ousted from Government employment.
13. That Government employment should be conferred not on the test of examinations, but by selection on the ground of race, position of the family, and other social and local considerations.
14. That public distinctions, such as seats on the Legislative Councils, Municipal Boards, and other public bodies should be conferred not by the test or election, but by nomination based on the ground of race, and social influence and importance.
15. That inasmuch as the Congress is a representative body, and inasmuch as the Hindus form the majority of the population, the Congress will necessarily be swamped by the Hindus, and the resolutions of the Congress will, to all intents and purposes, be the resolutions of the Hindus, and the Musalmans. Voice will be drowned, and, therefore, if the Musalmans join the Congress, they will not only not be heard, but will be actually assisting in supporting Hindus to pass resolutions against the interest of the Musalmans, and to give color to such resolutions as the resolutions of Hindus and Musalmans combined, and thus aiding in passing resolutions against themselves and misleading Government into believing that the Musalmans are in favour of such resolutions.
16. That Musalman boys have to learn the languages appertaining to their religion before joining schools; they are, therefore, at a disadvantage in the start for English education as compared with the Hindus. That the result is, that the Hindus pass the examinations, and

as Government employment is given upon the test of examinations, the Musalmans are necessarily ousted from Government employment, and it follows that the test of examination is not a fair test.

17. That as employments are given on the test of examinations, the result is that Hindus get such employment and even in districts where the majority of the population are Musalmans, the Hindus form the subordinate officialdom. That the Hindus being hostile to the Musalmans, lord it over them, and the Musalmans are naturally grieved to be lorded over by the Hindus; that in many cases Hindus are from the lower strata of society, and in that case they tyrannise the more and thus aggravate the harsh treatment of the Musalmans. That the result is that the Musalmans, and amongst them Musalmans descended from royal and noble families, are mortified at being not only ruled over, but even molested by and tyrannised over, in all manner of ways by Hindus, and Hindus of the lowest orders.

### **Mr. Sayani's Answers to Mohammedan Objections**

I, now proceed to answer these objections :

1. Musalmans in the past, Musalmans not in name only but orthodox, true Musalmans—constantly travelled in foreign lands and mixed with all the nations of the world. The Musalmans in India are the descendants of the Musalmans who thus travelled to and settled in India, and of the Hindus whom such Musalmans converted to Islam. All the Musalmans in India have always lived side by side with the Hindus and mixed with them and even cooperated with them, both during the period of the Musalman Rule, as also since then. In fact, both the Musalmans and the Hindus, as also other races residing in this country, are all equally the inhabitants of one and the same country, and are thus bound to each other by ties of a common nativity. They are all shares in the benefits and advantages, as also in the ills consequent on common residence; and, so far as natural and climatic conditions are concerned, all the inhabitants, irrespective of all sorrows and must necessarily cooperate with each other, as humanity is imperfect and dependent on cooperation. Again, both the Musalmans and the Hindus are subjects of the same sovereign and living under the protection of the same laws, and are equally affected by the same administration. The object of the Congress is to give expression to the political demands of the Congress subjects and to pray that their political grievances may be redressed and their political disabilities may be removed; that the political burdens of the country may be lightened and its political condition may be ameliorated; that the political status of millions of human beings who are their fellow-countrymen may be improved, and their general condition may be rendered more tolerable. It is a most meritorious work, a work of the highest charity. No nobler or more charitable work could possibly be conceived. The only question is whether there should be two separate

organizations, Musalman and non-Musalman, both simultaneously doing the same work, separate in name, but identical in nature and interest; or whether there should be a joint organisation. Obviously, the latter is preferable, especially as the Congress has no concern whatever with the religion or the religious convictions of any of its members.

2. It is not true that the Congress movement is a movement in opposition to Government. It is a movement for the purpose of expressing the grievances of the subjects to Government in a legal and constitutional manner and for the purpose of asking Government to fulfil promises made by Government, of its own free will and pleasure in fact, it is the duty of all truly loyal subjects—subjects desirous of seeing the Government maintained in its power—to inform Government of their own wants and wishes as it is also the duty of Government to ascertain the wants and wishes of the subjects and, indeed, those subjects who will not keep the Government well informed of their own wants and wishes cannot be called true friends of Government. We are all aware that the English nation, our common fellow-subjects, always makes it a point to inform Government of its own wants and wishes, so that Government may be able to fulfil such wants and wishes. In the case of India, moreover, promises have been made from time to time by Government to concede certain privileges; indeed, we have the plighted word of our most gracious Sovereign herself confirming those promises. It is our duty, therefore, to remind Government of such promises and to ask it to fulfil them.

3. Language is but the medium of expression. Orthodox and true Musalmans have in their time learned the Greek, the Latin, and other languages. There is, therefore, nothing against learning any language. In fact, many Musalmans of India, indeed, most of them learn and speak languages other than the language of their religion. The objection, therefore, against learning the English language, which is moreover the language of our rulers, is so absurd on the fact of its, that it need not be further adverted to.

4. The object of the Congress has already been stated. The success of the Congress, as has also been stated, instead of weakening Government, will only contribute towards the greater permanence of British rule in India. The Musalmans, therefore, need not be frightened by phantoms created by their own imagination.

5. It is the duty of all good boys, who have by the liberal policy of their fathers been enabled to receive a liberal education, to repay the kindness of their fathers, by assisting their fathers in the management of their affairs with the aid of such education and by contributing to the maintenance and welfare of the family by all honest means in their power. Similarly, it is the duty of those subjects who have received a liberal education with the aid of Government, to repay the kindness of Government by assisting Government in the proper discharge of its high functions by informing Government of the shoals and rocks lying ahead in its path and

thus enabling Government to steer clear of such shoals and rocks, and not to lie by quietly with a false sense of gratitude and leaving Government to run against such shoals and rocks and thus unintentionally, of course, but nevertheless contribute to its grounding ashore. True gratitude lies in true good wishes and true good assistance, and not in false modesty and indolence.

6. If the Congress does not, as is alleged, adequately represent all the races, surely the fault lies, not on the shoulders of the Congress leaders who invite all the races, but on the shoulders of those races themselves who turn deaf ear to such invitation, and prefer not to respond to it. It is the duty of such races, in response to such invitation, to attend the Congress and not blame the Congress when, in fact, they ought to blame themselves.

7. All public bodies, assembled in public meetings desirous of giving every publicity to their proceedings and even keeping a public record of its transactions, ought to be judged by their sayings and doings. It is not right or proper to attribute to such bodies improper motives, unless such motives can be fairly and reasonably inferred from their saying or doings or both. In fact, no person, having any sense of self-respect, ought to attribute improper motives, unless he is prepared to prove the same, and it is to be hoped, for the honour of the Musalmans, to cease from making reckless charges which they are not prepared to substantiate.

8. As to the aims and objects of the Congress not being practical, it is well-known fact that public attention has been drawn to the demands of the Congress, and not only the classes but even the masses have already been awakened to a sense of their political grievances and disabilities. Government has also been pleased to take into its favourable consideration the demands of the Congress, and has partially conceded the the expansion of the Legislative Councils and introduced the element of election therein. Indeed, if the Congress movement is continued with the same ability, prudence and sagacity that have characterised it in the past, and especially if those who have hitherto contented themselves with simply throwing out objections began in right earnest to take part in the movement, the movement is certain to bear fruit in the very near future and to end in practical results.

9. As to the Congress not being important enough to deal with the subjects it takes up, it will not be denied that the Congress contains in its ranks some of the most educated, most wealthy and most influential men of the day, some of whom have occupied—and occupied honourably—public offices of trust and importance, and most of whom are leaders of their respective centres. In fact, in the Congress camp one comes across legislators, municipal councillors, rich zamindars, extensive merchants, renowned lawyers, eminent doctors, experienced publicists, indeed, representatives of every industry and every

profession in the land. In fact, it will be hard—nay impossible—to name any other non-official public body equally important with the Congress.

10. As to the modes of government prevailing in the West not being adapted to India, the position stands as follows. In a primary state of society, whilst a particular small nation, confined to a narrow strip of territory, is governed by a single ruler, who generally belongs to that nation and is residing in that territory, as the nation is not a numerous one and the territory not a large one, the ruler is necessarily in daily and constant touch with his subjects. The affairs of the State are of a very limited nature and do not occupy much time of the ruler. Moreover, there are not special or local circumstances of sufficient importance to be taken into consideration. The affairs of the State are of a simple nature. The offices are not many and do not require special merits for their proper performance. Whenever, therefore, the ruler has to appoint to a post, the ruler himself is qualified to do so. He does not find it necessary to resort to any complicated method for the performance of this part of his duty. Hence the posts are filled without compelling the candidates to undergo the trouble of going through any definite or complicated course of instruction or examination. As the nation, however, increases in numbers, as the territory is enlarged and the needs of society become more numerous and more complicated, the number of the posts to be filled becomes greater, and the qualifications required for the proper performance of the posts grow higher and are of diverse character. The touch of the ruler with each one of the ruled gets less and less and the ruler cannot possibly keep himself personally abreast of knowledge of the increased and complicated needs of the people. He becomes, in fact, less qualified to properly fill up all the posts, and he is compelled to delegate this part of his duty to others. In course of time, he discovers that it is not a very satisfactory thing to nominate to posts by means of deputies and that some definite method of selection must be substituted. The considerations which formerly guided him, when he alone had personally to nominate, are of such a vague character when placed in the hands of his deputies, that he finds that it is not only not useful but even mischievous to resort to them as, instead of such considerations being in fact given weight to, they simply open a wide door to undue influence and even bribery, and he finds it necessary to discard them and is compelled to limit himself to selection by a public examination of candidates, after they have gone through a course of instruction laid down for the purpose. Thus it happens that all other qualifications such as of family, standing and position and others come to be dispensed with, and the test of public examinations, that is, of personal merit alone, as tested by such examinations, is substituted. It may be conceded at once that it is not a perfect or infallible test. It is a choice of evils. In order, to guard against the evil of dispensing with other considerations, a certain proportion of the posts is filled by examinations and promotion is guided by seniority and merit combined. The circumstances above set-forth are not peculiar to any particular country or climate, but are equally applicable to all, and it is not correct to say that the above method is a peculiarly western method and

not applicable or adapted to India. In fact, In China, which is peculiarly an Eastern country, the same method has been of universal application for many centuries past. Moreover, the present rulers of India happen to be foreigners, and in their case, therefore, the considerations, which have led to the method of examination being adopted, apply with even greater force. The above considerations also apply to the method of election and representation, though not with the same force or to the same extent. Hence, election and also nomination in the case of Local Boards, Municipal Corporations, Legialstive Councils, and the like. It has been suggested by the Honorable Haji Mohamed Ismail Khan, of the North West Provinces, that the Congress should pass a resolution “recognising the absolute necessity of equality of number of Hindu and Mohammedan elected members in Legislative Councils, District Boards and Municipalies.....” and “wishing all Hindus and Mohammedans to elect” accordingly. It is a good suggestion, but o long as Musalmans do not join the Congress movement in the same numbers and with the same enthusiasm as the Hindus do, the Congress cannot in fairness be asked to carry out such a suggestion in the manner and to the extent indicated in the suggestion.

11. As to the modes of government prevailing in the West not being adapted to Musalmans, the observations in answer to objection No. 10 also apply to this objection. The Musalmans may be reminded that out Holy Prophet did not name a successor. He felt it to the believers to elect one for themselves. The Caliph or the successor was originally freely chosen by the free suffrages of the believers and was responsible to them for his acts. In later times this practice was altered and the Caliphs were made hereditary; but this was done by the confidence and the consent of the believers. But even to this day, the sanction of the believers in the shape of Biat, is deemed necessary. “The Government of Islam,” says Mr. Ahmed Riza, “is therefore in the hands of an elective monarch, limited in the exercise of his powers by prescriptive religious tranditions. According to Musalman Law if the Caliph departs from the traditions, the body of the learned (Ulema) is armed with the right of remonstrating, and is even able to depose him. Amongst the traditions, there is one which makes it obligatory on the Caliph not to do, or even to resolve on, any act without first seeking the advice of the chiefs of the tribes and the doctors of the law—a principle very characteristic of Representative Government. According to Musalman Law, the Caliph is bound to be just, to respect the liberties of people, to love his subjects, to consider their needs and listen to their grievances.” ..... “It is clear that Islam knew how to determine and regulate the rights, and duties of the sovereign, even before England essayed the task.” Islam has no caste, “Let all your subjects,” said Frederick the Great, “have the right to address you directly both in speech and writing.” “The Musalmans, says Mr. Ahmed Riza, “are free from clerical domination, and know nothing of rank or social grade.” Said Ali, the fourth Caliph. “Superiority in knowledge is the highest title of honor.” “The spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion” of the Musalmans was remarkable. Musalman cities were “full of sevants and men



of letters.” “Roman Law and Greek Science continued their evolution among the Arabs.” “The best of Holy Wars,” said our Holy Prophet, “is the righteous word spoken to a monarch who is acting tyrannically.” “Islam knows no master; the Commander of Faithful is only the chosen servant of the people.” “Obedience to a Chief is limited; it is founded on the presumption that the Chief commands in the name of the law and in the interests of him who obeys.” “Obey me said Abu Bekar (the first Caliph), so long as I go on in good practices. If, I deceive myself, warn me. If you do not, you will be responsible.” “The Government of Islam is a collective authority in which every free citizen, in possession of his mental faculties, is bound by a common destiny, and shares it responsibilities.” “Islamism is not occupied with supra-mundane interests alone. It does not say, “Leave to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s.” It teaches its adepts that they have a civil duty to fulfil here below, especially the duty of controlling the conduct of Caesar. “Election and Representation as also Universal Brotherhood are characteristics of Islam and ought not to be objected to by Muslims. All muslims are equal, and if they want any employment, they must like the rest pass public examinations. If they want any position of rank, they must endeavour to be fit for such position and resort to election, like the rest. Of course, if they can gain such position by nomination, they must thank their good fortune, but if they cannot, they have no right to grumble. They may contend, however, that so far as examinations are concerned, they are at a disadvantage, as compared with the Hindus. If that is so, it is no doubt a misfortune. But surely they must rely on merciful Providence and put their own shoulders to the wheel and by the grace of God they are bound to succeed in their efforts; may even more, if they have more difficulties to overcome than the Hindus, so much the more creditable will be their success to them, and so much the more will they be qualified, not only for the initial posts, but for higher promotion. In fact, even in India, we find that when Musalmans do really take to liberal education, they generally equal, if not even surpass, the other races, and that Musalmans are good not only in matters requiring muscle and valour, but also mental powers and intellectual vigour, and the Musalman community of India can produce distinguished and deeply learned scholars such as Mr. Justice Badruddin, Mr. Justice Ameer Ali and Mr. Justice Mahmood, and here it may be remarked in passing that if Musalmans in India have a few more leaders of educational advancement, of the calibre and energy, and persistence and devotion, of the type of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, who has by his life-long services done a great deal for Musalmans in this matter, and whose name will be remembered with gratitude and admiration for a long time to come, Musalman education is bound to prosper. The Musalmans may further contend that in elections they will be swamped. All that may be said here is that they are mistaken in thinking so. They have simply to try, and they will find that they will have no reason complain. Assuming, however, that they are unsuccessful, notwithstanding their honest endeavours and notwithstanding their fitfulness, why, then Government will, for its own safety, be compelled to come to their help. Objections 12, 13, 14 and 16 have already been answered.

15. it does not follow that, because the Hindus form the majority of the Congress, that the Resolutions of the Congress will be the Resolutions of the Hindus. It is a standing rule of the Congress, solemnly passed and recorded, that if any proposal is disapproved of by the bulk of either the Hindus or the Musalmans, the same shall not be carried. Again, the Congress is not a meeting of shareholders in a Joint-Stock Company or any other body formed for the gain of profit or for private interests, and a numerical majority does not and cannot influence its decisions—decisions by the bye, which cannot affect anybody as they are simply expressions of opinion, and as such must necessarily depend on their intrinsic sense and reasonableness to carry any weight with Government for whose benefit they are passed. Again, so long as the Congress leaders happen to be men of education and enlightenment, men of approved conduct and wide experience, men, in fact, who have a reputation to lose, the Congress will never be allowed to run its course for the benefit of sectional, private or party purposes. Again, if the Muslims attend Congress meetings, surely the Congress shall be bound to hear and to give careful consideration to Musalman views, and arguments founded on facts and reason are bound to prevail. Assuming, however, that the Congress is reduced to a rabble meeting, which is not probable, why, then it will lose its position and nobody will pay any attention to its resolutions.

The Musalmans, however, instead of raising pure and imaginary objections from a distance, should attend Congress meetings and see for themselves what is going on in such meetings. Indeed, they will find that even when one member puts forward cogent reasons in opposition to the proposal, such proposal is eventually dropped.

17. If the complaint in regard to the conduct referred to in the objection be correct, it may be mentioned that such conduct is not peculiar to any particular race.

It is in the nature of things that persons of low origin, born and brought up in the atmosphere of low morals, should, on finding themselves suddenly clothed with the authority of the Sircar, get their heads turned and be led into playing the tyrant. The less the education they have, received, and the smaller the emoluments their posts carry, the greater their superciliousness the more marked their contempt for others. Cringing to superior authority and lording it over the people who have anything to do officially with them, are the distinguishing traits of these pests of society. Persons of high birth and culture, who have seen better days and better society, may sometime be naturally inclined to give to these supercilious tyrants a sound thrashing so as to make them remember it to the end of their days and prevent them from reverting to their evil ways. But persons of high birth and culture naturally recoil from doing anything which may savour of vulgarity, and hence their silent sufferings. Government has been ever ready and willing to check high handedness and insulting conduct on the part of their native subordinate officials. Europeans, both official and

non-official, lovers of manliness and justice as they are, strongly disapprove their hauteur. But no Government, however, watchful, and however anxious it may be, can possibly completely eradicate the evil, the true remedies for the removal of which are as follows. The standard of education required of candidates for subordinate official posts should be gradually raised higher and higher so as to compel the candidates to have better education better culture, in order to make them forget the evil surroundings of their previous life and to take to a better appreciation of the moral law of nature. At the same time education should be disseminated all over the land, and the standard of education of the masses, should be gradually and steadily raised, so that the masses, armed with the weapon of education, may not have meekly to submit to petty tyrannies, but may know how to protect themselves against them and to bring the offenders to a proper sense of their puniness and the impropriety of their conduct by means of union and the agitation of their grievances, and in legally provable cases by bringing the culprits to their well-deserved punishment.

### **Fundamental Principles of Islam**

All who believe in one God and acknowledge the Holy Prophet are true believers. The fundamental principles of Islam are few and simple. Islam knows no castes and ought not to have divisions and sub-divisions. Yet we find Islam divided into sects, into innumerable divisions. This is certainly against the spirit of Islam. All true believers are equal. By Musalman Law they can all eat with each other, nay more, they can eat with the followers of Great Prophets on whom Revelation has descended. All Musalmans can intermarry, nay more, Musalman males can marry females from the followers of the Great Prophets. Yet the defferent sects of Indian Musalmans will not intermarry, even amongst themselves. It is the duty of all true believers to educate themselves, their wives and their sons and their daughters so as to enable them to know God aright. Yet ignorance is the prevailing rule amongst Indian Musalmans. Musalman females are free. Marriage is a contract in which the husband and the wife are parties. Females have independent property.

Yet amongst Indian Musalmans there are frequont cases of maltreatment of wives. The Musjids are places of worship as also places for giving education, and places of meeting for discussion of social and political matters. Yet discussion and consideration and expression of opinions is an exceptional thing amongst Indian Musalmans. Freedom of speech and liberty of action consistent with a few fundamental and world-recognised principles are the birthright or Musalmans. Yet Indian Musalmans are content to sit idle. To point out to the rulers their own grievances and to ask redress for them is the privilege of Musalmans. Yet Indian Musalmans prefer to remain silent. To be active and to be energetic, to be enterprising and to be fearless, has been the characteristic of the faithful. Yet Indian Musalmans prefer to remain indolent and apathetic. Are not Indian Musalmans, then, to

blame themselves? If the Indian Musalmans once shake off their lethargy and rid themselves of their apathy, if they unite together and love each other, as members of the same fold, as brothers of a Universal Brotherhood, mix with each other and intermarry educate themselves, and their wives and children, and meet together and exchange opinion and voice their grievances, and generally endeavour to raise themselves and actively cooperate in the raising of their brethren, they have under merciful Providence as bright a future before them as they had a glorious past. The Indian Musalmans are a brave and generous race, and it is natural that they should smart under the misfortunes that have overtaken them and resent the treatment that has been and is extended to them. But certainly apathy and lethargy are not the means calculated to reinstate them in anything like their former greatness. Relying, therefore, upon merciful Providence and True Religion, and placing confidence in Almighty God, the Creator of the Universe and the Dispenser of all things, they must rise equal to their present trials, and it is to be fervently hoped that the Benign Ruler may have mercy upon them and raise them again to prosperity and good fortune.”

## **FAMINE AND POVERTY**

I now come to the most absorbing topic of the hour. After a lapse of twenty years, famine has again overtaken a greater part of the country. The insufficiency of rainfall in Bihar, in the North-West Provinces, in the Punjab, in parts of Central India, in many districts of Bombay and Madras and in Mysore has already led to distress among those classes who habitually live from hand to mouth. The cultivators, whose improved condition is well known, are the greatest sufferers. Next come the class of small artisans and weavers, and then the day-labourers who barely eke out an anna per day as wages. The prices of foodgrains in every one of the afflicted tracts went up high, in some cases 50 and 100 per cent. This occurrence was most unusual. It has seldom happened that at the very beginning of the season of scarcity, prices of wheat, rice, bajri, and the jowari have gone up so high as has been the case at present. That such a condition of affairs should have created a panic and led even to looting and rioting as in Sholapur, in Nagpur and elsewhere is not unintelligible. The people seem to have been frightened at the insufficiency of foodgrain. They naturally thought that a limited stock of grain, at the very commencement of the scarcity, should raise prices so high, what might happen when the season advances and the stocks are exhausted? No doubt, the first impulse was to curse the Bania graindealer and lay on his head all their woes. But as the panic subsided, and as it became known that Government would spare no efforts to relieve the distressed, while the long arm of charity may be expected to loyally assist the efforts of the State, prices went down a little. This may be taken as the situation at present. The weekly official reports show that upwards of two lakhs of persons in various parts of the country are already employed on relief work, and that as week after week advances, the number will swell till at last it may reach a maximum in April and

May, the number of which it is impossible to forecast at present. Every presidential and provincial Government has been straining its nerve to do its level best to cope with the distress which really bespeaks well of the humanity of our Government. British civilisation could not tolerate famine. And the head of the State has already declared from his place in the Council Chamber that his Government will endeavour to save life at all cost and all hazard. Let us all devoutly hope that it may be so able to achieve its noble intention without indulging in hope or prospect not founded on the realities or circumstances prevailing in the country. To entertain sanguine prospects which may not only be not realised but which may end in heavy mortality, otherwise preventible, would be grievous. For when we recall to mind the disastrous mortality which took place in 1877-78, when, according to official accounts, over 50 lakhs of human beings perished, we cannot but contemplate with the gravest apprehension what may befall unhappy India at this dismal juncture, should the efforts and energy of the State, with all the ample resources and most perfect organisation at its command, be found to be not so satisfactory as the people have been led to expect. I do not mean to say that these efforts and energies will be wanting. But it is not unlikely that, here and there, owing to more sanguine estimates of food and fodder and other optimistic views, the same care and attention may not be paid. You may have on paper the most perfect Famine Code; but unless those entrusted with its work, from the highest to the lowest, do not fall short in carrying out its provisions by a variety of causes, it is not unlikely that mortality, otherwise preventible, may ensue. It is, therefore, the duty of every citizen and public body to heartily second the efforts of our benign rulers in saving life. The Press, too, is doing an invaluable service in placing before the public from day to day all intelligence regarding the famished in various parts of the country. It is discharging a noble duty worthy of its sacred functions, and we cannot but express our gratitude to it for its enterprise, which enables it to give such wide publicity to all intelligence in connexion with the famine. Its argus eyes can detect, neglect, indifference or mismanagement anywhere, and enable the authorities concerned to set matters right at once. The primary and essential function is to see that relief is given in time, that is not allowed to be too late when it may become impossible to save lives.”

### **Growing Civil and Military Expenditure**

The famine has conclusively demonstrated, beyond all other facts and all other statistics, the existence of the poverty of India, to which our patriotic Grand Old Man, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, has been persistently drawing the serious attention of our rulers. That one main source of that poverty is the annual drain of millions of the national wealth, is now admitted everywhere. None can deny the fact., however plausibly it may be explained away. When we come to analyse the cause of that drain, we are confronted with the enormous expenditure incurred in England on Civil and Military Pensions, India Office Establishments, and what are generally called, Home Charges. More or less, they are undoubtedly the outcome of the costly foreign

agency in the administration a subject on which the Congress has continued to express its emphatic opinion from time to time during the twelve years of its existence. I do not propose to enter here into the details of this grave economic phenomenon. But to us it is a matter of some satisfaction to know that, in respect to the costliness of the administration, there is now sitting a Royal Commission to investigate the whole subject, Commission which is the direct fruit of the agitation by this Congress, and by none more than Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji and Sir William Wedderburn. None can deny that, but for their strenuous exertions in Parliament to have this Commission appointed India today would have been still without any inquiry. The last one was in 1874. But the Fawcett Committee, as it was called, concluded its sittings without a report.”

## CHAPTER VII

### Speech of Narayan Ganesh Chandravarkar

The Sixteenth Session of the Indian National Congress was held at Lahore in 1900. Mr. Narayan Chandravarkar presided over the Session. Following are some of the important passages from his speech :

“There are two or three notions of which we have to get rid before the problem of agrarian indebtedness and poverty in India is approached. That famines occur because the monsoon fails no one denies. In a sense they are inevitable in India; but no more inevitable, for instance, than in Ireland or Egypt. If the latter country was able to tide over this year of the lowest Nile in the century without a famine, why should not India be able to do the same when the rainfall fails? No famine policy is worth the name which does not discard the pusillanimous doctrine that famines are inevitable and that, therefore, not much can be done. The question which has been forcing itself on the attention of all serious thinkers and responsible Administrators is not—why do famines occur? but—why do they occur in increasing severity, and why is the staying power of the people going down? I do not think that anybody seriously believes in the population theory which is so often propounded in certain quarters as an answer to the question. There are a score of countries where population has been increasing much faster than in India, and yet they have not been struck down by the phenomenal poverty which is staring us in the face in this country”.

“The problem is, no doubt, complicated, but much depends on the view which a ruler takes of the possibilities and limitations of the power of Government to benefit the people. It is just possible to exaggerate the one or the other. Those who hold exaggerated notions of the possibilities regarding them as equivalent to those of Divine Providence are doomed to discomfiture; but this at any rate, must be said for them that they “will not bind their soul with clay”. Those, on the other hand, who exaggerate the limitation of human governments are those to whom hope never comes, and who can only plunge a race or a nation deeper into the depths of misery and despondency than they found it. It is encouraging to find that our present Viceroy has no superstitious belief in the virtues of official action. At the same time he is not a fatalist in the matter of administration. No one pretends—and if any one does, there are very few of the class—that agrarian indebtedness is due solely to any particular cause. What is complained of is that the Government has but touched the fringe of the subject hitherto in dealing with the question of its solution. For instance, take the question of the share which the money-lender on the one hand and our law courts on the other are said to have had in deepening the ryot’s poverty. The money-lender is not a creature entirely

of the British Government, but as years ago Sir Erskine Perry, once Chief Justice of Bombay, pointed out, whereas before the advent of the British in India the money-lender was either some Bunnia or Brahmin of the village, whose interests and fortunes were identified with those of the ryots to whom he lent, after that Marwari adventurer took his place. The ryot did, and does, require protection from the grasping money-lender, but it is admitted on all hands that he cannot do without the money-lender altogether. Now, we may fairly ask this question. Have the attempts hitherto made to save the ryot from money-lender's clutches proved the ryot's salvation? Take the case of the law to which I have above referred—the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act passed in 1879. Its main object has been to save the Deccan ryots from the exactions of money-lenders and to prevent in that way lands from passing from the former to the latter. There is a suggestion now that the Act which applies to some of the districts of the Bombay Presidency mould be extended to all. But those of us who have had to do with the course of litigation under the Act have reason to fear that the relief which is given by the Act to the ryot is more apparent than real. The ryot is allowed to sue his money-lender without any charge for court fee for his litigation. The Court scrutinises his dealings with his creditors with a great deal of jealousy, and helps him to get his land freed from exorbitant demands. That is so far for the good of the ryot, but does the good go to him? What professional men like myself, having to deal with cases under the Act, often find is that the ryot is only the man who figures on the scene; but behind him is some one fighting his battle, spending the money for him, carrying on the litigation, and getting probably all the benefit of the Act intended to save the ryot. The Act in fact substitutes one creditor for another; but all the same the ryot is not saved. This is a point which has struck nearly all those who have any experience of litigation connected with the Act. It is my impression—and the impression of several of my brother pleaders, gathered in the course of professional business. It is said that the tendency of the ryot to have “frequent intercourse to the law courts”, I borrow the words used by his Excellency the Viceroy in his reply to the address of the Mahajana Sabha of Madras the other day—has contributed to his impoverishment. The Hon'ble Mr. Toynbee drew the attention of the Government to this phase of the problem during the discussion on the last Budget in the Viceroy's Legislative Council—to the steady increase which is taking place year by year in the Government revenue from courtfees and the enormity of the law charges. He said : “The character of our courts is a cause of our poverty.” Undoubtedly it is a striking fact that large and highly paid judicial establishments are kept up to deal with litigation, the bulk of which, i.e. over 60 per cent as an examination of the statistics shows, concerns property or transactions worth less than Rs. 50. But this character of our litigation is not so much a cause as an indication of the poverty of the country, showing how small the transactions of the community are. It is proposed to pass a law for the mofussil on the lines of the Arbitration Act which applies to Presidency Towns. That is a good move in the right direction and may help the ryot to some extent, but will not save him from his load of indebtedness.”



“All that we plead for is a more systematic, sympathetic agricultural policy than has been pursued. Government have gone to the relief of the Bengal ryot, and fixed the relations between him and his zamindar. Government are going to give relief to the ryot in Ratnagiri as against his khot. Why does it not examine more closely that it has done, and subject to a thorough impartial inquiry, its own relations towards its own tenants? Then, as to the improvement of agriculture. It was stated by the Hon’ble Mr. Ibbetson some months ago in reply to the Maharajah of Darbhanga that the Secretary of State had sanctioned the appointment of a Director to become the chief of a great Government organisation for affording assistance to the agricultural industry in this country. This we welcome as a hopeful assurance. That was the dream of Lord Mayo’s wise and judicious administration, and it is known to all that Mr. Hume in Lord Mayo’s time was appointed to organise an Agricultural Department for the improvement of agriculture. But one Viceroy succeeds another—and we drift. At one time the cry is taken up that the ryot ways of cultivation require to be reformed. We hear it for a time, and then it is replaced by another cry that the ryot knows all about it and stands in no need of help. Now, the Indian ryot is neither a sinner nor saint in his business—he is neither stupid nor perfect. It is no use teaching him to give up his methods of cultivation wholesale. He is wiser than his teachers there. But at the same time the State may gently take him in hand, and help him to improve his industry by scientific methods where that can be done. And it can be done, provided the policy is pursued systematically and steadily. Let us hope that this new experiment which is to be made by the appointment of a Director of Agriculture for affording assistance to the agricultural industry of the country will be marked by a consistency of policy. We want not only a Director of Agriculture, but a Central Department of Agriculture and Industries.

That brings me to the subject of industrial development—a subject on which I am rather afraid to speak with the warning before me of Lord Curzon given the other day at Madras that his subject of technical education or industrial development has “an extraordinary fascination for the tongue in India.” I know that there are people who talk about it without knowing the real aspects of India’s Industrial situation—but after all the talkers may not be altogether a useless class. In every country the talkers precede the actors at every stage of its progress. And, as the late Mr. Bright once put it. “I have observed that all great questions in this country require thirty hours of talk many times repeated before they are settled. There is much shower and much sunshine between the sowing of the seed and the reaping of the harvest, but the harvest is reaped generally after all.” And in India, where there is such a tendency to let things drift, there is no fear that talk may do no good—for that is one way of keeping the problem before us. The first Famine Commission declared that “the multiplication of industries was the only complete remedy for famine.” That was twenty years ago. But since that report was made, very little has been done to advance the suggestion into the region of practice. On the contrary, some thing have been done, unconsciously perhaps,

which have had the effect of reducing the number of our industries. Is it any wonder that, under the circumstances, with millions of people coming on the land, millions of them should go out of it, and that Sir James Lyall and his colleagues on the second Famine Commission should find that numbers of the peasantry have been, and are being, reduced to landless day-labourers? These are the people whom a famine first touches, and who flock to relief-works the moment they are opened, and as they go on increasing in numbers, famine relief must soon outrun the resources of Government. The present relief policy is doomed to early extinction, and already during the famine it has been stretched to breaking point. We are assured here again by Lord Curzon that as to this question of industrial development "Government is bestowing its serious attention upon the matter." His Excellency has, however suggested the difficulty which stands in the way. Replying to the Mahajan Sabha of Madras on this point, his Excellency asked: "Are you quite certain that those agencies and institutions which exercise so powerful a control upon the mind of the Indian youth are using their influence as they might do to encourage the particular form of education, which in theory they applaud?" Now I do not wish for one moment to minimise this difficulty. That we have our part to do in this matter—to do our best to turn the mind of our youth to industrial channels rather than the seeking of merely literary education, and the courting of Government employment—is what I will freely admit. But what has happened in India by way of a tendency to seek literary education, and go in for Government employment, is what happened at one time in some countries in Europe, and what will happen in any country at first where schools are established and the improved machinery of official administration creates a large number of offices. Montalambert many years ago pointed that out in writing about some countries in Europe. The tendency will move in another direction slowly but steadily—if the initiative comes from the State as it has come in many other civilised countries. It is true that on the principle that while one man can load a horse to drink water, even twenty cannot make it drink. Government may open schools for technical instruction, but they cannot get Indian youth to enter them if the youth will not enter, and that Government cannot create the spirit of enterprise where there is no desire for enterprise. But after all the mind of the Indian youth is not so hopelessly conservative and blindly stubborn. There are already signs that our educated men are not merely talking in the matter. As a Madras newspaper pointed out the other day in adverting to Lord Curzon's advice to the students at Cochin, there is a stream of tendency in the direction. What is claimed at the hands of Government is that it should take advantage of this tendency, and do all it can to help and forward it on. One way of helping it on was pointed out by the Indian Agriculturist in March last. It said: "If we wish to see how a Government can help its subjects to solve this problem, we have only to look at what has been done in Canada, and is now being done in Ireland. In Canada, as we have more than once pointed out in these columns, the Agricultural Department acts on the principle that as it can command better brains than the individual farmer, its duty is to take the initiative, and to show the farmer how he can improve his

methods and where he can find new sources of profit. If these new sources are beyond his unaided reach, the Department gives him a helping hand, but always on the understanding that as soon as the individual has secured a good grip of the new industry, he will do the rest of the work for himself. It is in this spirit that the Canadian Department of Agriculture has organised a cold storage service of train and steam-boat, so that butter and cheese can be sent in good condition from remote Canadian farms right away to Liverpool. As soon as the system is self-supporting and self-managing—an end already in sight—the Department will leave it alone, and go on to something else. The Irish Department of Agriculture has been planned with the same ends in view, but with this valuable addition that it is empowered to deal with manufacturing industries as well as agriculture.” Above all, no country in the economic and industrial condition of India has thriven under a laissez fair policy of commerce and agriculture. Even in England it was only in the middle of this century, when industries had grown to manhood, machinery had been invented, and manufactures had fully exhausted the advisability and needs of the old policy of protection, that, in response to the altered circumstances, the Free Trade Policy was pursued. Now, I do not plead for Protection, for if I did I should have to go back to the times when people had faith in it—and we do not live in those times. And even if we did ask for Protection, there is not the slightest chance that we shall get it. We have to deal with the question as a question of practical politics—and Protection is a creed that is obsolete and British statesmen will have none of it. And what Lord Salisbury said some twelve years ago is true. His Lordship said : “My belief is that protection means nothing else but Civil War.” But if the British manufacturer does not get Protection, he gets from the State something very much better in its stead— “the open door” or “foreign markets.” Now let that open door policy be for the whole Empire, and let not Indian subjects going to Natal or Cape Colony be treated as if India had no part or lot in the Empire. Nor should they be subjected to such restrictive rules as have been recently passed as regards the Roorkee College in India and Cooper’s Hill in England. Let us have, secondly, an “open door” in our own country for our country’s industry. The excise duty levied on the Bombay mill industry clearly shows that under the present policy no Indian industry will be allowed to out grow European competition.

But the solution of this problem which calls for remedies against famines will not be complete unless they are made possible by a policy of wise and judicious economy in administration. Governments any more than individuals cannot both eat the cake and have it. The larger the proportion of revenue spent on the administration, the less of it there is to provide for the administered. It is encouraging to find that Lord Curzon has applied himself to this question also. Some years ago, no less an authority on Indian finance than Sir Auckland Colvin said in an article contributed to the columns of the Nineteenth Century—an article which created considerable interest at the time it appeared—that “there can be no improvement in Indian finance so long as Indian revenues are depleted by the claims of

frontier extension.” Soon after his assumption of the office of Viceroy Lord Curzon addressed himself to this question, and his examination of the subject in relation to the financial condition of the country had resulted in what may be regarded as a wise compromise, the new policy being to irritate the susceptibilities of the frontier tribes as little as possible and to conciliate their goodwill. It is true the policy of subsidising these tribes may be carried too far, and these annually—recurring subsidies may in course of time mount up to the cost of a war. Besides, goodwill obtained by subsidies will have to be kept up by subsidies—and these may become a perpetual drain on the country. The success of new policy will have to depend mainly on the careful choice of the officers appointed to deal with and keep in hand the wild tribes on the frontier. Here it is mainly a question of “men, not measures.” These rude, unsophisticated men adore a man that is true and brave, and discreet, and personal ascendancy so gained over them will be proof against the outburst of fanaticism more than anything else. But it is not on frontier extensions alone that money has been wasted, I am prepared to make every allowance for expenditure to grow in these days of advancing civilisation and increased State responsibilities. But it should not in any case be called to outgrow the capacity of the country, and when it does, it makes a costly administration synonymous with a ruinous administration. Complaints have been made that while important works of public utility are postponed or declined, works of considerably less urgency are undertaken, and hastened on, without reference to the state of the treasury. An Anglo-Indian friend cited to me the other day what may appear a trifling instance, but what seems to me to be an opposite illustration of what I am submitting. He had always wondered, he said, how Government could sanction the erection of a costly building for a Military Mess in the Marine Lines on the Queen’s Road in Bombay. While every pie the Government could spare was, it was said, wanted for plague and famine, here was a building rising in imposing greatness, and it stands there as one more proof of how economy is more preached than practised. There is the other thing—the importation of medical men from England for the purposes of plague. These may appear small matters, but these straws best show how the wind blows. Apart from these individual instances there is a general tendency for the cost of the administration of the country to increase, and it is dangerous to be guarded against. If the country progressed in a corresponding measure, it would not much matter, but the country does not. The Welby Commission says that the cost of Civil Government increased during the period of 1883-84 to 1895-96 at a rate more than double that of the population during the same period, notwithstanding the re-imposition of the taxation remitted in previous years, and the addition of further new taxation at a rate only slightly in excess of the growth of the population. This means, to my mind, that while the prosperity of the nation has been practically at a standstill, the expenditure has grown by leaps and bounds. But it is somewhat encouraging to find that the Secretary of State for India has resolved and arranged to relieve India by pound sterling 257,000 yearly, beginning on the 1st of April next. Lord Curzon, we all feel, has begun well by setting his face against the policy of drift of which I have been speaking. But after all Lord Curzon has come among us for five

years, two of which have expired, and but three remain. Will British statesmanship drift, into the old policy after him? It is here that our duty lies. The Congress has been from the beginning of its existence a standing protest against the policy of drift and the time is now come—it is now most opportune—when standing out more emphatically than ever, it ought to redouble its efforts, and help the Government in the solution of the great Indian problem to which all eyes are now turned. We belong to a movement which is the product of the genius of the British administration. It is a movement which is the natural outcome of the spirit of the age, and all that is best, noble, and enduring in Pax Britannica, and the one duty that devolve on it is to stand forth and preach : “Not drift, but wise and sustained direction will save India.”

And in fulfilling this duty we have no reason to fear that we shall be suspected as noisy agitators who wish to embarrass rather than help the Government. We have moved on since it used to be said in some quarters that the educated native does not represent the people. That controversy is now a mere matter of history, or if it is not, I look upon it as a mere war of words. And so far as I have been able to gauge official opinion, the large majority of those who are responsible for the good administration of the country recognise the value of the opinion and influence of educated natives. And the very wise and statesmanlike observations made on this subject by Lord Curzon in his reply to the address presented to him by the Municipal Corporation of Bombay ought to dispel all doubt on the point. And we have now arrived at the stage where the Congress has its power to make its usefulness felt by carrying on its work on its old-accustomed constitutional lines, by helping the Government with facts, with information, with practical suggestions, which will strengthen its hands, and enable it to pursue a policy of large and liberal measures and give up the tendency to drift in administration.

This is the duty before us. It is that to which we have committed ourselves, and for the performance of which in the spirit of loyal adherence to the Throne of Her Majesty we have here assembled. We know that the work before the Government—the task to which our Viceroy has devoted himself—is arduous and beset with difficulties, and that years must pass before the cause of reforms wins. It is not for one man or even any body of men to say that he or they can finish the work and see his or their endeavours crowned with success. A learned divine has said, and said rightly : “One alone among the sons of men was able to say—It is finished.” But that British statesmanship has awakened to the gravity of the situation which envelops the Indian problem is one of the most hopeful signs that the country has a better future before it, and the last famine—the disastrous suffering that it has brought to the people, the terrible strain it has put upon officials and the marks it has left of misery and death—will not be altogether a calamity, if it keep alive the conscience it has so signally served to awaken. All this should hearten us for the future. It should encourage us to devote

ourselves to our country's cause with unflagging zeal. We have as members of this Congress taken upon ourselves a sacred duty—and be it ours to go on in the discharge of it with faith in our mission, hope for future, and loyal trust in the sense of justice and righteousness of the Government of Her Majesty the Queen-Empress.”

## CHAPTER VIII

### Speech of Dinshaw Edulji Wacha

The Seventeenth Session of the Indian National Congress was held at Calcutta in 1901. Mr. Dinshaw Edulji Wacha presided over the Session. Following are some of the important passages from his speech :

“Ladies and Gentlemen,— From my heart I thank you all for the honour you have done me in calling me to preside over the deliberations of your assembly which, today, enters on the seventeenth year of its career of national usefulness. It is indeed most kind of the gentleman who, on your behalf, just proposed, seconded and supported my election such complimentary terms, to observe that I have earned the honour by my steady devotion to the work of the Congress. For this mark of confidence I feel grateful to you, though you will believe me when I say that that work to me has been all through a labour of love. Let me hope that so long as health permits and this life lasts, it may be in my power to devote myself to that work with the same love, unflinchingly and unselfishly.

#### **The Late Mr. Justice Ranade**

I now crave your indulgence for a few minutes to refer to some of the mournful occurrences which have taken place since you last met at Lahore, and which have, eclipse like, cast their dismal shadow over the land. The hand of death seems to have been specially busy during the interval, reaping a harvest which has filled us with the greatest grief. No sooner had the new century dawned on the horizon than the Reper claimed as his own one of the greatest and noblest sons of India, the like of whom she may not see for many a year to come. Suddenly and without warning, Mr. M. G. Ranade breathed his last on 17th January. The country was at once plunged into the deepest sorrow at this national calamity. Mr. Ranade, the erudite judge, the profound scholar, the keen student of Indian economics, the philosopher cast in the Hellenic mould, reminding us of Socratic intellect and Socratic simplicity, the pure patriot, of glowing zeal, and above all, the spotless citizen of boundless faith and hope, is no more, Whether, as the poet says, he has gone to swell the fulness of the eternal psalm, or rise slowly to a higher birth or, as George Elliot pathetically sings, to join the Choir Invisible of the Immortal Dead who live again, his voice shall always remain with us, reminding us, and the generations to come after us, of the great unselfish career in the cause of his country, stimulating us by his example to follow in his wake, and urging to leave our footprints, however slight, on the sands of time. Like Mr. Gladstone, he showed, as Mr. Morley informed his audience at Manchester eight weeks ago, the great things which a great

man may make of life. Like our veteran living patriot, who still labours for his country's good six thousand miles away, perseveringly and patiently, Mr. Ranade also made the public good the ruling motive of his life from the beginning of his public career to its end. May India cherish his memory for ever and ever!"

### **"Famine Slowly Passes Away**

Turning now to a retrospect of the year just coming to a close, the first important event which attracts our attention is the passing away, slowly but steadily, of the famine conditions which unhappily prevailed to a deplorable extent during the preceding twelve months. The recent monsoon, with its fair harvest, has greatly tended to improve those conditions though it is a fact that parts of Gujarat and the Deccan as well as Kathiawar are in the throes of a third famine. The situation here is not only gruesome but positively heart-rending. Apart from the holocaust, the two previous seasons of insufficient rainfall have claimed, both in men and plough cattle, there is apprehended this time a dearth of drinking water as the season advances. This contingency is awful to contemplate. But it is to be devoutly hoped that the winter rains may tend to alleviate the aggravated condition of hardship and distress from which the peasantry is suffering at present. We are, however, aware of the anxiety of the Government in reference to the grievous situation of the two provinces. It is indeed gratifying to record the fact that since the date of the assumption of his high office, the Viceroy has been able to infuse among the officials not a little of his own spirit of greater watchfulness, solicitude, sympathy, and, above all, of speedy action for those suffering from the visitations of famine. That spirit will, no doubt, be able, as far as human efforts can go, to alleviate in a great measure the affliction of those who are now unhappily subjected for the third time to the appalling inroads of the drought.

### **Effects of Famine**

It goes without saying that the two admittedly severest famines of the century have greatly taxed the energy and resources of the Government. We have been officially informed that the total cost of relief on their account has amounted to 25 crores of rupees, whereof 17·25 crores are direct expenditure. But great as this cost is, it is nothing in comparison with the loss of crores entailed on the peasantry in the afflicted parts by reason of deficient crops and almost total destruction of agricultural cattle. It is to be greatly feared that the restoration of the live stock to the number which was estimated before the famine commenced will take some years. Meanwhile this diminution of the ryot's capital is certain to fall upon his industry and bear annual income. So that the sacrifice the State has undergone cannot be considered to be abnormally heavy relatively to the losses which the impoverished ryots have suffered. Already the Government has told us of the returning prosperity to its finances. Unfortunately



the same can in no way be predicted of the peasantry, who will be more closely chained to the wheel of toil for the next ten years at the least in order to be able to retrieve the utterly destitute position into which they have been plunged by the double calamity. It would, however, be illogical to jump to the conclusion that because State finances are supposed to prosper, therefore, the mass of the cultivators are prospering also. Nothing is more delusive or opposed to fact.

### **State and Private Relief**

Again, it is of importance to remember that all over the world, State expenditure has to be derived from the annual produce of the land. In India especially nearly 28 per cent of the gross revenue is derived from the tillers of the soil, who form the bulk of the population. It is not as if the State by its own diligence were able to accumulate 25 crores of rupees, which it afterwards sacrificed for the relief of millions of distressed and starving humanity. All the money comes from the labour of the sweating cultivators themselves. Practically, therefore, in spending the monies on the famine-stricken, the Government, as an enlightened but alien and Christian Government, was doing no more than the duty it owed to those who yearly contribute crores to its treasury. But the spirit of humanity which prompts so large an expenditure, when famine unhappily overtakes the land, is beyond all praise. Organised State philanthropy is, however, known to be a plant of too recent growth. It is needless to remind you that up to the date of the Bihar famine of 1866, there were no systematic relief operations of the character which we have since witnessed. This methodical system of relief has developed with the march of civilization and the progress of human ideas all over the world. Just as in matters of jail discipline and reforms, there has been a great evolution in the mind of the British people, so in reference to famine relief. England herself, half a century ago, would have hardly thought of such a perfected standard of relief operations as was practically carried out in India during the two recent famines. But not to go too far, take the case of Russia of today. It is well known that there has been a prolonged famine in that country for the last seven years consecutively. Can it, however, be said that even now she has realised the standard of relief organisation which the British Indian Government, despite many mistakes, has on the whole so successfully carried out? Thus, in judging of the relative efficiency of relief in matters of famine, it is essential for purposes of a just comparison to take into consideration the standard of charity and philanthropy which may have prevailed in a given country at a given age. It would, however, be unfair to judge of the results of one period by applying to it a standard prevalent in another.”

## **“The Famine Policy of the Bombay Government**

The lessons, however, which the two famines have taught will, it is to be devoutly hoped, be carefully borne in mind. Much has no doubt been done, and done with success. But much more still remains to be done. The defects pointed out by the Commissions of 1898 and 1900 should be removed, especially those revealed in Bombay. No doubt, the Government of that PRESIDENCY HAS ATTEMPTED AN ELABORATE DEFENCE OF THE DETAILS OF ITS FAMINE MANAGEMENT, WHICH HAD BEE SEVERELY CRITICISED BY Sir Antony MacDonnell and his colleagues. But much of that laborious rejoinder is unconvincing. Anyhow, it has not improved the position of that Government if public opinion expressed on that apology is to be taken into consideration. But be the defence right or wrong, it cannot be gainsaid, broadly speaking that the Bombay Government had misconceived its true functions as regards famine relief operations both in 1897 and 1899—the result, in my personal opinion, of a too illiberal and narrow view of the situation. In that Presidency there was some strange infatuation on the part of those responsible for the relief which led to the many deplorable incidents in Gujarat. The primary idea was to run famine on the cheap. Hence there was considerable false economy of a most griveous character, which ultimately resulted in heavy mortality and most acute stage of the famine. The tests were hard and unreasonable, while the system of wages and task-work was unusually rigorous. But on this subject, and on that of the appalling inadequacy of the medical staff employed—inadequacy of which His Excellency the Viceroy was himself personally convinced when visiting the Gujarat Relief Camp—the Commission, so ably presided over by Sir Antony MacDonnell, have commented so freely that I would fain refrain from repeating them here. Apart from the mortality caused by the most illiberal policy pursued for a time by the Bombay Government, but eventually modified under severe pressure of public opinion, there was a large number of deaths from cholera, owing to the inadequacy of medical hospital assistants. “Cholera raged in May,” say the Commissioners, “and did not finally abate till August. It is stated by ull witnesses that much of the mortality due to cholera was wrongly assigned to other diseases, and it is evident from the figures given below that to a large extent this was so.”

But even apart from cholera, the excessive mortality from famine in Bombay Presidency was deplorable.

“Making allowances”, again say the Commissioners, “it is not possible to dissociate the mortality from the famine or to regard it as inevitable. We have no doubt that the mortality in the period up to May would have been less, had more works been opened near the peoples’ homes in the Kaira and the Pancha Mahal districts, and had the provisions of the Famine Code in regard to the distribution of gratuitous relief in the villages been acted upon with due liberality. We are also of opinion that much of the cholera mortality would have been

avoided had the provision in reserve of a scheme of village works enabled the authorities to split up the large works and return people to their homes, and had the organisation of the works been more efficient.”

Thus, it will be seen how the famine policy of the Bombay Government was comparatively a failure. That authority, which was taken to task from the very beginning by its critics, was too self-sufficient to modify its mistaken policy, which eventually resulted in such heavy and lamentable mortality . Nay more. An attempt was seriously made in the Press to contradict public opinion as if it were valueless or unfounded. The results of the Commission’s investigation have now demonstrated the fact that, after all, the public were in the right, and those responsible for the famine operations grievously in the wrong. That error has now been admitted by the Bombay Governmnet, but it is indeed most extraordinary that it should have pleaded it as a justification of the policy it pursued. In its defence it has laid the blame of that error at the door of the Government of India. It puts forth in its extenuation the circular of Mr. Holderness which prescribed economy. It did nothing but faithfully follow it, practising economy with a vengeance. This part of the defence has already been severely criticized. Commenting on it, the Advocate of India, in its issue of the 22nd November 1901, justly observed :

It is inconceivable to our mind that the Executive should have been so overpowered by this perfectly legitimate act of the Government of India that it felt bound to shirk its obvious and plain duty at a time of emergency and to hold tight on the public purse-strings whilst the people were dying in thousands from sheer want.

In plain words, the defence of the Bombay Government amounts to this—that it refused to do its obvious duty because it had been warned by the Circular to be careful how the money given to it was spent :

“If doubt actually existed as to the meaning of the Circular”, proceeds the Advocate, “this could have been brushed away in half an hour by the simple process of wiring to Simla for specific instructions. To openly declare at this date that they feared to incur censure is an admission of neglect of a precaution which would have entirely obviated any such criticism of the Bombay famine policy.”

### **“Is There Responsibility in the Government**

Gentlemen, I think I have now referred at sufficient length to the extraordinary and unconvincing defence the Bombay Government has made with regard to its famine policy, and would, therefore, refrain from further animadverting on it. We may leave that Government

to derive such consolation from it as best it may. The more serious constitutional question, however, which arises from it should not be allowed to escape our attention. What we have to ask is, whether there is any responsibility with any authority whatever in this serious matter? Or is it still the case as was stated years ago, by John Bright in one of his memorable speeches that in India it would seem that there are three kinds of responsibility, namely, “the question of divided responsibility, of concealed responsibility, and of no responsibility whatever.” It should be borne in mind that there is great danger in a repetition of such error of judgment in future in any Provincial Government. It is, therefore, to be devoutly hoped that the beneficent intentions and instructions of the Government of India with regard to famine will everywhere be followed with scrupulous care and faithfulness in future operations, which we all hope may now be remote.

### **Famine Codes do not Prevent Famine**

This subject naturally leads us to the Famine Code itself. In all human affairs it has long been recognized that, however perfect the measures may be, the value of their perfection greatly depends on the men who eventually happen to carry them out. In matters of State, the same proposition holds equally good. Hence, the Government of India may go on tinkering and perfecting its Code, ever so long, but it is hopeless to expect that while the men, to carry out its excellent provisions in practice, are not of the right type, all the good that might be expected will be achieved. And, after all, what may the most perfect Famine Codes accomplish? They will not prevent famine. At the best they are a set of instructions to guide and direct the famine officials how to act under given circumstances and how famine may be allayed. Though, therefore, the efforts which the Government of India makes, on the recommendations of each Famine Commission, to improve the Famine Code, are praiseworthy, it must be candidly observed that they are in a way futile. Not all the codes and pandects on famine relief will ever go to prevent famine by a hair's breadth. Statesmanship lies not in devising these Codes but in concerting farsighted measures which shall prevent famine. Famine Codes are most useful when famine actually prevails; but by themselves they do not avoid famine.

### **Impolicy of Running Famine of the Cheap**

Another point in the same connection may here be touched before I proceed to make a few observations on the prevention of famine. The Famine Commission compute the total direct expenditure on the last famine at ten crores of rupees, and the indirect at five crores more. But this aggregate expenditure of fifteen crores is characterized as excessive. They say it “far exceeds that incurred in any previous famine.” Evidently, it is implied that the State in future should take care that such a large expenditure is not incurred. They, however, felt

conscious while making the remark that it was liable to be misunderstood. So immediately follows the qualification, namely that they do not for a moment advocate a departure from the humane policy of famine relief laid down by the Government of India; but experience has shown that the object in view can be attained at a moderate cost with little demoralisation, if prudence and foresight be duly exercised, and if means be properly adjusted to ends. As laid down in the abstract the principle is indeed admirable. But who is to be the judge of moderation? It will all depend on the view the chief officials at the seat of the Central Government may take at a period of famine. The Imperial treasury may be far from full; or it may be that it has to disburse large sums on their undertaking or on warlike operations. Under such a condition of affairs the Imperial fiat might go forth that famine expenditure should be kept well in hand—in other words, most niggardly incurred. The practical result of such an order may be easily anticipated. The provincial administrations would readily fall in with the views of the Central Government and endeavour to do all in their power to run famine on the cheap as the Bombay Government actually did. The last found a convenient excuse for its own condition of unpreparedness by laying the blame at the door of the Government of India. This is the great evil to be avoided. In the case of Mr. Holderness Circular alluded to, it is superfluous to observe that it was the subject of much hostile criticism throughout the country. In substance, it enjoined expenditure to be kept as low as possible, no doubt consistent with safety to the life of the famished (which was the point the supine Government of Bombay grievously missed) under the pretext of preventing people not in need of State aid flocking to the famine camps. That plea had really no solid foundation in fact. If people began to crowd at the very outbreak of the famine in relief camps, it was because they found themselves utterly prostrate and destitute after the effects of the earlier visitation of 1896—97. They had absolutely no breathing time to recuperate themselves. Evidence of the crippled and helpless condition to which most of the peasantry in the afflicted parts were reduced by the famine of that year is not wanting in Sir James Lyall's report. It is, therefore, quite intelligible there is greater influx of the starving at the very outbreak of the second visitation. But such a phenomenon should have been carefully investigated and the causes verified before taking unnecessary alarm and issuing that ill-fated Circular, which, in Bombay at least, worked so disastrously.

Having observed so much, it should not be understood that the abstract principle laid down by the Government of India is unsound, namely, that famine expenditure everywhere should be judiciously regulated, with a due regard to the conditions of each locality. On the contrary, it is but right and proper that the State should safeguard the interest of the general tax-payer. But we all know how in Indian affairs principles laid down in the abstract are one thing, while their practical carrying out is another? In famine matters it is the ease that some of the Provincial Governments, with their finances at a low ebb, are naturally prone to economize expenditure to a dangerously narrow limit. They always try to be one better in the

exercise of their economic conscience than the Central authority itself. This tendency on the part of subordinate Administrations needs to be carefully watched and checked, as if unwatched and uncontrolled from above, it is prolific, of the greatest mischief to the starving population. Again, in carrying out the instructions of the Central authority for a judicious expenditure, it is highly essential that the human factor should on no account be overlooked. In famine relief operations finance has to be subordinate to humanity itself. Discrimination and human sympathy for the woes and sufferings of the starving and the dying, of orphans and widows, of the sick and the infirm, of the less able-bodied and the helpless women—these demand paramount consideration. It is to be feared that it is disregard of this special aspect of famine which eventually leads to illiberal expenditure every way and exposes all Administration to the adverse but justifiable criticism of the public. So much for the evil of circulars of the character just alluded to.”

### **Causes which have Led to Famine**

Having thus cleared the ground as to what constitutes famine, the next question which we have to consider is the causes which led to it. For, it is only when the physician has diagnosed the disease that he is able to prescribe a cure. To probe, therefore, to the bottom of the cause or causes of the severe famines which have recently visited this country and which threaten to be more frequent than before, is the paramount duty of the citizen and the State alike. Practical remedies which in a measure may tend to minimize the sufferings of famine in the future are only possible and feasible when the true causes have been accurately ascertained beyond all contradiction. And here it may be not unuseful to remind you that famine is not a calamity known to India alone. Famines have prevailed all over the world from time to time. But we have heard very little of them during the last fifty or seventy years, save now and again in Russia, and sometimes in Ireland and Italy. Leaving aside all other countries, let us take the case of England alone. How is it that there at least for half-a-century past there is no such calamity as famine, though the country depends for two-thirds of its food-supply on foreign nations? Is it not the case that it is the vast and most satisfactory improvement in the economic condition of the English labourer and artisan which has banished the sufferings? There might have been any quantity of food supply from foreign parts; but so long as there was the lack of the necessary means to buy that supply, the food for all intents and purposes might as well be at the bottom of the sea. Now the one phenomenon, above all others, which was discerned on the surface in India in reference to the last famine, was the almost total disability of the masses to maintain themselves and their families no sooner than the conditions of a deficient harvest were established. This phenomenon was not a new one. But what happened in previous famines was that the famished did not resort to the relief camps in large numbers at the very outset. They did possess some staying power, some means which enabled them to subsist for a time without

State relief. It was only when the pinchings of poverty became acute and began to be seriously felt, with the approach of the summer season, that they were to be noticed seeking relief. Why, then, this difference during the last famine specially? The universal belief is that the staying power of the masses has vanished. That belief would naturally lead us to conclude that their economic conditions must have deteriorated. Here it seems there is a difference of opinion. There is the majority, more or less in full touch with the masses and their condition, which ascribes it to the growing, impoverishment of the ryots, while there is the minority, chiefly the official classes, who attribute it to their imprudence and improvidence. In spite of this difference it appears that there is one agreement underlying the contentions of both. It is not denied that the ailment of the peasantry is an economic one. Economic causes, whether superficial, as one set of thinkers aver, or deep-rooted, as another set assert, are undoubtedly at work which have prevented the cultivator from saving enough in fat years to provide against the lean one. Of late those lean years have been many. The peasantry, in one locality or another, has not thriven since 1891. Bad harvests or woefully deficient harvests have been frequent, which have plunged them into a heavier load of debt, from which they have barely found time to relieve themselves and be on their legs again. This much is generally acknowledged. But most of us, from our closer contact with the masses—a contact which it is scarcely possible even the best of officials can ever claim—are further of opinion that in addition to the misery and destitution arising from deficient harvests, there is the burden of the State demand for enhanced land revenue assessments which is gnawing into the vitals of the peasantry. This demand is rigid and is collected with all the hardness of the cast-iron system, which British administration has introduced into the country. It is to be feared that periodical revisions of the Survey Department have not a little to answer for agricultural indebtedness. Instituted with the best of motives, it is now admitted by those who have carefully studied its history, say, from Lord Salisbury downwards, that revisions have been far from beneficial to the ryot. That great authority has observed in his memorable minute of 1879 that :

“We may fairly discourage scientific refinements in the works of assessment which are a natural exercise of the intellect in highly cultivated officers but which worry the ryot, distribute the burdens of State with needless inequality and impose a costly machinery on the State.”

Thus, the periodic enhancements have been oppressive and beyond the means of the payers who, over a greater part of the country, own on an average seven acres of land. To satisfy the burdensome call at inconvenient seasons the ryot is driven into the arms of the moneylender. Once in the clutches of that entity it is almost hopeless for him to extricate himself. But this cause is denied by the officials. It is declared that the assessments are light, and that the ryot, if he suffers at all, suffers from other causes. Here, then, is a difference of opinion. Now



and again departmental or other committees have sat to trace the causes. These have demonstrated that the agricultural indebtedness of the peasant is chiefly to be attributed to rack-rents. More, there have been a few careful observers who, having fully studied this agricultural problem, have independently come to the same conclusion that we have been entertaining these many years. I have to refer you, gentlemen, to the minutes of Sir Louis Mallet and Lord Salisbury on the subject, made as far back as 1879, and which are officially embodied in the appendices to the Famine Commission Report of the year. I would be taxing your patience and time too much if I here cited even a hundredth part of what they said. Suffice it to say that Sir Louis Mallet was strongly opposed to Survey Settlements and the enhancement of land revenue, which was their logical resultant. He had no hesitation in observing that “the policy of further taxing the land might easily become a political danger.” From the economical point of view, he regarded such a policy as “mischievous” and directly tending “to a progressive pauperization of the community.” This was said twenty years ago, but who will deny the prophetic character of Sir Louis Mallet’s observation, with the knowledge and light of the two famines? Progressive pauperization is a fact which cannot be ignored. But it was not Sir Louis Mallet alone who had scented the economic mischief from a far and sounded the tocsin of “political danger.” As early as 1883, a thoroughly able writer, fully conversant with the economic situation of the peasantry of the country, gave an equally serious warning in more unmistakable terms in the columns of the Spectator. It was observed that :

The ultimate difficulty of India, the economic situation of the cultivator, is coming to the front in a most disheartening way and is existing among the most experienced officials a sensation of positive alarm.

That was “the great Indian danger” of the future. He accurately described the situation as follows :

Tens of millions of persons there either can do or will do nothing but cultivate; and if cultivation does not pay, what hope have they? The traders do not buy more food of them for being rich, and they have only food to sell. They can get their clothes cheaper through freetrade and railways, but they have reduced clothes to such an appreciable minimum that the saving is not a rupee a year per house. They need nothing save only land, and land, under the pressure of number becomes so dead, that either the profit per acre will not keep them, or they get too few acres for a maintenance. Other occupations would save them, but they must be occupations of billions, and where are they?

I ask you all the same question which the writer put eighteen years ago : “Where are they”? We should be all glad if there be a single official in the country who could



unhesitatingly and courageously declare today that the description of the masses just related has been in any way exaggerated. Was he at all drawing a pessimistic picture when the same experienced writer further described the economic condition of the cultivators?

Five people cannot live and pay a direct tax in money and the interest of old debts at 16 per cent upon five acres of overcropped soil, without danger in bad years of a catastrophe. That is the position of the whole district in India. All, however, that we want is a thorough examination of the subject by men who can lead opinion.”

### **Condition of the Masses**

I would now crave leave to rivet your attention on what has been a burning question for many a year I—mean the condition of the masses. All are agreed that India, compared with the countries of Europe and the Far West, is poor. At the same time it is alleged that the standard of living is low, and, therefore, the prevailing poverty is not of an appalling character. It is, indeed, natural for our alien rulers that they should resent any serious allegation which might in any way reflect on the character of their rule. It is certainly not pleasant for any civilized government to be told that its people are steeped in abject poverty and that poverty, according to all symptoms, is growing. But when such a disagreeable statement is made, practical statesmanship suggests that its correctness or incorrectness should be conclusively demonstrated. For such a purpose two courses are open. Either the Government, against whom the allegation is made, should court a full and fair inquiry in coram populo, say, by means of a disinterested and imperial tribunal of experts, reputed for shifting evidence of irrefragible facts fathered from each district, and probing the truth to the bottom; or it should collect through its own trusted officers such reliable statistics as shall enable the public to draw its own inference one way or the other. In my own opinion, the first method is preferable to the second. An open inquiry in broad daylight, conducted from district to district, where witnesses could be put through the searching test of cross-examination as regards average produce in a given series of years, their average value, the range of wages, the cost of living, the saleable price of land itself, and all other circumstances essential to a right understanding of the true conditions of the people, is the most satisfactory. If the seal of public confidence is to be set on such an investigation, it is superfluous to observe that publicity and close examination of facts are absolutely essential. Unfortunately, for reasons best known to itself, the Government has shrunk from instituting such an open inquiry though more than once appealed to. In India, it is always so difficult to conquer the hydra of hide-bound officialism.”

## Economy of Public Expenditure

But, gentlemen, it is not necessary for me to say that expenditure depends on policy, and so long as the policy in this country is erroneous and calculated to promote Indian interests only in a secondary degree, it is not expected that we could have a chance of reduction in the expenditure. Economy and efficiency are nowhere, though we, no doubt, hear of the Government constantly saying that economy is practised to a remarkable degree. It has to be remembered that this assertion emanates from the taxeaters, who are aliens and masters of the situation. Indians have no voice in the expenditure and taxation of the country. Otherwise they may show how, with a minimum of taxation, the maximum of economy and efficiency may be established. But there is the overweening conceit of the governing classes that we are an inferior race and hardly capable of carrying on the government, much less of steering State finance. Monopolists as they are, it is natural that they should view all Indian matters from their own selfish point of view. Hence they think that all monopoly of State wisdom and State finance is concentrated in them alone; and that we are no better than mere hewers of wood and drawers of water. In this connection, however, it may be most instructive at this juncture to quote from that famous letter which Turgot addressed to Louis XVI on 24th August 1774 : “The question, Sire, will be asked incredulously, ‘on what can we retrench’? and each one speaking for his own department will maintain that nearly every particular item of expense is indispensable. They will be able to allege very good reasons, but these must all yield to the absolute necessity of economy. . . .Your Majesty is aware that one of the greatest obstacles to economy is the multitude of demands by which you are constantly besieged. It is necessary, Sire, to consider whence comes to you this money which you are able to distribute among your courtiers, and to compare the misery of those from whom it has to be extracted (sometimes by the most rigorous methods) with the situation of the class of persons who push their claims on your liberality. . . .It may reasonably be hoped, by the improvement of cultivation, by the suppression of abuses in the collection of the taxes, and by their more equitable assessment, that a substantial relief of the people can be attained without diminishing greatly the public revenue, but without economy being the first step all reforms are impossible. So long as finance shall be continually subject to the old expedients in order to provide for State services, your Majesty will always be dependent upon financiers, and they will ever be the masters, and by the manoeuvres belonging to their office they will frustrate the most important operations. . . .When you have recognised the justice and necessity of these principles, I implore you to maintain with firmness their execution, without allowing yourself to be dismayed by the clamours which are absolutely certain to arise on such matters whatever system we adopt, whatever line of conduct we pursue.” It is to be hoped that those in the highest authority will bear constantly in mind these wise sayings of Turgot, between every line of which much has to be significantly read. Indian finance would then certainly undergo a vast change for the better. At present, it is neither here nor there. We are not even fortunate in

having trained financiers with the grasp of the first principles of public finance at the head of our finances. But it would be well if those in power and responsibility not only bore in mind Turgot's memorable counsel to his King, but the sage declaration of the far-sighted and practical Sir Robert Peel on the same question. Speaking of Indian finance, he observed that it is "a superficial view of the relations of England with India," that there is no direct immediate connection between the finances of India and those of England. "Depend upon it," observed that thoughtful Chancellor of the Exchequer, "if the credit of India should become disordered, if some great exertion should become necessary, then the credit of England must be brought forward to its support, and the collateral and the indirect effect of disorders in Indian finances would be felt extensively in this country." I presume that not until such a financial catastrophe occurs that the responsible authorities in England and India will ever learn to practise economy in State expenditure."

### **Concluding Remarks**

"And now, gentlemen, I must bring this address, already lengthened out beyond what I wished and expected, to a close. You will pardon me if I have taxed your patience overmuch, and you will pardon me still more if I have left out of my purview many other important topics on which the Congress has been incessantly attracting the attention of the ruler, such as the separation of Judicial from Executive functions, the reform of the Police, of Excise and Forest laws, the question of juries, the further modification of the constitution of our Legislative Councils, which are still a solemn mockery, higher education, provincial finance and other equally important matters. But with a session limited to three days and with the orthodox hour and-a-half for Presidential address, it is not practical to do justice even to a title of the topics enumerated in the way they ought to be, despite all efforts at condensation. But I trust I have this time endeavoured, in pursuance of the general voice of our enlightened countrymen, to rivet your attention on such topics alone as are of absorbing interest at present. They are topics on which the attention of the Government is greatly concentrated. And if any Viceroy could listen to our prayers on these special subjects with the respect and attention that they deserve, I am sure you will agree with me that that Viceroy is Lord Curzon, whose zeal for the advancement of the general welfare of our people is beyond all praise and whose uniform sympathy and burning desire to hold the scales even and render us all that justice on more than one matter, which is our due and for which we have been knocking at the door of Government these many years, are unquestionable. May it be the good fortune of his Lordship to render this country lasting good before he lays down his exalted office, and earn the gratitude of its people. The course of a wise and just Government in this matter is straight, be the opposition what it may. The Government has neither to look to the right nor to the left. It has one goal straight before it to reach. It has to discharge its duty by the people, how to promote their contentment and prosperity. It would repeat here

what I stated in my Presidential address at the Belgaum Provincial Conference. It is needful, nay imperative in order to stimulate the Government to action, to have the motive power of well-informed and disinterested public opinion. This can only be created by arousing the British people, through the influence and instrumentality of Englishmen, sympathising with our aspiration as the British Congress Committee has been strenuously doing these few years, with an energy, capacity, and self-sacrifice, which are beyond all praise. It is needful to strengthen the hands of that Committee, extend its operations and enlarge the scope of its undoubted utility in this direction. For such a purpose heavy sacrifices will have to be made. For, it would be absurd to attempt to achieve such an object without any sacrifice at all. Hence I repeat, we shall never be able to bring the reforms we ask for within the range of practical politics till the English are sufficiently and correctly educated a regards our demands. We are at present in a transition state. We are passing from the old order of things to the new. But the process of transition, as history teaches us, is invariably beset with obstacles. Thus it is that the broad and liberal statesmanship, which characterised British rule in India till late, has been somewhat arrested. "Insane Imperialism," to use Mr. Moreley's phrase, with its mischievous policy of retrogression and repression, is in the ascendant for the moment. But this policy of political insanity, I am firmly of conviction, must sooner or later give way to the former policy of sound liberalism, modified in conformity with the march of time and the irresistible logic of events. The policy should be constructive, having for its foundation the material and moral improvement of the masses. All else is doomed to failure. Indians have never been slow to recognize the benefits of British rule. But it would be unreasonable to ask them to sing eternally its praises and transform themselves into its unqualified panegyrist. No doubt we have a good Government, but it is not unmixed with many an evil. The desire is that the evil may be purged away, and that in the course of time we may have a better Government. So far we are not asking for the impossible. The impossible will be asked only when, as Mr. Lowell says, the reasonable and the practicable is denied. For, it is only when the possible is made difficult that people fancy the impossible to be easy."

## PART II

### CHAPTER IX

#### FIRST SESSION OF THE CONGRESS, 1885

The President of the First Session of the Indian National Congress was Mr. W. C. Bannerji. This Session was held as explained above in Bombay. The Presidential account of Mr. W. C. Bannerji was a short one. The full address is as follows :—

“The President-elect, in rising to acknowledge the honour done to him, said he might well be proud of being thus called on to preside over the first National Assembly ever yet convened in India. Looking round he saw the representatives of all the important centres of the Bombay Presidency : Karachi, Ahmedabad, Surat, Poona, Bombay itself and other less populous though still important towns; almost every district in the Madras Presidency was represented, as well as the towns of Madras, Salem, Coimbatore and others. Of Bengal, his friends and himself might to a certain extent be accepted as representatives since although, owing to a series of misfortunes, deaths, illness and the like, of which the meeting were already aware, Bengal was very inadequately represented so far as the members actually present were concerned, though as the delegated exponents of educated native thought in Bengal, they might claim a consideration to which their numerical strength would hardly entitle them. Then, there were the representing Political Associations collectively of very widespread influence. Besides these representatives, who would take an actual part in the proceedings, he rejoiced to see present, as it were as *amici curiae*, several of the most distinguished native officials of this country, whose presence would materially enhance the weight and the dignity of the proceedings. It was not merely provinces that were represented, almost all the Political Associations in the Empire were represented by one or more of the gentlemen present, while as regards the press, the proprietors, editors or delegates of the *Mirror*, the *Hindu*, the *Indian Spectator*, the *Tribune*, and others showed conclusively the universality of the feelings which had culminated in this great and memorable gathering. Surely never had so important and comprehensive an assemblage occurred within historical times on the soil of India. He claimed for it an entirely representative character. It was true that, judged from the standard of the House or Commons, they were not representatives of the people of India in the sense the members of the House were representatives of the constituencies. But if community of sentiments, community of feelings and community of wants enabled any one to speak on behalf of others, then assuredly they might justly claim to be the representatives of the people of India. It might be said that they were self-elected, but that was not so. The news that this Congress would be held had been known through out the year in the different Provinces of

India, and they all knew that everywhere the news had been received with great satisfaction by the people at large, and though no formal elections had been held, the representatives had been selected by all the different associations and bodies, and he only wished that all thus selected had been able to attend, instead of their having now to lament the absence of many valued co-adjutors, whose attendance had been unhappily barred by various unfortunate circumstances.

*\* This part contains speeches of Presidents who presided over the Session of the Congress held in Bombay.*

## **Aims and Objects of the Congress**

And now it seemed a fitting occasion for answering a question that had continually been asked in the world outside during the past few weeks, viz., what the objects and aims of this great National Congress really were. He would not pretend to reply to this question exhaustively. The ensuing proceeding would, he believed, do this more effectively than any single speaker could hope to do; but he might say briefly, that the objects of the Congress could for the most part be classed under the following heads :

(a) The promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in our country's cause in the different parts of the Empire.

(b) The eradication, by direct friendly personal intercourse, of all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of our country, and the fuller development and consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that had their origin in their beloved Lord Ripon's ever memorable reign.

(c) The authoritative record, after this has been carefully elicited, by the fullest discussion of the matured opinions of the educated classes in India on some of the more important and pressing of the social questions of the day.

(d) The determination of the lines upon, and methods by which, during the next twelve months, it is desirable for native politicians to labour in the public interest.

Surely there was nothing in these objects to which any sensible and unprejudiced man could possibly take exception, and yet on more than one occasion remarks had been made by gentlemen, who should have been wiser, condemning the proposed Congress as if it were a nest of conspirators and disloyalists. Let him say once for all, and in this he knew well after the long informal discussions that they had all amongst themselves on the previous day, that he was only expressing the sentiment of every gentleman present, that there were no more thoroughly loyal and consistent well-wishers of the British Government than were himself and the friends around him. In meeting to discuss in an orderly and peaceable manner questions

of vital importance affecting their well-being, they were following the only course by which the Constitution of England enabled them to represent their views to the ruling authority. Much had been done by Great Britain for the benefit of India, and the whole country was truly grateful to her for it. She had given them order, she had given them railways, and, above all, she had given them the inestimable blessing of western education. But a great deal still remained to be done. The more progress the people made in education and material prosperity, the greater would be the insight into political matters and the keener their desire for political advancement. He thought that their desire to be governed according to the ideas of government prevalent in Europe was in no way incompatible with their thorough loyalty to the British Government. All that they desired was, that the basis of the Government should be widened and that the people should have their proper and legitimate share in it. The discussion that would take place in this Congress would, he believed, be as advantageous to the ruling authorities as, he was sure, it would be to the people at large.

Telegrams of sympathy with the objects of the Congress were then read from the British Indian Association, from the Provincial Conference recently held at Calcutta, from a public meeting held in Assam under the presidency of the Hon. Mr. Ananda Mohun Bose, etc. etc.

The Chairman then formally declared the Congress open and it started consideration of various resolutions. The following resolutions were finally adopted.

### **Resolutions adopted by the Congress**

#### **I. Working of Indian Administration :**

Resolved that this Congress earnestly recommends that the promised inquiry into the working of Indian Administration, here and in England, should be entrusted to a Royal Commission, the people of India being adequately represented thereon, and evidence taken both in India and in England.

#### **II. Abolition of India Council**

Resolved that this Congress considers the abolition of the Council of the Secretary of State for India, as at present constituted, the necessary preliminary to all other reforms.

### **III. Legislative Councils**

Resolved that this Congress considers the reform and expansion of the Supreme and existing Local Legislative Councils, by the admission of a considerable, proportion of elected members (and the creation of similar Councils for the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, and also for the Punjab) essential; and holds that all Budgets should be referred to these Councils for consideration, their members being moreover empowered to interpellate the Executive in regard to all branches of the administration; and that a Standing Committee of the House of Commons should be constituted to receive and consider any formal protests that may be recorded by majorities of such Councils against the exercise by the Executive of the power, which would be vested in it, of overruling the decisions of such majorities.

### **IV. I.C.S. Examinations**

Resolved that in the opinion of this Congress the competitive examinations now held in England, for first appointments in various civil departments of the public service, should henceforth, in accordance with the views of the India Office Committee of 1860, “be held simultaneously, one in England and one in India, both being as far as practicable identical in their nature, and those who compete in both countries being finally classified in one list according to merit”, and that the successful candidates in India should be sent to England for further study, and subjected there to such further examinations as may seem needful. Further, that all other first appointments (excluding peonships and the like) should be filled by competitive examinations held in India, under conditions calculated to secure such intellectual, moral, and physical qualifications as may be decided by Government to be necessary. Lastly, that the maximum age of candidates for entrance in to the Covenanted Civil Service raised to not less than 23 years.

### **V. Military Expenditure—I**

Resolved that in the opinion of this Congress the proposed increase in the military expenditure of the empire unnecessary, and regard being had to the revenues of the empire and the existing circumstances of the country, excessive.

### **VI. Military Expenditure—II**

Resolved that in the opinion of this Congress, if the increased demands for military expenditure are not to be, as they ought to be, met by retrenchment, they ought to be met, firstly, by the re-imposition of the Customs duties; and secondly, by the extension of the licence-tax to those classes of the community, official and non-official, at present exempted



from it, care being taken that in the case of all classes a sufficiently high taxable minimum maintained. And further, that this Congress is of opinion that Great Britain should extend an imperial guarantee to the Indian debt.

### **VII. Annexation of Upper Burmah**

Resolved that this Congress deprecates the annexation of Upper Burmah and considers that if the Government unfortunately decide on annexation, the entire country of Burmah should be separated from the Indian Viceroyalty and constituted a Crown Colony, as distinct in all matters from the Government of this country as is Ceylon.

### **VIII. Circulation of Congress Resolutions**

Resolved that the resolutions passed by this Congress be communicated to the Political Associations in each province, and that these Associations be requested with the help of similar bodies and other agencies within their respective provinces to adopt such measures as they may consider calculated to advance the settlement of the various questions dealt with in the resolutions.

### **IX. Next Congress Session**

Resolved that the Indian National Congress reassemble next year in Calcutta, and sit on Tuesday, the 28th of December, 1886, and the next succeeding days.

## CHAPTER X

### SECOND SESSION IN BOMBAY

#### Speech of Sir William Wedderburn

*The Fifth Session of the Indian National Congress* was held in Bombay in 1889. Sir William Wedderburn presided over this Session. Following are some of the important passages of his Presidential address :

##### **“Congress Movement**

I have watched from its commencement the movement which has now culminated in the Indian National Congress. And in my humble judgment the movement is unmitigated good, in its origin, its objects, and its methods. As regards its historical origin, we know that it is the direct result of noblest efforts of British statesmanship : the natural and healthy fruit of higher education and free institutions freely granted to the people of India. Again, what are the practical objects of the Congress movement? They are, to revive the national life, and to increase the material prosperity of country; and what better objects could we have before us? Lastly, as regards our methods, they are open and constitutional, and based solely on India's reliance upon British justice and love of fair play. Looking back to the history of the movement, here was one critical time in its development; that was about ten years ago. The leaven was then actually at work, though the purpose of the movement was not then so well defined, and it was unwisely sought to deal with it by a policy of repression. The results might have been disastrous. But happily that time of tribulation was cut short by the arrival of the greatest and best of all our Viceroy's, the Marquis of Ripon. By his wise and sympathetic policy, Lord Ripon met and fulfilled the aspiration of the national movement. And on their side the people of India recognised that a Government conducted in such a spirit could not be regarded as an alien rule. This was the meaning of the passionate demonstrations at the time of Lord Ripon's departure. You, gentlemen, will correct me if I am wrong in saying that those demonstrations were a popular declaration that on such terms British rule could be accepted as the national government of the Indian people.

##### **Indian Affairs in England**

But, gentlemen, you know all this as well as I do, and better. I think what you want to hear from me is not so much about your affairs in India as about your affairs in England. I have been nearly three years away from you and have been studying English politics with special

reference to Indian interests. As you would like to know what are the results. You will naturally ask me, what are the prospects of the Congress movement in England? What are the obstacles which we have to overcome? And what are the practical objects to which our activity can best be directed? To those inquiries I would reply generally that our hopes depend entirely upon the degree to which the British people can be induced to exert their power with reference to India. Our one great ultimate question is that of a Parliamentary control over Indian affairs. If that can be obtained, all will be well. The case of India in England is really a simple one. The Crown and Parliament of Great Britain have laid down certain broad and liberal principles for the administration of India, and have solemnly pledged themselves that these shall be acted on. With those principles the people of India are fully satisfied. But the difficulty is in the practice. For owing to the necessity of the case the actual administration has to be entrusted to official agents in India. And the problem is, how under the circumstances can an effectual control be exercised from England so as to ensure these principles being carried out and these pledges fulfilled?

Unfortunately there is one very serious fact which much enhances the difficulty of this problem, and it is this, that in certain important particulars the professional interests of our official administrators in India are in antagonism with the interests of the Indian tax payer whose affairs they administer. This is a somewhat delicate matter, but it is an important one, and I feel it my duty to speak out clearly. Perhaps also it is easier for me than for most people to speak freely regarding the Indian official class, and that for two reasons. First, because I am deeply interested personally in the honour of that class. The Indian Civil Service has been a sort of hereditary calling in our family since the beginning of the century. My father entered the Civil Service in 1807; and my eldest brother followed him, until he lost his life in the Bengal mutinies. I came out shortly afterwards so that we are identified with what may be called the Indian official caste. The other reason is, because my complaint is against the system; not against the men who carry it out. On the contrary, it is my deliberate brief that the Indian Civil and Military services have never been surpassed for honest hard work and unselfish devotion to duty.

Such being the case, I have no hesitation in repeating that the interests of the Indian services are in great measure antagonistic to the interests of the Indian tax payer. The main interests of the Indian tax payer are peace, economy and reform. But all those necessarily distasteful to the civil and military classes. A spirited and well-equipped army naturally desires, not peace, but active service. And who can reasonably expect officials to love economy, which means reduction of their own salaries; or reform, which means restriction of their authority? It cannot be expected that as a class our official administrators in India will work for peace, economy and reform. But this very fact makes all the more urgent the necessity for a control in England which shall be both vigilant and effectual. We have,

therefore, now to see what is the state of that control. Is it strong, vigilant, and effectual? I am sorry to say that the answer to this question is highly unsatisfactory.”

### **“Organised Forces of India’s Opponents In England**

I fear, therefore, that in reviewing the situation in England, we must admit that the organised forces are in the hands of our opponents. The India Office is strong against us, together with the influence of the services and of society. The London Press is not favourable to us. And those Members of Parliament who have Indian experience rank themselves mostly on the official side. On the other hand, we need not lose hope; for the spirit of the age is on our side. The forces of the new democracy are in favour of national aspirations; and wherever meetings of working men are addressed, they are found willing, nay eager, that justice should be done to India. My friend has referred to constituency of North Ayrshire, which has been good enough on the liberal side to choose me as its candidate; and he hoped that my invitation to come out here would not in any way damage my chances. I am very glad to assure you that so far from damaging my chances, it has very much raised me in their estimation. As soon as my supporters in North Ayrshire learned that I had been invited to preside at this Congress, they were highly gratified, and resolutions were passed expressing strong sympathy with the Indian people. Nor is it on the liberal side only that India has active sympathisers. She has many good friends among Conservatives; and to those I think we may reasonably appeal in the matter of Parliamentary control over Indian affairs. It is sometimes said that conservative walk in the footsteps of good reformers; that is, they stand now in the position that good reformers stood in perhaps 50 years ago. If this is so, we may well ask their help to carry through the reforms that commended themselves to Burke and to Fox, and still more to restore that 30 years’ periodical inquiry which was originally secured to us by the wisdom of our ancestors.”

### **“Englishmen and the Congress**

In conclusion, I would like to address a few words to those of our English friends who distrust the Congress movement. The Promoters of the Congress profess strong attachment to British rule. And I would ask, is there any reason to doubt this profession? Have those men any interests antagonistic to our rule? Remember that the originators of this movement are educated men trained up by us in a love of freedom and free institutions. Is it likely that these men should wish to exchange the rule of England, the freest and the most enlightened country in the world, for that of Russia which is one of the most barbarous and retrograde? I remember being much struck with the remark of a native friend of mine with reference to Russian advances. He said to me :

‘If India is lost we are the chief losers, you can go to your ships and will be safe in your distant homes. We, on the other hand, should lose all; our country, our liberties, and our hopes for the regeneration of our race.’

Perhaps some of our doubting English friend will say, “we attach more importance to deeds than to words.” I think we can point also to deeds. It is well known in all schemes for the invasion of India, the Russian Generals depended for success on a hope for rising of the native population. In 1885, they appear to have put this idea to the test by a pretended advance. Had this move been followed by any signs of sympathy, or even by an ominous silence of expectancy throughout India, Russia would have rejoiced, and we should have felt our position weakened. But India does not treat England’s difficulty as her opportunity. On the contrary, there went up on all sides a patriotic cry, led by the native press, calling on all to join with men and money, and make a common cause against the common foe. I think also the action of the Congress, when calmly viewed, will be seen to point in the same direction. The man who points out the rocks and shoals towards which the ship is moving, is the friend of the captain, not the enemy. And that is the light in which the government should regard the criticisms of the Congress. The moderate reforms proposed by the Congress will all tend to make the people of India more prosperous and more contented, and will thereby strengthen the foundations of the British rule.

And here I would specially invite our English commercial friends to join with us in our efforts to increase the material prosperity of the country. At present, owing to the poverty of the people, the trade is nothing in comparison with what it ought to be. This is an argument which has been effectively pressed by our veteran leader, Dadabhai Naoroji. He has pointed out that our Australian Colonies take English goods at the rate of pound sterling 17 or 18 per head per annum, where as poor India can only take at the rate of eighteen pence a head. If, by realising him from his bonds of debt, and placing him in a position to exercise his industry, we could make the ryot moderately prosperous, how great would be the benefit to English trade! If the Indian customer could take even pound sterling 1 a head, the exports to India would exceed the exports to all the rest of the world put together, I would, therefore, say to our mercantile friends, help us to make the peasant prosperous, and your commercial business will soon increase by leaps and bounds.”

## CHAPTER XI

### THIRD SESSION IN BOMBAY

#### Speech of Henry Cotton

The 20th Session of the Indian National Congress was held at Bombay in 1904. Mr. Henry Cotton presided over the Session. Following are the important passages from his speech :

“It was well said by one of my predecessors in this Chair that the Presidency of the Indian National Congress was the greatest honour that could be conferred by the people of India on one of their own countrymen. I feel that the honour is even greater when it is bestowed on one who is not of your own race or country. I have good reason to be proud of the position in which you have placed me this afternoon. Although I must always be aware that one of your own body would more worthily and adequately discharge the functions of the office, and am conscious that it must be more appropriate for an Indian to preside at the Indian National Congress than an Englishman. I received your invitation to come here as the highest compliment you could pay me, and accepted it not only with a deep sense of responsibility, but also of gratitude and pride in this notable and public recognition of the humble services, I have been able to render to India.”

#### “Leaders and Followers

The Indian National Congress has thus its own functions, which I take it upon myself to say, as a watchful eyewitness from its birth, it has discharged with exemplary fidelity, judgement, and moderation. Yours is a distinguished past. If you have not in any considerable measure succeeded in moulding the policy of Government, you have exercised an immense influence in developing the history of your country and the character of your countrymen. You have become a power in the land, and your voice peals like a trumpet-note from one end of India to the other. Your illustrious leaders have earned a niche in the Temple of Fame, and their memory will be cherished by a grateful posterity. Foremost among them I place the venerable figure of your grand Old ex-President, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji who, now in the evening of his life, at the age of four score years, applies himself with unremitting energy and patriotism to your cause. Among those who are lost to us, pre-eminent is Mahadeo Govind Ranade, the wise in counsel, whose death we do not cease to mourn. Nor will I omit the name of the late Manmohun Ghose, who has set before us a conspicuous example of practical and reconstructive effort. We have still with us our distinguished

Chairman of the Reception Committee Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Mr. W. C. Bannerji, the first of our Presidents, Mr. Justice Badruddin Tyabji, Mr. Justice Sankaran Nair, Mr. Romesh Chunder Dutt, Babu Surendra Nath Bannerji and Messrs. Dinshaw Edulji Wacha and Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Why need I mention more names? They are all household words, not only in this Congress camp, but in all and hamlet, in the palace and in the cottage. Their leadership in India is ably supplemented by the labours of the British Committee of the Congress in England, and it is impossible to speak in terms of too high praise of the self-sacrificing devotion of Mr. Hume, and of Sir William Wedderburn, whom it is a pleasure and honour to welcome today in our midst. The name of Mr. Hume will always be associated with the origin and growth, the mingled triumphs and defeats of the Indian National Congress. Sir William Wedderburn's unrivalled familiarity with the details of Indian political work in the United Kingdom and his exceptional knowledge of the Bombay Presidency are of the utmost utility to us at the present time. The late Mr. William Digby was not a member of the British Committee, but he was an Englishman devoted in an extraordinary degree to Indian interests; his whole life, indeed, was given up to the cause of India, and I desire from this place to commemorate his service and to acknowledge the profound loss India has sustained by his death.

Patience and perseverance, persistence in good repute and evil repute, earnestness and resolution, these are the attributes of the leaders of a national movement. I make bold to say that they are the qualities which your leaders possess. You may well be proud of them. But the victory cannot be won by leaders only. It is for their followers to give them their loyal and undivided support.

You cannot all be leaders. Captains and Generals are few in number; the plan of the campaign is designed by them, but success is assured by the obedience and discipline of the rank and file. I speak in no unfriendly spirit when I warn you of the risks you run by petty internal bickerings and dissension, by unworthy jealousies and ignoble depreciation of the life-long labours of the foremost men of your generation. It is here I lay my finger on the weakness of your organisation. These signs of frailty are natural, inevitable in the nascent growth of your movement. But they are none the less corroding and dangerous symptoms, the existence of which is undoubted, and which it is, at all costs, the duty of all of you who have the glow of patriotism in your hearts firmly to suppress and eradicate.

## **England and India**

It is true that the reforms we advocate depend for the most part on their adoption by public opinion in England. Recall the case of Ireland ! Internal agitation in Ireland was the necessary stepping-stone of reform, but by itself it accomplished little; it was only when Irish

agitation forced itself upon English Liberal statesmen and was supplemented by a powerful phalanx of opinion in England, that any concessions were allowed to the sister island. And so it is in the case of India. The remedy for both countries is the same. The opportunity of a peaceful solution rests in both cases with the English people, who alone have it in their hands to effect a material modification in the attitude of Government through the pressure of public opinion from the Mother Country. In this lies the value of your British Committee in London. Perhaps you do not always recognise the services which have been rendered to your cause by the untiring exertions of the members of that Committee, who unceasingly place the India view of Indian affairs before the British public by means of Parliament, the Press, and the Platform. The work of this Committee deserves from you more generous support than it has received. It is from this point of view, also that lies the importance of increasing the representation in Parliament of those who are not only possessed of an adequate knowledge of Indian affairs, but are also imbued with a hearty sympathy for the grievances and aspirations of the Indian people. You owe a deep debt of gratitude to those honourable members who are always willing to press Indian questions upon the House, of whom I would especially mention Messrs. Schwann and Robetts. Mr. Caine, alas ! is lost to us; but I need not tell you that the number of men in the present House of Commons who combine this knowledge and sympathy may be counted on the fingers of one hand. Remember that it is in the House of Commons that the great questions on which the fate of India depends must be ultimately decided.

### **Member for India**

We want more Members for India ! Yes, indeed ! But remember also that the use of that phrase cannot but ring a delusive note. Do not deceive yourselves or expect too much. We want to hear more of India in the House of Commons. We want members of the House who will devote themselves to India as an integral and not the least important part of the British dominions as a portion of the empire which is not directly represented, and calls, therefore, for their special attention but we cannot expect from them that undivided devotion to Indian interests to which we are so accustomed in this country from our own leaders. Sir Henry Fowler once declared that all the members of the House of Commons were members for India, but this is the very apotheosis of cant, and we have only to be present in the gallery of the House when Indian question are under discussion to realise that no statement could be further from the truth. India returns no representatives to Parliament; and even the most friendly members for Parliamentary constituencies are not returned to represent India in the House, but their own constituents. They never can be members for India in the strict sense of the expression, for the first claim upon a member of the House of Commons is, and always must be, held upon him by his constituents.



## **The Functions of Parliament**

Remember, also, what are the relations between the Imperial Parliament and the Indian Government. "It is not business," said Mr. Gladstone on a memorable occasion, "to advise what machinery the Indian Government should use. It is our business to give to those representing Her Majesty's Government in India ample information as to what we believe to be sound principles of government. It is also the duty and the function of this House to comment upon any case in which we think the authorities in India have failed to give due effect to those principles, but in the discharge of their high administrative functions, or as to the choice of means, there is no doubt that that should be left in their hands." These words convey a wise warning that the duty of England towards India is to form convictions on the general policy which should guide the Government and to stimulate and strengthen and control the authorities in putting them into practice. They do not imply and abnegation of the responsibilities of Parliament for the good Government of India, and there is little echo in them of the pitiful appeal of the Indian bureaucracy to preserve India from Parliamentary interference. But they are a timely reminder to us that the function of Parliament is not to make any attempt to extend its direct rule to India, and that the details of administration must be left to the local authorities, upon whom must rest the personal responsibility of giving effect to the general principles which are laid down for their guidance.

## **The Opportunities of a General Election**

All these are qualifications which it is necessary for us to bear in mind, but the great enduring fact remains that the Parliament of Great Britain and the people of England are the final arbiters of India's destinies. It is not in India itself that the fate of India will ultimately be determined. Those are blind, and worse than blind, who ignore or depreciate the importance of the work that devolves on your English associates and on the delegates whom you may send from India to educate and build up the growth of English public opinion in regard to India. The present is one of those critical periods that recur every few years. No one can say precisely when a General Election will take place. But everyone knows that it cannot be much longer delayed, and in all human probability the interval between the twentieth and twentyfirst Congress will witness that great upheaval to which we are looking forward in party politics at home, the expulsion of the present Government from office and the formation of another in its place, the appointment of a Liberal Secretary of State for India, and the beginning of a period during which it is reasonable to expect, not only the undoing of many of the mistakes committed during ten dark years of reaction, but also some definite advance in the work of reconstruction. We stand at the parting of the ways. We see before us a period of hope of which for so long we have been unable to catch a gleam. But in order that this period may be rendered fruitful much will need to be done, and assuredly one of the first and most important

things is that the Indian National Congress should clearly and emphatically put forward its proposals, organise and inspire its forces, and make all necessary preparation for an epoch-making campaign.

### **The Growth of a National Spirit**

What is the great political problem that lies before you? What is the real meaning of the movement which has brought you together today and animates your thoughts and action? It is the consciousness that your organisation is a national one, and that you are working together in the formation of a national movement with common sentiments of interest and patriotism. The different races, the numberless castes, classes, and creeds of India are welded together in your ranks. This is primarily the result of education, the inestimable boon which in accordance with a noble and liberal policy, England has extended to India. It is education, and education on English methods and on the lines of Western civilisation, that has served to unite the varying forces among the Indian populations. The English language is the channel through which you are now able to meet on a common platform, and to give expression to your common interests and aspirations. At the same time the railways, the steamships, the post office, and the telegraph have played their part in closing the gap that used to keep the different provinces of India as under. I rejoice to see that this great movement is fully recognised by your countrymen. It advances by leaps and bounds. The unmistakable yearning for nationality finds its utterance through a Newspaper Press Which has now become a potent factor in your politics. I have watched the growth of this Press, rising, in little more than one generation, from struggling, obscure, and fitful efforts, into an organ of great power, criticising the measures of Government with remarkable independence and vigour, and continually checking the abuses of executive authority. I am not blind to its imperfections, but it is impossible not to admire the ability and patriotism with which it is conducted. The unanimity of this Press is as marked as the increase of its influence. The whole of its influence is in the direction of nationalisation. A single note is struck. In every large town in India newspapers are now published, identical in their spirit and in their common object, all aiming and converging at the formation of a single political idea.

The growth of a national spirit is the touchstone of your organisation. This assemblage of delegates to an Indian National Congress is the decisive evidence of national movement. The growth of an Indian nation is the great political revolution that is working before our eyes. There is no doubt of its meaning, its character, or its destination. It involves the introduction of no anarchical element into India's future; there is no sign of any rupture with the past. We know, indeed, that the present form of British administration cannot be permanent. The Hon'ble Mountstuart Elphinstone, whose memory is still revered in this Presidency, where he ruled as Governor for eight years, wrote as long ago as 1850 :

“I conceive that the administration of all the departments of a great country by a small number of foreign visitors, in a state of isolation produced by a difference in religion, ideas, and manners which cuts them off from all intimate communion with the people, can never be contemplated as a permanent state of things. I conceive, also, that the progress of education among the Natives renders such a scheme impracticable, even if it were otherwise free from objection.”

Every thinking man must know that these words are true. But we know also that the connection between India and England will not be snapped. The English language, while it is the means of enabling you to attain unity, binds you also to Great Britain. The future of India is linked with that of England, and it is to England that India must always look for guidance, assistance, and protection in her need.

### **“The Economic Problem**

What is your economic problem? It is the poverty of your people. No one who considers the economic condition of India can doubt that one of its greatest evils is to be found in the fact that the great mass of the people are dependent upon the cultivation of the soil. The establishment of large industries capitalised by Englishmen affords but a poor compensation for the variety of indigenous industries once spread through the country. An India supplying England with its raw products and dependent upon the West for all its more important manufactures, is not a condition of affairs which an Indian patriot can contemplate with equanimity. I may be allowed to appropriate the words which have been uttered by your distinguished Viceroy in another connection :

“There is no spectacle which finds less favour in my eyes than that of a cluster of Europeans settling down upon a foreign country and sucking from it the moisture which ought to give sustenance to its own people.”

India is the field where British capital is invested, but all the interest that is reaped therefrom passes to the pocket of the investor, and he takes it to England. This is a part of the economic drain which has been sneered at as a “copy-book fallacy” and as “a foolish and dangerous illusion.” But how can it be denied that it would be vastly more beneficial to India if the wealth produced in the country were spent in the country? India is poor and there are those who believe that in consequence of its political conditions it is becoming poorer; but the ambition of your people is to take their place among other nations in the future federation of the world. Your opposition to the exploitation of your country by foreigners is based upon a conviction that this exploitation is a real obstacle to your progress, and you do not need to be assured by me that the prosperity of your country depends on the diminution of its economic

drain and on the conservation of its resources for ultimate development by indigenous agency. I am glad to recognise the growing tendency of Indians to help themselves. The death of Mr. Tata was an irreparable loss, but there are others, stimulated by his example, who will strive to take his place. The Industrial Exhibitions in connection with the annual meetings of our Congress are satisfactory evidence of the tendency of which I speak. The difficulties are immense, for the essential difficulty always hinges on the disagreeable truth that there can be no revival of Indian industry without some displacement of British industry. But the first steps have been taken, and a start made by Indian capitalists. The beginnings are small, very small at present, but like the little cloud no bigger than man's hand they may grow and swell with a full promise of abundance. It rests with you to see that the present impetus does not flag or dissipate itself in ideal words

### **The Problem of Western Influences on the East**

Look at JAPAN! The force which had made Japan what she is, is an absorbing patriotism derived from, and dependent on, her national existence. It is based on collective action which independence alone can give. What an inspiration is afforded by the character of these Eastern islanders! What an example have they not set to the East of the power of a patriotic spirit! The conditions in India do not point to any early renaissance such as we have witnessed in Japan. But the changes that are taking place among you are as remarkable in their social, moral and religious relations as in their political and economic aspects, and your nascent nationalism is the magnet which holds together the solvent influences of Western civilization let loose on the simple society of the East. Under the immediate effect of these influences, your old organisations are crumbling up, and you have entered upon a long period of transition preparatory to the establishment of a new order. The result of English education has been to break the continuity of centuries, and the problem now is to bridge over the period of disorder with the least disturbance. Official interference was unavoidable in the first instance— in no other way could a beginning have been made, but the educational movement in India now stands in need of no such stimulus. It is in matters of education more than any other that the people of the country have become ripe for self-Government.

Systematic education is already falling into the hand of private enterprise. The time has come for the Government to transfer its educational endowments to the custody of those who have been educated through them. The present system of University education should be reconstituted on a representative basis. A policy which progresses to unit together still tighten the bonds of official control is absolutely retrograde. It has been condemned by every section of Indian opinion; and though it may temporarily prevail, it will be as evanescent as it is unsound. It is only through the educated members of your own community that it will be possible to guide your countrymen at large so as to ensure that the changes which are being

wrought by contact with the West shall be effected without danger and in a healthy manner. It is reserved for you to link the present with the past and to introduce modifications with regard to the antecedents which always must powerfully affect the environment in which you are placed. The problem of grafting Western ideas on to an Oriental stock is now ready for solution in the only way in which a successful solution is possible, by means of Orientals who, having been thoroughly imbued with a knowledge of Western civilisation, have at the same time not lost sight of the traditions of their past.”

### **“The Proposed Partition of Bengal**

A word, too, I wish to say on a subject which is so justly agitating the minds of my old friends in Bengal; I allude to the proposed partition of that province. We shall recognise that this is a matter of more than local interest when we recall that the sinister aspect of the proposal is to shatter, if it be possible to do so, the unity and to undermine the feelings of solidarity which are so happily established among the members of a compact and national branch of the Empire. The idea of the severance of the oldest and the most populous and wealthy portion of the province, and the division of its people into two arbitrary sections has given a profound shock to the Bengali race. I do not think I ever remember popular sentiment to have been more deeply stirred than it has been by this scheme for the separation of one-half of Bengal from the capital of the province and its amalgamation with Assam. It has been suggested that there should be a new Lieutenant Governorship with all its expensive paraphernalia of a large secretariat and separate departments; a scheme which is not without its attraction to the members of an autocratic bureaucracy who see before them the prospect of additional offices and emoluments. But it is repugnant to the last degree to the inhabitants of the country affected, who are aghast at the idea of their exclusion from a province to which they are attached by all historic material, social and sentimental associations. I admit that it is desirable to relieve the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal from some of the responsibilities which rest upon his shoulders. But this end may easily be attained by other means; either by the appointment of an Executive Council, or preferably I think, by the separation of Bihar, which is not peopled by Bengalis, and the constitution of that province, with a population of twenty millions in round numbers, as a separate administration with its own Chief Commissioner. It would be easy to devise a scheme which would not receive the unanimous disapproval of the affected population. To press on proposals such as those which have been put forward for the break up of Bengal against the loudly expressed wishes and sentiments of the Bengali people can only be described as a most arbitrary and unsympathetic evidence of irresponsible and autocratic statesmanship. I am convinced that a Liberal Secretary of State would never sanction such proposals, and I fervently trust that the Government of India, in the exercise of their own good sense and better feeling, will not shrink from abandoning a project so universally condemned.”

## “Conclusion

I am now bringing my remarks to a conclusion. We have good grounds for hope. The foundations of the future have been laid, and a superstructure is arising upon them. Skill, care, and forethought are needed; enthusiasm tempered by the construction of the edifice, liberality and largeness of conception in the design. You are the nucleus of a movement the power of which grows every day, and already supplies the most potent impulse in inspiring, instructing, and controlling the varied forces upon which the future of India depends. It has been the labour of my life to endeavour to ameliorate the relations between rulers and the ruled, to soften asperities and to evoke confidence and respect through sympathy. My position among you today is an evidence, that I have not altogether failed. I have carried on the golden lamp to those who shall come after me. I have never despaired of the present or doubted of the success which is denied eventually to crown your efforts. But it is upon yourselves that you must rely for the initiation and development of schemes which depend, in their systematic application and fulfilment, upon the local source from which they emanate. You are not without the noblest stimulus to cooperate with heart and soul in the great work that lies before you. The memory of the dead is with us at this hour. May the memories of Ram Mohun Roy and Dayanand, the energising labours of Kisto Das Pal, of Telang and Ranade whose names we have inscribed with reverential love on the roll of Indian patriots, infuse into your hearts the zeal and strength to devote your own lives to the service of your country. Strive to show yourselves constantly worthy of your causes. You have incurred grave responsibilities: do not shrink from the honest endeavour to discharge them worthily :

We live in deeds not years; in thoughts, not breaths,  
In feelings, not in figures on a dial;  
We should count life by heart-throbs. He most lives.  
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.

Labour each in your own sphere, as you are bound to do, to hand on to your successors the large endowments you have received, augmented and improved by your own exertions. Be tolerant towards all. And especially take to heart the need to brotherly feeling towards one another and of a spirit of veneration and gratitude to your leaders in this national movement. Remember that moral improvement is the only source of real unity, and as such of dignity as well as happiness.”

## CHAPTER XII

### FOURTH SESSION IN BOMBAY

#### Speech of Sir S. P. Sinha

The Thirtieth Session of the Indian National Congress was held in Bombay on December 27 to 29 in 1915. Mr. Satyendraprasad Sinha presided over the Session. Following are some of the important passages from his speech :

#### **“Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I return you my profoundest acknowledgment of gratitude for the high and honourable position to which you have called me. It is a peculiarly responsible position, for this year the task of delivering the annual message of the Indian National Congress is beset with special difficulties. The atmosphere created by the titanic struggle overshadowing the entire civilised world is not helpful to the calm and dispassionate consideration of our many complex and delicate national problems. And my task is made all the more difficult as the cruel hand of death has removed from our midst, within a few months of each other, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Pherozeshah Mehta and Henry Cotton—three of our most beloved and sagacious leaders whose counsels would have been of incalculable value to us today and whose loss we all so deeply mourn.”

#### **“The War**

The question which, above all others is engrossing our minds at the present moment is the war, and the supreme feeling which arises in our minds is one of deep admiration for the self-imposed burden which England is bearing in the struggle for liberty and freedom, and a feeling of profound pride that India had not fallen behind other portions of the British Empire, but has stood shoulder to shoulder with them by the side of the Imperial Mother in the hour of her sorest trial. In the great galaxy of heroes, in the imperishable Roll of Honour, there are now, and there will never cease to be, beloved Indian names testifying to the fact that our people would rather die unsullied than outlive the disgrace of surrender to a bastard civilisation. Our conviction is firm that, by the guidance of that divine spirit which shapes the destiny of nations, the cause of right will ultimately prevail and the close of the struggle will usher in a new era in the history of the human race.

Brother-delegates,—my next duty is to convey our unstinted admiration and our heartfelt gratitude to those of our brethren who have been shedding their blood in the battle-fields of Europe, Asia and Africa, in defence of Empire. The war has given India an opportunity, as nothing else could have done, of demonstrating the courage, bravery and tenacity of her troops, even when pitted against the best organised armies of the world, and also the capacity of her sons of all classes, creeds and nationalities to rise as one people under the stimulus of an overpowering emotion. That the wave of loyalty which has swept over India has touched the hearts of all classes had been ungrudgingly admitted even by unfriendly critics. The Bengalee is just an anxious to fight under the banner of His Majesty the King-Emperor as the Sikh and the Pathan and those of them to whom an opportunity has been given to serve either in ambulance, postal or despatch work, have shown as great a disregard of danger and devotion to duty as other employed in the more arduous work of fighting. India has risen to the occasion, and her princes and peoples have vied with each other in rallying round the imperial standard at a time when the enemies of the Empire counted on disaffection and internal troubles. The spectacle affords a striking proof as much of the wisdom of those statesmen who have in recent years guided the destiny of the British Empire in India as of the fitness of the Indian people grasp the dignity and the responsibilities of citizenship of a world-wide empire. Nor must we forget to tender to the families of those who have laid down their lives in the glorious cause our sincere and respectful sympathy.”

### **“Our Ideal Self-Government**

What, to begin with, should be the political ideal India? To some, the raising of this question may seem to be unnecessary and at best academic and, to others, positively mischievous. To me, however, it seems that the greatest danger in the path of the future well-being of the country is the want of a reasoned ideal of our future such as would satisfy the aspirations and ambitions of the rising generations of India and at the same time meet with the approval of those to whose hands our destinies are committed. It is belief that a rational and inspiring ideal will arrest the insidious and corrupting influence of the real enemies of our Motherland, even if it is not able to root out from the land that malignant mental disease which has been called anarchism and whose psychology it is so difficult to analyse. It must be obvious to all sincere and impartial judges that no mandate whether of the Government or of the Congress will be able to still the throbbing pain in the soul of awakening India, unless the ideal which is held up by the Congress and accepted by the Government commends itself first to heart and then to the head. *It seems to me, brother delegates, that the only satisfactory form of self-government to which India aspires cannot be anything short of what President Lincoln so pithily described as “government of the people, for the people and by the people.”* (emphasis added).



When I say this, I do not for one moment imply that the British Government is not the best Government we have had for ages. We have only to look round to see the manifold blessing which have been brought to this country by that Government. But as a British Premier early in this century very truly observed, “good government cannot be a substitute for self-government.” Says a recent writer in a well-known British periodical : “Every Englishman is aware that on no account, not if he were to be governed by an angel from heaven, would he surrender that most sacred of all his rights, the right of making his own laws. . . . He would not be an Englishman, they would not be able to look English fields and trees in the face, if he had parted with that right. Laws in themselves have never counted for much. There have been beneficent despots and wise law-givers in all ages who have increased the prosperity and probably the contentment and happiness of their subjects, but yet their government has not stimulated the moral and intellectual capacity latent in citizenship or fortified its character or enlarged its understanding. there is more hope for the future of mankind in the least and faintest impulse towards self-help, self-realisation, self-redemption than in any of the laws that Aristotle ever dreamt of.” The ideal, therefore, of self-government is one that is not based merely on emotion and sentiment, but on all the lessons of history.

I believe in all sincerity that such has been the ideal which the British Government itself has entertained and cherished almost from the commencement of British rule in India. Generations of statesmen have repeatedly laid down that policy, solemn declarations of successive sovereigns have graciously endorsed it, and Acts of Parliament have given it legislative sanction. I will not burden my speech with quotations from these; they will all be found in previous Presidential addresses. But, with your leave, I will quote only one passage from a speech of John Bright delivered at Manchester on the 11th of December, 1877 : “I believe it,” said John Bright, “that it is our duty not only to govern India well now for our sakes and to satisfy our own conscience, but so to arrange its government and so to administer it that we should look forward to the time when India will have to take up her own government and administer it in her own fashion. I say he is no statesman—he is no man actuated with a high moral sense with regard to our great and terrible moral responsibility—who is not willing thus to look ahead and thus to prepare for circumstances which may come sooner than we think and sooner than any of us hope for, but which must come at some not very distant date.”

It is, however, unfortunately the fact that a few years ago unhappy statements and even actions of responsible statesmen gave rise to a widespread suspicion among large classes of people in all parts of India that there was a change of policy—a deliberate intention to retrace the steps. That this suspicion is not wholly without foundation will appear from the estimate of an eminent French publicist who cannot be charged with either lack of admiration for the British administration of India or an excess of sympathy for the Indian reform party.

This is what Mr. M. Chailley says (I am reading from page 188 of the translation by the present Finance Minister, Sir William Meyer) :

“Had England taken as her motto ‘India for the Indians’, had she continued following the ideas of Elphinstone and Malcolm to consider her rule as temporary, she might without inconsistency grant to the national party gradual and increasing concessions which in time would give entire autonomy to the Indians. Does any reasonable man imagine that it is possible to satisfy the palpitating hearts of the thousands of young men who, to use the classic words of Lord Morley, ‘leave our universities intoxicated with the ideas of freedom, nationality and self-government,’ with the comfortless assurance that free institutions are the special privilege of the West? Can any one wonder that many of these young men, who have not the same robust faith in the integrity and benevolence of England as the members of this Congress, should lose heart at the mere suspicion of such a policy, and, driven to despair, conclude that “the roar and scream of confusion carnage” is better than peace and order without even the distant prospect of freedom? Fifteen years ago, Lord Morley said : “the sacred word ‘free’ represents, as Englishmen have thought until today the noblest aspiration that can animate the breast of man.” And today millions of Englishmen are freely sacrificing their lives in order that others may be free; therefore, an Englishman will be the first person to realise and appreciate the great insistent desire in the heart of India, and I for myself say with all the emphasis and earnestness that I can command that if the noble policy of Malcolm and Elphinstone, Canning and Ripon, Bright and Morley, is not steadily consistently and unflinchingly adhered to, the moderate party amongst us will soon be depleted of all that is fine and noble in human character. For my part, I believe with the fervour of religious conviction that that wise and righteous policy is still the policy of the great English nation. When His Majesty sent us his gracious message of sympathy and later on of hope, what do you think he meant but sympathy for our political aspirations and hope for their ultimate fulfilment? As late as the 8th day of October this year, His Excellency the Viceroy, addressing a large number representative officials at the United Service Club Simla, said :

“England has instilled into this country the culture and civilisation of the West with all its ideals of liberty and self-respect. It is not enough for her now to consider only the material outlook of India. It is necessary for her to cherish the aspirations, of which she herself has sown the seed, and English officials are gradually awakening to the fact that high as were the aims and remarkable the achievements of their predecessors, a still nobler task lies before them in the present and the future in guiding the uncertain and faltering steps of Indian development along sure and safe paths. The new role of guide, philosopher and friend is opening before you and it is worthy of your greatest efforts. It requires in you gifts of imagination and sympathy, and imposes upon you self-sacrifice, for it means that slowly but surely you must divest yourselves of some of the power you have hitherto wielded. Let it be

realized that great as has been England's mission in the past, she has a far more glorious task to fulfil in the future, in encouraging and guiding the political self-development of the people. The goal to which India may attain is still distant and there may be many vicissitudes in her path, but I look forward with confidence to a time when, strengthened by character and self-respect and bound by ties of affection and gratitude, India may be regarded as a true friend of the Empire and not merely as a trusty dependent. The day for the complete fulfilment of this ideal is not yet, but it is to this distant vista that the British official should turn his eyes, and he must grasp the fact that it is by his future success in this direction, that British prestige and efficiency will be judged."

These noble words of Lord Hardinge, which must still be ringing in our ears, are not the idle speculations of an irresponsible enthusiast, but the well-considered pronouncement of a statesman who, after guiding the ship of state during a period of unprecedented storm and stress, sends forth this message both to his own countrymen and to us. Lest there be any among us of so little faith as to doubt the real meaning of those memorable words, lest there be any Englishman inclined to whittle down the meaning of this promise, I hope there will be an authentic and definite proclamation with regard to which there will be no evasion, no misunderstanding possible. So far as we the people are concerned, there is no reason for mistrust, for this policy proclaimed so long ago and repeated so recently has been fruitful of innumerable beneficent results. Officials, even the highest, may sometimes have spoken or even acted in a different spirit, but England always did and does still consider it her glorious mission to raise this once great country from her fallen position to her ancient status among the nations of the earth, and she enjoins every English official in India to consider himself a trustee bound to make over his charge to the rightful owner the moment the latter attains to years of discretion."

"Coming to domestic politics, I do not think it necessary that I should on the present occasion deal in detail with the various concrete measures which the Congress advocates as an effective advance towards self-government on lines suited to India's special requirements. A decisive advance toward provincial autonomy, the liberalisation of the Council Regulations, establishment of elective as opposed to non-official majorities, an increase of their powers of control, specially in regard to finance, a larger representation of Indians in the various Executive Councils as also in the Council of the Secretary of State, the admission of larger numbers of Indians to all the higher branches of the public services, the long-delayed separation of judicial and executive functions, the abolition of indentured labour and the improvement of the position of Indians in other parts of the Empire—these are reforms which have long been urged and which will be dealt with by you, I have no doubt, so far as you think necessary. I am afraid, however, most of them must stand over for adjustment till peace is in sight. For myself, I will be content with dealing as shortly as I can with three specific matters

which have become increasingly urgent and with regard to which there is a practical unanimity of opinion. They are :

*Firstly.*— The question of commissions in the army and military training for the people.

*Secondly.*— The extension of local self-government.

*Thirdly.*— The development of our commerce and our industries including agriculture.”

### **“A programme of self-help**

*Brother delegates.*—Hitherto I have been dealing with measures that can be undertaken only by the Government, and in doing so I have incidently mentioned the various ways in which we ourselves must act and move forward. Indeed, the field for such work is so vast as to render it impossible of definition. Primary education, improvement of agriculture and industrial expansion, improvement of rural as well as urban sanitation there is work enough and to spare for every one of us. And how much could we not do by our own efforts, if only we cared to organize ourselves. I venture to suggest that we, in this connection, should lay down a constructive and continuous programme of work in all these directions as a part of our Congress activities, and that Provincial and District Committees all over the country should occupy themselves throughout the year in some one or more of these manifold directions, so as to show the achievement of some result, however small, however insignificant, at the end of each year. For instance, while waiting for the establishment of a system of free and compulsory primary schools in their district during one year. Similarly, we might very usefully and profitably extend our activity in supplementing the work of the District Local Boards and in spreading among our rural population some elementary knowledge of hygiene and sanitation and in organising relief for local and provincial distress, if and when need be.”.

## CHAPTER XIII

### FIFTH (SPECIAL SESSION) IN BOMBAY

#### Speech of Mr. Hasan Iman

A Special Session was convened in order to consider the implication of the announcement made on 20th August 1917 declaring the policy of British Government regarding the demands of Indian National Congress for self-Government.

A Special Session of the Indian National Congress was held in Bombay from August 29 to September 1, 1918. Mr. Hasan Imam presided over this session. Following are some of the important passages from his speech :

**“Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

With history looking on us, our labours today may well strike sympathy in the hearts of those who have the refinement to feel the agony of a race that, conscious of its rights, is struggling to realise them. The struggle is arduous, every step of it is labourious but our purpose is firm and our courage is ending. We are earnest and we mean to achieve our object, and it is at such a moment that you have called me to a duty that is most responsible, most onerous. I would not be human if I did not feel the honour you have chosen to confer on me—the greatest that you had in your gift—and I would be less than human if I did not express to you my deep sense of gratitude for the high privilege so generously conferred. But while I am expressing to you my gratitude, I am not, I fear, quite unselfish in my acknowledgment, for to be thankful for a favour is to lay out for another. I have much indulgence to ask of you to overlook my deficiencies and to assist me in conducting the proceedings of this great Congress of a nation struggling for freedom, to a successful end. This Special Session of the Congress is of exceptional importance and therefore of exceptional difficulty. Our task is burdensome for we have to discuss the proposed constitutional reforms as emanating from a Secretary of State and a Viceroy who, at least in their declarations, have not been wanting in a spirit of sympathy towards Indian demands. Their frank acknowledgment of the justice of our claim to equal civil rights with the rest of the British Empire lends to their proposals a sincerity; which it is difficult to question.”

“The announcement of the 20th August, 1917, declaring the policy of His Majesty’s Government certifies to the correctness of our demand and that our claim was not

prematurely conceived is indirectly acknowledged in the Report in the following noteworthy passage :

“It is no longer sufficient to administer India; it is necessary also to satisfy her political aspiration; and because we were all too slow in taking cognizance of the changes that were occurring the task is all the heavier because there is lee-way to make up”. The Report is full of generous acknowledgments of our claim and if acknowledgment alone could not merely gratify but satisfy us the need for us to meet in this Congress would not exist. It is when we come to the proposals themselves that disappointment meets us. The Secretary of State and the Viceroy, it has to be admitted, have made their proposals with a genuine desire to ultimately secure for us the right of governing ourselves and determining our own future, but the proposals in themselves seem to be afraid of themselves and do not comprise any such real measure reform as we had a right to expect. We realise the difficulty of their delicate task, placed as they have been between conflicting bureaucratic and Indian interest.

The deficiencies of the proposals appear to me to be due not to any intention of their part to withhold from us what we should have, but to a spirit of compromise to secure the support of the bureaucrats. It, therefore, behoves us to consider the proposals in a spirit of sympathy and not of mere carping criticism. Now our criterion is the Congress-League scheme, and, if the proposals lack the essentials of that, we should with all the emphasis that we can command, make our protest; but we must guard against a hasty rejection of the proposals. Opinion in the country is more or less divided on the subject of the acceptance of the rejection of the proposals. There is a small section of political thinkers that advocates a rejection of the proposals. I treat their views with respect, for their attitude of mind is based upon the political sagacity of not allowing consent decree to be passed against them and upon the political philosophy that national rights have to be won and not merely to be received as gifts.

Underlying their principle of rejection is the desire to continue the struggle for freedom and every one will admit that the severe the struggle the greater the vigour of the race. On the other hand there is another class of our political thinkers that stands for the acceptance of the proposals with the proviso that we must go on asking for more. The country, however, is agreed that the proposals as they stand, certainly do not embody the essentials of our demand and are not calculated to satisfy our just aspirations. If you will permit me to point out, there seems to me no material difference between those that advocate rejection and those that advise acceptance, for the common feature of both is to continue the struggle till our rights are won. In politics as in war, not combat but victory is the object to be pursued and where ground is yielded, not to take it would be to abandon what you have won. The Secretary of State and the Viceroy in their Report have earnestly exhorted us to put our heads

together in constructive statesmanship and I have no doubt that at this crucial juncture in our political history we shall preserve that deliberative calm which is necessary for the building of a great project.

The proposals have placed us under a great disappointment for, though the essentials of our demand are acknowledged in theory, they have not been conceded in substance. Under disappointment our mind would naturally be prone to be occupied with the evil that disquiets it, but true wisdom lies in calmly finding out the means to remove the evil. The history of our Congress is a history of patient constitutional struggle. The traditions that we of the present generation have inherited from those that founded and established this great national organisation are of perseverance in the face of even tremendous opposition, and today it stands acknowledged as the champion of the rights of the Indian people. Those traditions are dear to us and we cherish them. We know no extremists and we know no moderates, names that have been devised by “our enemies” to divide us. We know only one cause and we have only one purpose in view. Our demand is the demand of a United India, and so long as our rights are denied to us we shall continue the struggle.

“Unchained in soul—though manacled in limb—

“Unwarped by prejudice—unawed by wrong.

“Friends to the weak and fearless of the strong.”

“The illustrious authors of the Report themselves remark that there is a belief abroad that assurances given in public pronouncements of policy are sometimes not fulfilled. I would say, not “sometimes” but “Seldom” fulfilled. The Morley-Minto Reforms were hailed by the whole country as ushering in a new era of political progress, but when they were brought into actual operation the bureaucratic framers of the rules and regulations succeeded in nullifying the liberal policy of Lords Morley and Minto. After our sad experience of the Reforms of 1909 our faith in promises and pledge stands much shaken today. Just as we are told to realize that India’s political future is not to be won merely by fine phrases, so we ought to make it clear to Government that a whole fifth of the human race cannot be kept loyal to foreign rule by mere promises. The days of fine phrases and hollow promises have equally passed and if we are to be kept within the great British Empire, our confidence must be won, our affection must be secured. To the Secretary of State and the Viceroy we are grateful for the genuine desire their Report demonstrates for the political progress of our country, but to be perfectly frank, we are not without just apprehension that in much of their work their good intention will be frustrated by those to whom the carrying out of the policy will be entrusted in this country

and it is for this reason that our demand for the Indian element in the Governor-General's Executive Council must be insistent on being half of the total strength."

### **"Fiscal Policy**

The fiscal policy concerning India has not been stated in any detail by Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford. They say that connected intimately with the matter of industries is the question of the Indian tariff. No one can doubt the defect of the existing fiscal policy so far as the interest of India is concerned. The subject is obviously excluded from discussion as it has been thought undesirable at this juncture to raise any question of the modification of the fiscal policy. The illustrious authors of the Report say that they have no immediate proposals to make but they are anxious that any decision which may hereafter be taken should be taken with full appreciation of educated Indian opinion. We have through our representatives in the Indian Legislative Council, by our speeches from public platforms and by the medium of the press, expressed the Indian desire for a protective tariff.

With growing expenditure on administration and expanding individual needs we look to protective tariff as a means of bringing relief. We believe that if industries are to be nurtured tariff must be adopted. We are told that our belief is wrong but so long as our error in calculation is not demonstrated our faith in protective tariff will remain. Our desire for fiscal autonomy is not based upon any hostility to British interest. No doubt the extent of Indian gain will mean a corresponding loss to the British merchant but in the larger economy of the Empire a strong and prosperous India is of much greater value than mere commercial gain to Great Britain. The need to strengthen the Empire is demonstrated by the present war and the necessity for the strengthening of every unit of the Empire is now beyond question. I do not think any one will dispute the statement that in the past Indian Commercial interest was subordinated to British interests, but with a more spacious view of the Empire we expect greater attention to be paid to what will conduce to the prosperity of the country. Much of the political situation in India is due to economic forces that have been silently but surely working. It has often been said that foreign capital, which means British capital, has done much for the development of Indian resources. That is true if the development of resources as an abstract idea, detached from actual benefit, were regarded as a title of the British capitalist to the gratitude of the Indian people.

The question is has the kind of development, that we have had, brought to the Indian the prosperity that he wants. The Indian has merely been the producer of raw materials for the benefit of British manufacturers who have purchased the materials from him at low prices and sold the manufactured articles to him at high prices. Industrially we have been left so utterly untrained that we have not been able to free ourselves from the importation of foreign



manufacturers, while the export of raw materials has continued on an ascending scale. Frankly stated our conviction has been that our industrial backwardness has been positively encouraged in the interest of British manufacturers. This conviction is not based upon a mere prejudice that one race may have against another, but it is based upon facts of history dating from the time when the commercial development of the country was fostered by the Company as a matter of business. The tradition of the Company inherited by the Government under the Crown, we believe, have not been departed from and British commercial interests have had the same fostering care as in the days of the Company. The maintenance of the duty on cotton goods manufactured in the country has been unquestionably in the interest of Lancashire. The need for industrial development has been felt by us for a long time and it is at our solicitation that the Government now seems to be cognisant of it. We are glad to note that Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford are agreed that if the resources of the country are to be developed the Government must take action. We have long urged that the Government ought to be alive to their responsibility for the industrial development of the country; we have been crying for scientific institutes and technical institutions; we have urged upon their attention the examples of Germany and Japan. Have the Government up to now responded to our call with that depth of sympathy that the circumstances demanded? The dearth of technical institutions in the country testifies to the correctness of the charge that the Government, contrary to their duty, are indifferent to our industrial growth. Until the Government come forward as guide and helper, the charge will stand and we would be entitled to entertain the belief, as indeed at present we do, that in the policy of the Government the interest of India is but merely secondary.

The political consequences of such a belief can be easily imagined, for no Government can afford to allow the impression to prevail and to spread that the ruled are being “bled white” for the profit of the rulers. The whole subject has been comprehensively put by Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford in language that is impossible to be excelled. They say : “After the war the need for industrial development will be all the greater unless India is to become a mere dumping-ground for the manufactures of foreign nations which will then be competing all the more keenly for the markets on which their political strength so perceptibly depends. India will certainly consider herself entitled to claim all the help that her Government can give her to enable her to take her place as a manufacturing country; and unless the claim is admitted it will surely turn into an insistent request for a tariff which will penalise imported articles without respect of origin. On all grounds a forward policy in industrial development is urgently called for not merely to give India economic stability; but in order to satisfy the aspirations of her people who desire to see her stand before the world as a well-poised, up-to-date country; in order to provide an outlet for the energies of her youngmen who are otherwise drawn exclusively to Government service or a few over-stocked professions; in order that money now lying unproductive may be applied to the benefit of the whole

community and in order that the too speculative and literary tendencies of Indian thought may be bent to more practical ends, and the people may be better qualified to shoulder the new responsibilities which the new constitution will lay upon them.”

## CHAPTER XIV

### SIXTH SESSION IN BOMBAY

#### Speech of Babu Rajendra Prasad

The fortieth Session of the Indian National Congress was held in Bmbay from October 26 to 28, 1934. This was the 6th time during the history of the Indian National Congress that the city of Bombay had the honour of holding the Congress Session. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was the President of this Session. Following are some of the important passages from his speech :

“The Congress movement has passed through various phase during the last fifty years of its existence. One would feel tempted to take a birds-eye-view of its hope and aspirations, its weakness and failures, its successes and triumphs. But I would resist that temptation except in so far as its recent history may be necessary to elucidate the present and enable us to lay out a programme for the future.

It will be recalled that the last regular session of the Congress was held at Karachi in March 1931, soon after the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. It was much to be hoped that that Pact would open a way to permanent peace between British and India but that was not to be. Now that Civil Disobedience has been suspended it would be useless to go into a detailed examination of the circumstances, which forced the hands of the Congress to restart Civil Disobedience after Mahatma Gandhi's return from the Second Round Table conference. I would content myself by stating that at every step the object of the authors of the Pact was frustrated by the officials who were in charge of affairs and had to give effect to it provisions.

Lord Irwin had retired. Lord Willingdon had come in and there was undisguised resentment in official circles at what was regarded as a surrender on the part of Lord Irwin. And the moment he was away from the scene, a complete change in the Government policy came about and preparations were set afoot to take the Congress by surprise as soon as the Round Table Conference was over. It was known the Government could not afford and did not intend to accept the demands of the Congress. Events in England also proved favourable to this scheme of things. The Labour Government had resigned. The National Government with a big Conservative majority was formed and the whole policy of Lord Irwin and Mr. Wedgwood Benn was reversed.”

## “Suspension of Civil Disobedience—Council Programme :

Events have somehow so happened that since the breach of the Truce in 1932 we have had to steer our course clear of Government policies. The suspension of the Civil Disobedience movement was declared not with reference to any declaration of policy by Government, but with reference to the peculiar moral and spiritual character of our struggle.

I will not go into the events that led up to the historic Patna decision of May 1934—how Gandhiji successfully challenged from jail the Communal Award of the Premier which had threatened to vivisect the Hindu community in twain, how Gandhiji intensified the movement for the abolition of untouchability and his epic fast a part of it, and his release, the Poona Conference and how as a result of things he had heard and seen during the great Harijan tour he came to recommend to the AICC suspension of the Civil Disobedience and confining it to himself. Let the country study the course of events in the statements Gandhiji has issued from time to time.

Some of the factors which must have weighted with Gandhiji when he recommended suspension of Civil Disobedience as a mass movement could not have escaped the notice of even casual observers. Two weaknesses seem to me to have dogged our footsteps.

Firstly, the Congress workers had been gradually, and perhaps unconsciously, led into adoption of methods of secrecy, which reduced what would have been an open battle of defiance into a battle of wits. It was not realised that Satyagraha is essentially a fight on a higher moral plane in which suffering is openly courted and cheerfully borne and which aims at conquering the opponent by an appeal to his moral sense and in which any attempt to overreach him rebounds with fatal effect on the Satyagrahi himself.

Secondly, it must be also admitted that the attack of the Government on a vulnerable point succeeded. People were not prepared to lose property to the extent they were prepared to lose liberty and even life and when heavy fines and sequestration of property in lieu of fines and confiscations started on a wholesale scale, gradually demoralisation set in and ultimately broke the back bone of the movement. Attempt was made to continue the struggle by confining it to those individuals who had faith in it, and taking it out of the methods of secrecy. That partly explains the Poona and the Patna decisions.

It has had to be suspended in the very interests of the movement and those of the country. The principal reason was our own weakness and yet I do not feel that there is any reason to be down-hearted. Our object is nothing less than the liberation of a vast country which is as big as a continent with its varied population of many casts and creeds and

speaking different languages. The response which the country has made from one end to other to the call of the Congress has been splendid and we have reason to be proud of it. Because our object is great and the task difficult and tremendous we have to consider our own shortcomings and defects of the Working Committee and the All India Congress Committee.

Naturally certain resolutions and certain announcements which Mahatma Gandhi has made, have been subjected to very searching criticism. The value and importance of these resolutions and the statements of Mahatmaji consist in the fact that they have brought in the forefront of discussion certain fundamental considerations. The first statement which Mahatmaji issued from Patna on the 7th April last simultaneously with his correspondence with Dr. Ansari announced his advice to the Congress and Congressmen to suspend Civil Disobedience, except with regard to himself and to those who believe in entry into legislatures, to take up the programme of Council-entry. Both these items were considered at great length at a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee at Patna in the following May and were endorsed by it. The Council entry programme naturally led to the creation of the Congress Parliamentary Board which has been entrusted with the work of organising, guiding and controlling propaganda in favour of election of Congressmen to the Assembly for the time being.

Now today we are in the midst of a campaign which has led to the formulation of the Congress policy in the legislatures in regard to the White Paper and the Government policy of ruthless repression on which all parties in it are agreed but also unfortunately on what has been called the Communal decision of the British Government on which all are not agreed. It will be recalled that after the Second Round Table Conference, the British Government announced its decision settling from its point of view the questions of communal representation in the legislatures under the reformed constitution. The decision was given because the Indian members of the Round Table Conference were unable to arrive at an agreed settlement of the outstanding differences on the constitutional question amongst the various communities in India. It has created the unfortunate position that whilst we are unable to agree among ourselves, it is also impossible to accept this decision which is anti-national in many respects and is calculated to retard the progress of the country towards a common national outlook.

On the other hand it cannot be denied that some of the minorities, particularly the Musalmans, are opposed to rejecting it or think in the main it safeguards their interests. The Working Committee had therefore to decide the question on which a large section of Hindus and Sikhs are on the one side and practically all Musalmans, with a few leading exceptions and perhaps members of some other minority communities are on the other, the former

favouring the unqualified rejection of the decision and the latter equally strongly favouring its acceptance until it was replaced by an agreed settlement. Under the circumstances the working Committee had no other alternative but to point out the unsatisfactory and anti-national nature of the decision hoping at the same time to be able in course of time to replace it by an agreed settlement and to that end not to divert the attention of the country by creating an agitation in favour of either accepting or rejecting it.

### **Mahatmaji's Statement**

But events have marched quickly during the past few weeks. Mahatma Gandhi has just made of statements of far reaching importance in which he has recorded his reading of the history of the past fifteen years, placed his finger unerringly on the secret places of our heart and given us a warning for the future. Not even his worst critics have challenged his analysis and some have even gloated over the situation in an 'I told you so' spirit. It will be best for us and for our country if even at the end of these fifteen years of our struggle we realise the true situation. The first statement was in the nature of a challenge and a feeler, the second is the result of the country's reaction to the first.

In the first he declared the things that he holds dearer than life itself—truth and non-violence and khadi, reform and revolution through conversion and not compulsion—and said that as one section of the country was running away from these articles of faith and as the other was giving no effect to the allegiance to them which it professed from year to year there was nothing for it but for him to retire from the Congress. In the second statement he declares his conviction that his retirement is inescapable but as he retires in order to be of more service to the Congress and the Country than heretofore he has also suggested a reform in the constitution which alone can save the Congress from disruption.

Now that leaders like Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr. Ansari and the Khan brothers have given their hearty assent to the correctness of Gandhiji's decision I do not think it is necessary for me to take up your time discussing the pros and cons of the question of his retirement. I should certainly have done so if my own mind ran counter to the opinions of these colleagues but I am in hearty agreement with them though the mind and heart both boggle at the thought of his retirement. But I am steadied as soon as I remind myself that his decision proceeds out of the depth of his devotion to truth and non-violence and it must spur us on to further effort towards those ideals.

But though Mahatmaji has made up his mind not to seek the vote of the Congress on things that make up the warp and woof of his life, I would ask you not to dismiss those things without a thought and would urge you to realize their implications and to give them some

place at least in your programme and your policies. Though I do not claim to have the same living and active faith as Mahatma Gandhi in those things that he has thought some of us at least to hold dear, I must declare my creed and my conviction about them.

About the amendment in the creed, I would ask you only one question. Have we really understood by “peaceful and legitimate” anything but “truthful and non-violent” all these years? Has the world outside understood our creed differently? All the credit that we can take today and all the discredit that critics and our self-introspecting hearts pour upon us spring from the fact that we have kept that lofty creed as our ideal. The world should cease to watch our fight with interest if our creed meant anything less than it has meant all these years. Whatever the failure of our civil resistance to civilise our rulers there is no gainsaying the fact that there should have been much more unashamed brutality that we have been the victims of, if there had not been this great creed proclaimed by us.

I next come to the yarn franchise and to the much discussed khadi clause. I may say without being guilty of national vanity that there is no other Flag in the world which expresses in itself purer and loftier ideals. It rules out in one sweep the fourfold curse of modern humanity, viz. imperialism, militarism, capitalism and industrialism. The spinning wheel and khadi are not only the living link between the classes and the masses, they are symbols of the country's determination to resist all forms of exploitation by non-violent means. They represent an era of purification of politics and private life. Remove the khadi clause and you will snap the living link between the cities and the villages.

To my mind Truth, Non-violence and Khadi represent a triple force whereby we can achieve the whole of the Karachi programme and more. There is a section of our countrymen who without having achieved even what we pledged ourselves to do at Karachi insist on crying for more. Whilst I would have no objection to amplifying the Karachi programme and elucidating it wherever there may be any fear of a misunderstanding. I would say emphatically that we should do nothing that compromises by one iota the creed of non-violence. Whatever may be our failures we have made rapid strides. Let us not by our impatience undo the work of the last fifteen years. My friends the socialists, are keen on a more inspiring ideology and would hasten the elimination of all that stands for exploitation. I should like to tell them in all humility but with all the force at my command that there is no greater ideology than is expressed by the creed of truth and non-violence and the determination of the country not to eliminate the men that stand for exploitation but the forces that do so. Our quarrel is with the sin and not the sinner which we all are to a greater or lesser degree. Compulsion will react on us with redoubled force; conversion however slow it may seem, will be the shortest cut and will mean a new contribution to history and civilisation.

Having said this, I would say a word about the reform in the constitution that Mahatmaji has suggested in his second statement. He recommends that the size of the Congress should be considerably curtailed and the representation in the Congress should reflect its hold on the country as a whole. It has been suggested that to make the Congress an efficient deliberative body, the number of delegates should be reduced from 6,000 to 1,000 and each delegate should be regarded not as a representative of a set number of people living within a particular area but should be regarded as in fact he is a representative of the members on the Congress roll and give to those places and provinces proportionally larger representation in the Congress, that will have more members on their rolls and that have been more active in carrying out Congress programme. Whether they, the members, represent the whole nation or not, will depend upon the quantity and quality of service they render. The Congress influence and hold over the people have never depended upon the number on the actual register depended upon what it stands for and the sacrifice that the members have made for achieving the goal.

In conclusion, I would say that in considering Mahatmaji's statements you should remove from your minds any apprehension that you may have that he is going to retire from public life or that by not being physically connected with the Congress his interest will cease or that his help will not be available. I have no such apprehension. I am sure his separation is intended to strengthen and help us and not in any way to weaken or hinder us. I feel that Mahatma Gandhi, outside the Congress which does not whole heartedly accept his programme, will be more helpful to the country and the Congress than Mahatma Gandhi inside the Congress with the drag of a big unbelieving majority at his back. I do not therefore feel any shock over his impending separation. I do not minimise the effect of such a decision if he comes to it but I wish you to have faith in him and I have no doubt that all will be right, whether he decides to work from within or from outside the Congress.

## **Conclusion**

Let us start with clean slate on the work in front of us. The need of the hour is not for a bigger or more inspiring programme but for the determination to achieve what little we may set before ourselves. The task is immense. There is today a greater determination on the part of the rulers not to part with power as they have succeeded in creating disruption in our ranks. The ordinance rule of the past four years indicates the extent to which Government can go to suppress the movement for freedom even though it may be probably non-violent. Bengal and N. W. Frontier have been raped seemingly beyond repair. It is difficult to breathe free in the one and it is impossible to understand the situation in the other. There have been deplorable acts of terrorism in Bengal, but unmanning the whole youth of vast areas it not the way to fight it.



The N. W. Frontier Province which has had a severe spell of repression which the brave Pathans, led by that selfless and patriotic servant, Abdul Gaffar Khan, have borne with exemplary restraint is forbidden ground for him and for his brother. There is constructive work enough and to spare to occupy the time and energies of those who care for it. The resolution on cent per cent Swadeshi that Mahatmaji has embodied in his second statement is a vital one. If the infatuation with high-sounding slogans has not blinded our reason we should see that khadi-with cent per cent Swadeshi is enough to take us to our goal of complete independence which, in Mahatmaji's language "is an impossible dream without the higher classes merging themselves in those millions who are miscalled lower classes."

There is lastly the Council programme. The all-India Congress Committee has decided to contest elections to the Legislative Assembly so that the country might pronounce its verdict on the White Paper and the repressive policy of the Government. I hope that the electors will show by unmistakable action that the Congress possesses their full confidence. Let us not, however, be led away by the idea that Swaraj can be achieved by what we do in the assembly. Price for freedom must be paid before we can get it, and while we have every reason to be proud of what has been done and what the country has suffered it is, after all yet inadequate for the great object we have in view.

The task we have taken upon ourselves is great and glorious. It required inexhaustible patience, unflinching determination and unending sacrifice. Time and world force are helping us and, above all, God is with us in this great epic struggle of an unarmed people fighting with the weapons of Satyagraha of Truth and Non-Violence, a most powerful Government armed cap-a-pie and equipped with the latest engines of destruction devised by science and human ingenuity. For us there is no turning back. The goal is clear. It is nothing short of Independence.

Independence is the natural outcome of all that the freedom movement in India has stood for. It cannot mean isolation, particularly when we remember that it has to be achieved by non-violence. It means the end of exploitation of one country by another and of one part of the population of the same country by another part. It countemplates a free and friendly association with other nations for the mutual benefit of all. It forbids evil to none, not even to those exploiting us except in so far as they rely upon exploitation rather than goodwill. The sanction behind this Independence movement is non-violence which in its positive and dynamic aspect is goodwill of and for all. We already see sings of how it has begun appealing to a certain extent to world opinion.

This appeal has to become irresistible. It can do so accordingly as the element of distrust and suspicion, which has its birth in fear, is eliminated and replaced by a sense of

security born of confidence in the goodwill of India. India having no designs on others, will not then need a large army either for its protection against foreigners or for internal peace which will stand guaranteed by the goodwill of her inhabitants. Having no designs on others, she will be able to claim immunity from the evil designs of others and her safety will be buttressed and protected by the goodwill of the world at large. Conceived in thi light, our Independence ought not to frighten even the British unless they aim at perpetuating the present unnatural conditions.

The method too is crystal clear. It is active dynamic non-violent mass action. We may fail once we may fail twice, but we are bound to succeed some day. Many have already lost their lives and all. Many more have sacrificed themselves in their struggle for freedom. Let us not be deterred by difficulties which confront us nor diverted from our straight course by fear or favour. Our weapon are unique and the world is watching the progress of our great experiment with interest and high expectation. Let us be true to our creed and firm in our determination. Satyagraha in its active application may meet with temporary setbacks but it knows no defeat. It is itself a grat victory, for as James Lowell put it,

“Truth for ever on the scaffold,  
Wrong for ever on the throne,  
Yet that scaffold sways the future  
And behind the dim unknown,  
Standeth God within the shadow,  
Keeping watch above His own.”

The remaining portion of his speech was devoted to the consideration of the provisions of White Paper on Indian Constitution.

## CHAPTER XV

### SEVENTH SESSION IN BOMBAY

#### Speech of Shri Jagjivan Ram

The Seventythird Session of the Indian National Congress was held in Bombay on December 28-29, 1969. This was an important Session as the Congress was meeting for the first time after the split in the Congress. Shri Jagjivan Ram presided over this Session. Following are some of the important passages from his speech :

“The associations of this great cosmopolitan city with the Indian National Congress are close as well as historic. It was here that the Congress was born almost 85 years ago. It was here that Mrs. Besant convened a secret conference of Congress leaders, among them Lokmanya Tilak and Surendranath Banerji, to induce them to join the Home Rule League in December 1915, a few days before the regular session presided over by Lord Sinha. It was here that the Congress celebrated its golden jubilee and one of the greatest sons of India and the gentlest of Congress Presidents. Deshratna Dr. Rajendra Prasad presided over the 1934 session. It was here again that Gandhiji gave his revolutionary ‘Quit India’ call in August 1942.

An organisation of moderates wedded to the method of constitutional representation, the Congress underwent a transformation when Gandhiji emerged on the scene. It functioned since then till the advent of independence as a mass movement and a united anti-imperialist front. It developed a massive organisation conforming in structure roughly to the British administrative apparatus. Beginning at the village level and extending up through the district and provincial levels to the Working Committee which approximated to the cabinet of independent India and a President who was a symbol of the people, it dominated the Indian political scene for decades. It was relatively easier during this phase to reconcile the varying and conflicting views of its highly differentiated following because of unanimity on the objective of political independence. After the achievement of this goal, however, in 1947, it had to adjust itself to a new situation in which the locus of power shifted from party to Government. The adjustment did not prove easy. Two Presidents quit office and some sort of a convention appeared to have crystallised. But it proved to be illusory. There was no conventions; there was only an adjustment. Therefore, when Panditji passed away, instead of the Congress Parliamentary Party electing its leader, through the established democratic procedure of a free election and the organisation accepting the decision without reservation, a reverse process was initiated which sought to circumvent the free expression of the will of the members of the parliamentary party, put it in the background, and put the organization

chief in the position of a king-maker. I want to make it clear that in saying this, I am emphasising a principle and no reference to personalities is intended. The reference is made only to underline that abridgement or denial of internal democracy invariably produces distortions.

As a matter of fact, post-independence Congress, in the form in which it existed even in 1948, had, according to Gandhiji, outlived its utility as a propaganda vehicle. He had, therefore, urged the initiation of popular activity on a different plane based on the concept of 'peoples committees'. The cataclysmic events which followed this prognosis made a complete break with the past and the building anew from below humanly impossible. The organisation, therefore, continued in the form in which it had existed in the pre-independence era. The administrative apparatus was also left unchanged. The old procedures continued to hold the field. All this certainly made for smooth transition and continuity but it smothered that soaring spirit of freedom which political independence had given rise to.

This session fulfils, in a way, Gandhiji's wish, not fully, but partially, not in form, but in spirit. It heralds the beginning of a new historic epoch in the Congress. It marks another transformation. **Just as Gandhiji's Congress in 1920 was a new Congress as also the old one, this Congress is a new Congress and still it is the old one.** [Emphasis added by the editor.] It seeks to transform itself into an instrument of revolution and change. It is committed, we are all committed, to democracy, socialism, secularism, unequivocally and irrevocably. Any law of the land which stands in the way of the realisation of these ideal must be repealed or suitably amended. Any power, social, economic or political, which comes in the way must be tamed and made to serve the common goal. The Congress must cease to be a loosely-knit heterogeneity riven by factions, by conflicting, even contradictory views about progress, bound together by the single obsession of political power. It can hardly afford to put up with the hesitations which stood in the way of formulation of bold policies and their vigorous execution. No quarter can be given to people paying lip sympathy to its ideals but acting all through the line to delay and distort the realisation of the objectives. Conflicts within us we will resolve. Contradictions within us we will remove.

“The humanistic strands in Indian thought which regard man as a part of divinity, as something sacred, are part of our heritage. Gandhiji's teachings are there. Nehru's vision is there. We have been able to synthesise these great strains of our thought with the humanistic strands of Western thought into our ideology of democratic socialism. We are committed to democracy, socialism and secularism—the three pillars on which the Indian National Congress stands. We all realise that in a traditionalistic backward society democracy without socialism implies the rule of the privileged by the privileged and for the privileged and socialism without democracy implies totalitarianism. We know that secularism is in a way an

old Indian ideal and not just a western inheritance. Equal respect for all religion is ingrained in the thought structure of thi country. Unfortunately, the humanistic and liberal strands of Indian thought never got integrated into the social structure, were never practised in daily life. The West lived upto it. The concept that man is born with certain inalienable rights forms the very foundation of Western Democratic society. And the west progressed. Indian society reared on built-in cumulative inequalities and disregard of man, languished. The thoughts are not new to us. The practice is. In any case modern man is the inheritor of all that is noble and good in human thought. And thus, our Democratic Socialism is a synthesis of all that is best in the thinking of the East and West and provides an ideology superior to other sectarian ideologies, which are ‘Communalistic’ or ‘Communitarian’.”

“So long as the social framework continues to be curved no performance either by the democratic group or that, will be equal to the occasion. In endeavouring, therefore, to build a new leadership structure from the village level upwards, fully in accord with the objects of the organisation and imbued with revolutionary zeal, in trying to put a new content in the old form, we would do well to clearly visualize the nature and the inadequacies of the form, as also its social background. The Congress has arisen, as we all know, from the background of a social order which was and continues to be traditionalistic, heirarchical, and, even tribalistic in some of its traits. Such a millieu, if allowed to remain unchanged is likely to sustain and perpetuate the old way of thinking and the bulit-in social inequalities and orthodoxies and sully the content. The social order must, therefore, change fast to provide a base for the new ideas, the new policies, the new programmes. On the pace of this change will depend the development of the organisation into an effective instrument of social change and revolution. Mere profession of the Congress ideals hardly takes us anywhere. Almost everyone talks of socialism. All Congressmen certainly do. But socialistic policies either do not find sustenance or support or in the process of implementation get diluted or deformed. The time has come to take swift and adequate action to end these contradictions. A large section of society which stands to gain from socialism and will naturally be in the vanguard of any movement for its establishment, has not been drawn to the Congress. The Scheduled Castes. Scheduled Tribes, other backward classes and all the minorities should be drawn in larger numbers into the Congress and involved directly in its activities. A sense of participation in the decision-making bodies at all levels should be ensured to them.”

“We also know that there is nothing wrong with our people, they only want to move faster and still faster. They know that we are in tune with their urges and aspirations. We pledge our loyalty once again to the people of India. We shall permit nothing, to stand in their onward march. To that pledge we Congressmen rededicate ourselves. We rededicate ourselves to our ideology of democracy and socialism, and resolve to so refashion our organisation that it becomes in fact as in spirit an effective instrument of change, social

revolution and service to the masses. We go from here with the full realisation that we are all committed to socialism and that commitment to socialism implies commitment to the social whole, commitment to the equality-principle, commitment to a scientific way of thinking. The task is great and difficult but I am confident that we shall rise to the occasion. We successfully face this challenge.”

## APPENDIX I

### PRESIDENTS OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

1885	First Session (Bombay)	President, Mr. W. C. Bannerji
1886	Second Session (Calcutta)	President, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji.
1887	Third Session (Madras)	President, Mr. Badruddin Tyabji.
1888	Fourth Session (Allahabad)	President, Mr. George Yule
1889	Fifth Session (Bombay)	President, Sir. William Wedderburn.
1890	Sixth Session (Calcutta)	President, Mr. Pherozshah M. Mehta.
1891	Seventh Session (Nagpur)	President, Mr. P. Anandacharlu.
1892	Eighth Session (Allahabad)	President, Mr. W. C. Bannerji
1893	Ninth Session (Lahore)	President, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji.
1894	Tenth Session (Madras)	President, Mr. Alfred Webb
1895	Eleventh Session (Poona)	President, Mr. Surendranath Bennerji.
1896	Twelfth Session (Calcutta)	President, Mr. Rahimtullah M. Sayani.
1897	Thirteenth Session (Amravati)	President, Mr. C. Shankaran Nair.
1898	Fourteenth Session (Madras)	President, Mr. A. M. Boss
1899	Fifteenth Session (Lucknow)	President, Mr. R. C. Dutt
1900	Sixteenth Session (Lahore)	President, Mr. N. G. Chandavarkar.
1901	Seventeenth Session (Calcutta)	President, Mr. Dinshaw Edulji Wacha.
1902	Eighteenth Session (Allahabad)	President, Mr. Surendranath Bennerji.
1903	Nineteenth Session (Madras)	President, Mr. Lal Mohan Ghosh.
1904	Twentieth Session (Bombay)	President, Mr. Henry Cotton
1905	Twentyfirst Session (Banaras)	President, Mr. Gopal Krishna Gokhale.
1906	Twentysecond Session (Calcutta)	President, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji.
1907	Twentythird Session (Surat)	President, Mr. Rash Behary Ghosh.

Note.—As the Surat Session of the Congress was not able to complete the deliberations on account of split in the Congress, the 23rd Session was continued in 1908 at Madras. The

President of the Session Mr. Rash Bechary Ghosh continued to be the President of the Session at Madras.

1909	Twentyfourth Session (Lahore)	President, Pandit Madan-Mohan Malaviya.
1910	Twentyfifth Session (Allahabad)	President, Mr. William Wedderburn.
1911	Twentysixth Session (Calcutta)	President, Mr. Bishan Narayan Dar.
1912	Twentyseventh Session (Bankipore)	President, Mr. Rao Bahadur R. N. Mudholkar.
1913	Twentyeighth Session (Karachi)	President, Mr. Nawab Syed Mohammed.
1914	Twentyninth Session (Madras)	President, Mr. Bhupendranath Basu.
1915	Thirtieth Session (Bombay)	President, Sir. S. P. Sinha.
1916	Thirtyfirst Session (Lucknow)	President, Mr. A. C. Mazumdar.
1917	Thirtysecond Session (Calcutta)	President, Mrs. Annie Beasant
1918 (Aug. 29 to Sept. 1)	Special Session (Bombay)	President, Mr. Hasan Iman
1918	Thirtythird Session (Delhi)	President, Pandit Madanmohan Malaviya.
1919	Thirtyfourth Session (Amritsar)	President, Pandit Motilal Nehru.
1920 Sept. 4, to 8	Special Session (Calcutta)	President, Lala Lajpatrai
1920 Dec.	Thirtyfifth Session (Nagpur)	President, Mr. C. Vijjaraghavachariar.
1921 Dec.	Thirtysixth Session (Allahabad)	President, Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das.
1922 Dec.	Thirtyseventh Session (Gaya)	President, Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das.
1923 Dec.	Thirtyeighth Session (Cocanand)	President, Mr. Maulana Mohamed Ali.
1924 Dec.	Thirtynineth Session (Belgaum)	President, Mahatma Gandhi
1925	Fortieth Session (Kanpur)	President, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu.
1926 Dec.	Fortyfirst Session (Gauhati)	President, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar.
1927 Dec.	Fortysecond Session (Madras)	President, Dr. M. A. Ansar
1928 Dec.	Fortythird Session (Calcutta)	President, Pandit Motilal Nehru.
1929 Dec.	Fortyfourth Session (Lahore)	President, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.
1931	Fortyfifth Session (Karachi)	Sardar Vallabhabahi Patel
1932	Fortysixth Session (Delhi)	President, Designate, Mr. Madanmohan Malaviya.



(Note.—The session was presided over by Mrs. Nellie Sen Gupta. Pandit Madanmohan Malaviya, the President-designate was arrested on the previous day on his way to Calcutta. Hence, Mrs. Nellie Sen Gupta Presided over the Session.)

1933	Fortyseventh Session (Calcutta)	President, Pandit Madanmohan Malaviya.
1934	Fortyeighth Session (Bombay)	President, Mr. Rajendra Prasad.
1936 (April)	Fortynineth Session (Lucknow)	Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
1936 Dec.	Fiftyeith Session (Faizpur)	President, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
1938	Fiftyfirst Session (Haripura)	President, Mr. Subhash Chandra Bose.
1939	Fiftysecond Session (Tripuri)	President, Mr. Subhash Chandra Bose.
1940	Fiftythird Session (Ramgarh)	President, Mr. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.
1946	Fiftyfourth Session (Meerut)	President, Acharya. J. B. Kripalani.
1948	Fiftyfifth Session (Jaipur)	President, Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya.
1950	Fiftysixth Session (Nashik)	President, Mr. Purushottam Das Tandon.
1951	Fiftyseventh Sesion (NewDelhi)	President, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.
1953	Fiftyeighth Session (Hyderabad)	President , Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.
1954	Fiftynineth Session (Kalyani)	President, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.
1955	Sixtyeith Session (Avadi)	President, Mr. U. N. Dhebar
1956	Sixtyfirst Session (Amritsar)	President, Mr. U. N. Dhebar
1957	Sixtysecond Session (Indore)	President, Mr. U. N. Dhebar
1958	Sixtythird Session (Gauhati)	President, Mr. U. N. Dhebar
1959	Sixtyfourth Session (Nagpur)	President, Mr. U. N. Dhebar
1960 Jan.	Sixtyfifth Session (Bangalore)	President, Mr. N. Sanjiva Reddy
1961 Jan.	Sixtysixth Session (Bhavnaaar)	President, Mr. N. Sanjiva Reddy
1962	Sixtyseventh Session (Patna)	President, Mr. N. Sanjiva Reddy
1964	Sixtyeighth Session (Bhubaneshwar)	President, Mr. K. Kamaraj
1965	Sixtynineth Session (Durgapur)	President, Mr. K. Kamaraj
1966	Seventieth Session (Jaipur)	President, Mr. K. Kamaraj
1968	Seventyfirst Session (Hyderabad)	President, Mr. S. Nijalingappa

1969	Seventysecond Session (Faridabad)	President, Mr. S. Nijalingappa
1969	Seventythird Session (Bombay)	President, Mr. Jagjivan Ram
1972	Seventyfourth Session (Calcutta)	President, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma.
1976	Seventyfifth Session (Chandigarh)	President, Mr. D. K. Borroah.
1978	Seventysixth Session (New Delhi)	President, Smt. Indira Gandhi
1983	Seventuseventh Session (Calcutta)	President, Smt. Indira Gandhi
1985	Seventyeighth Session [ <a href="#">This Session Celebrates the Centenary of the Indian National Congress</a> ] (Baombay)	President Shri Rajiv Gandhi

## **APPENDIX II BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON SOME CONGRESS LEADERS FROM THE CITY OF BOMBAY (1885—1915)**

DADABHAI NAOROJI

1826—1917

President of three Sessions of the Congress (1) Calcutta 1886, (2) Lahore 1893, (3) Calcutta 1906.

Dadabhai Naoroji was rightly called the Grand Old Man of India. He was born on September 4, 1825 in Bombay. His father was a Parsee Priest. Dadabhai began his career as a teacher in the Elphinstone Institution. Later on he was appointed Professor of Mathematics in the Elphinstone College. Dadabhai was a moving spirit in the establishment of Students Literary and Scientific Society on August 4, 1849. Thus, he was one of the pioneers of female education in the city of Bombay. He was an active member of the Bombay Branch of Royal Asiatic Society.

In the year 1855 a commercial firm of the Camas decided to open a business firm in London. They invited Dadabhai to join them as a partner in this firm. Dadabhai agreed and sailed for England. In 1895 Dadabhai established his own business firm in England under the name of Dadabhai Naoroji and Company. Dadabhai started in London with the collaboration of W. C. Bannerjee, “The London Indian Society”. On December 1, 1866, the East India Association was inaugurated in collaboration with a Committee of retiring officers with idea of acquainting the British public and British Government with matters pertaining to the East India Company. The membership of the Association was thrown open to all those who were interested in the welfare of India. Dadabhai was one of the most outstanding figures at the meeting of the Association. On May 1867 he read his paper on “England’s duties to India”. On August 13, 1867, Dadabhai raised the question of admission of Indians to Indian Civil Service and proposed that a memorandum be sent to the Secretary of State for India demanding that the competitive examination should be held simultaneously in India and in England. Dadabhai returned to India in 1869 and there was a unique assembly of the inhabitants of Bombay, Europeans and Indians at the Framjee Cowasjee Institute on July 3rd, 1869 to honour Dadabhai. It was really a unique honour showered on Dadabhai till that time. Dadabhai returned to England and on October 29, 1869 he attended the meeting of the East India Association. During 1870-71 the Association discussed the topic of Indian finance.

Dadabhai returned to Bombay on 26th July 1875. He published a voluminous book containing 700 pages. The book was "Poverty and Unbritish Rule in India". Dadabhai also published a monthly journal on February 1, 1882. The name of the journal was "Voice of Indin". Dadabhai supported the Ilbert Bill at a public meeting in Bombay. One of the first awakening caused by the Ilbert Bill agitation was establishment in 1885 of the Bombay Presidency Association which was inaugurated on January 11, 1885. Dadabhai was elected as one of the Vice Presidents of the Association. Later on in the year in December the Indian National Congress was founded in Bombay. Dadabhai was present at the first Session of the Congress. He returned to England and contested election to the House of Commons from Finnsbury and was elected in the year 1892. Gladstone expressed his joy at the election of Dadabhai. Dadabhai's election to Parliament was only a means to an end, the end being the welfare of Indin. India and Congress were inseparably associated in Dadabhai's thought in becoming a member of the Parliament. It is interesting to note that in January 1888, Dadabhai wrote to Hume as follows :

"It is desirable that the native states should be allowed to take interest in and help the Congress and even if they choose to find delegates. Solidarity of this kind with all the people of India is the thing to be desired."

This clearly indicates the vision of Dadabbai. On May 24, 1895, a Royal Commission was appointed with Lord Welby as Chairman to enquire into the administration and management of the military and civil expenditure incurred under the authority of the Secretary of State for India in Council. Dadabhai was invited to join the Commission which invitation he accepted. During the year 1900 India was groaning under one of her worst famines. At a meeting held in England, Dadabhai warned the people not to exhaust the patience of Indian people Dadabhai said,

"India had been loyal to the Crown. But don't expect that loyalty cannot fail."

Lord Curzon's rule in India was extremely unpopular. The partition of Bengal antagonised the entire nation. A protest meeting of Indians residing in United Kingdom was held in London. Dadabhai presided over the meeting and gave a thrilling address, more thrilling and inspiring than any he had ever delivered. He said,

"Indians have unanimously earnestly and emphatically declared that the system of the rule they are now under should not continue to be."

These words also appeared prophatic and are probably the beginning of the process which culminated in the resolution of the AICC held in Bombay on 8th August 1942. Dadabhai during his speech observed :

“More than 50 years ago Mount Stuwart Elphinstone said :

‘It is in vain to endeavour to rule Indians on principles only suited to a slavish and inhabitant population and we find not only a continuance of the same old system but we find it brought to bear on the people with even more energy and more vigour. Now the Indian people have for the first time risen and declared that this thing shall not be. Here is the clear issue between the rulers and the people. They have come face to face. The rulers say, ‘We shall rule not only as a foreign invader with the result draining the country of its wealth and killing millions by famines and plague and starving scores of millions by poverty and destitution, while the ruled are saying for the first time, “That shall not be”’.

Dadabhai then quoted John Malcolm and said that the evil of the British rule carry with it the seeds of destruction of the Empire. Dadabhai returned to India in the year 1906 to preside for the last time over the session of the Indian National Congress held in Calcutta in December 1906. The Key-Note of Dadabhai’s address at Calcutta Congress was Swaraj. It was the first occasion when the demand of self-Government was formulated and put forward from the platform of the Congress.

Dadabhai said :

“Just as the administration of the United Kingdom, in all services, departments and details was in the hands of that country, so should it be in India. As in the United Kingdom and Colony, all taxation and legislation and all power of spending taxes were in the hands of the representatives of the people so should it be in India and the financial relations between India and England must be adjusted on the basis of equality.”

In the concluding the address he said :

“Be united, preserve and achieve self-Government so that the millions now perishing by poverty, famine and plague and the section of millions that are starving on scanty subsistence may be saved, India once more occupy her proud position of yore amongst the greatest and civilised nations of the world.”

It is interesting to note that for Dadabhai, self-Government for India was only a means for eradicating poverty, famine and plague and saving millions of people who were starving. Dadabhai had presided over earlier two sessions of Congress and at the time of the Calcutta session in 1906 over which he presided he was 82 years of age. Hence he was rightly called, “The Grand Old Man of India”. Mrs. Annie Besant started her Home Rule League in the year 1915 and requested Dadabhai to accept the Presidentship of the League. Dadabhai gave his

consent to the Presidentship on certain conditions. One of the conditions was that the League must not be turned against the Congress. In the year 1916 the University of Bombay conferred on Dadabhai the Honorary Degree of Doctorate of Laws. Dr. Mackichan, the Vice Chancellor observed on the occasion as follows :

“Men of all shades of political opinion were quick to detect the transparent honesty, the simplicity of performance, the unselfish patriotism of the man who sought to interpret to the Great Britain the needs and aspirations of his countrymen. British political life is peculiarly of sensitive character. While in this University we do not concern ourselves with politics, we are deeply concerned with character and today we will pay the tribute of our admiration to Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji’s patience under adversities and disappointments, his unvaried perseverance in the maintenance of his convictions and to the unselfish love to his country and nation which inspired him throughout its many conflicts.”

Dadabhai was suddenly taken ill two months before the declaration of August 20, 1917 which guaranteed increased association of Indians in every branch of administration and the gradual development of self-governing institution with a view to progressive realisation of responsible Government in India, which Dadabhai had been demanding. His end came soon and Dadabhai died at the ripe age of 93. Sir Narayan Chandavarkar paid an affectionate tribute to Dadabhai in the following words :

“If we take stock of his life and as example, may I say with perfect justice and truth that in his career in all he did in all he suffered and in all he thought, he was the prophet Zoroaster’s religion personified because he was a man more than anybody else or pure thought pure speech and pure deeds.”

DINSHAW EDULJI WACHA

2—8—1844—1936

President of the Calcutta Session of the Congress (1901)

He was born on August 2, 1844. He was associated with the first session of the Indian National Congress. He was also one of the Secretaries of the Bombay Presidency Association established in 1885. He was Secretary of the Congress for sixteen years and contributed richly to the cause of the Congress. He was elected President of the Congress in 1901 when the session was held at Calcutta. In his presidential address he referred to the all-absorbing topic of Indian famines and the policy of famine administration especially in Bombay. He referred to the British administrative agency in India and pointed out the draining away of India’s riches.

Annual expenditure on account of the British administrative agency was Rs. 16 crores as against only 21 crores on Indian administrative agency. He observed,—

“Was not England paupaised when the Papacy was rampant and abstracted millions from it annually as history hns recorded? Would England refrain from complaining supposing that the position of India and England was today reversed?”

In 1915 Bombay was the venue of the session of the Indian National Congress. Pherozechah was to be the Chairman of the Reception Committee. But on account of his sudden death, Wacha became the Chairman of the Reception Committee. In his address he pointed out the need for military training for Indians, for opening the commissioned ranks in the army to Indians of repute. He also put a vigorous plea for self-Government. He urged the rulers to lay down “a far reaching policy which will give a first instalment of genuine and living representation in the active government of the country broad-based upon people’s will.”

Dinshaw Wacha was a leading citizen of Bombay at that time. He was the Managing Agent of the Morarji Gokuldas and Sholapur Mills; a member of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, a member of the Memorial Trust Board; a member of the Mill Owners Association; President of the Bombay Presidency Association; President of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee and member of the Bombay Legislative Council. He was one of those who founded the Indian National Congress and had been active worker in its behalf. He specialised himself in the financial condition of India. His speeches reveal the economic drain from to India on account of the British rule. He had wonderful mastery over facts and figures. He was rightly described by the Indian Daily News of Calcutta, “For over 20 years Mr. Wacha was *enfant terrible* of the local politics of Bombay.”

In 1897 he represented Bombay Presidency Association before the Welby Commission. His evidence was very valuable. In his evidence he pointed out that a financial embarrassment in India was due to the enormous growth of military expenditure and the growth of civil expenditure. He also referred to the burden of exchange on India. In 1901 he was elected President of the Bombay Municipal Corporation. He was also elected President of the Indian National Congress in the same year. A major portion of his address was devoted to all absorbing topic of Indian Famine and the policy of Famine Administration. As the Secretary of the Bombay Presidency Association he submitted various memorials to the Government of India. In 1915 as the Chairman of the Reception Committee, Wacha put in a vigorous plea for self-Government. He also pointed out that the path to obtain it was not strewn with roses. He did not believe that self-Government would be given for the asking. He observed :

“What is most essential and of paramount importance, is the concentration of responsible opinion, well reasoned, well balanced and well directed which might unmistakably reveal the fact that India is of one mind and one heart.”

He urged the British rulers to lay down a “far looking policy which will give a first instalment of the genuine and a living representation in the active Government of the country, broadbased upon people’s will”.

## **BADRUDDIN TYABJI**

[[History of the Freedom Movement in India, Vol. 2, page : 387-390—Tara Chand.](#)] **President of Madras Session 1887**

Badruddin Tyabji (1844–1906) was, in the early days of the Congress, one of the foremost nationalist leaders. He belonged to an Arab family, which came to India and settled down in Bombay. In early life, he was educated in a Muslim Madrasa, and then in the Elphinstone Institute at Bombay. He began to take a lively interest in politics when, in 1878 Lord Lytton promulgated the Vernacular Press Act and suggested to the Secretary of State for India (Lord Salisbury) to exclude Indians from the Convenanted Service. He reacted vehemently against these measures. The Illbert Bill controversy of 1883 brought him to fight for the Indian cause. He was then rapidly climbing upwards in his profession as a barrister. He had been already appointed an additional member of the Legislative Council of Bombay, where by his eloquence and advocacy he gained great popularity among the people. On the 31st of January 1885, the Bombay Presidency Association was established, and he gave expression to his political opinions in the following words :—

“It is, I think, with the nations as with individuals that the growth of political life new aspirations arise, and those aspirations require an organisation to give them due expression and the organisation in its turn watches, regulates, develops, and directs national aspiratuin.” He went on to say, “We have awakened to a sense of our political rights, and the distinctions of race, colour and creed, which have so long and unfavourably divided us, have at last disappeared under the softening and enlightening influence of education.”

Along with Kashinath Trimbak Teland and Pherozeshah Mehta, Badruddin Tyabji was the recognised leader of all public movements in Bombay. As Sir H. P. Mody points out, “the brilliant triumvirate were carrying on a ceaseless campaign for reforms in every branch of the administration. From various platforms and through diverse organisations they laboured to promote the public good in every sphere of public life.”



When the Indian National Congress met in Bombay in December 1885, Tyabji not only supported the Congress but took pains to repudiate the charge of the London Times that the Muslims of Bombay had kept aloof. In a speech at the Bombay Presidency Association, he said, "I assure you of my perfect sympathy with the movement, and the sympathies of my co-religionists at Large. The English Times, in writing about the movement, mis-stated that the Muhammedan community refrained from having anything to do with it. This I deny. Although it is a fact that, for some reasons, Tyabji was unable to attend the session, Rahmatullah Sayani and Abdullah Dharamsi, two equally influential Muslim leaders of Bombay were present. And Tyabji reaffirmed his views thus : "The Muhammedans have their Anjuman-e-Islam to represent to Government the wants of the community, and to urge them to adopt measures for its general improvement, but I deny that they are not one with their countrymen of other creeds and persuasions in the movement for the political improvement of their country."

Feelers were thrown out by the Governor of Bombay, Lord Reay, to dissuade the Muslims from supporting the Congress. Lord Dufferin, who had already held a very satisfactory interview with Syed Ahmad Khan, personally tried to influence Badruddin Tyabji also. The Viceroy met Tyabji, presented to him a group photograph of himself and family, and professed great admiration and friendship for the Muslims, whom as British Ambassador in Turkey, he had come to love. But the effort of the Viceroy had no effect. Badruddin confessed, "I am much afraid of Donees bringing presents." Syed Ameer Ali also tried to win him over. As Secretary of the Muhammedan Association of Calcutta, he invited him to join the proposed Muhammedan political conference. Tyabji decline the invitation saying : "you are no doubt aware that I have always been of opinion that in regard to political questions at large, the Muhammedans should make a common cause with their fellow countrymen of other creeds and persuasions, and I cannot help deprecating any disunion on such questions between ourselves and the Hindus and Parsees. On this ground I have highly regretted the abstention of the Mussalmans of Calcutta from the National Congress held both in Bombay and Calcutta, If therefore, the proposed Muhammedan Conference is started simply as a rival to the National Congress, I should entirely oppose it, as it seems to me that the proper course is to join the Congress and take part in its deliberations, from our peculiar circumstances." In a subsequent letter, too, Badruddin Tyabji reiterated his political views in these words : "My own views are that in regard to general political questions affecting India as a whole, it is the duty of all educated and public-spirited citizens to work together, irrespective of their caste, colour or creed."

In 1887, the Indian National Congress held its session in Madras and elected Badruddin Tyabji as President, and he paid no attention either to the displeasure of the Government or the frowns of Syed Ahmad Khan and Syed Ameer Ali. In his presidential

address, he laid stress on the desirability of all communities of India joining together “in their efforts to obtain the great general reforms, those great rights which are for the common benefit of us all, and which I feel assured have only to be earnestly and unanimously pressed upon.” He refuted the charge that the Congress was merely a crowd of people. He challenged any person who made that assertion, stating, “come with me into this hall and look around you, and tell me where you could wish to see a better representation of the aristocracy, not of birth and of wealth, but of intellect, education, and position, than you see gathered within the walls of this hall.”

For several years after 1887, Tyabji was a decisive factor in the deliberations of the Congress. On the one hand, he attempted to convince the Muslims of India that, in matters of religion, they were free to act as they pleased and that the Congress would not interfere. But so far as national activities were concerned, the Indian Muslims should consider themselves as Indians and for all national advance—better government, better treatment of Indians, less taxes, better educational arrangements for all the communities—they should struggle together as one people to achieve their end. At the same time, he tried to dispel the fears of the Muslim community regarding the grant of representative institutions which would result in the preponderance of the Hindus, which might endanger the interests of Muslims by making laws and regulations affecting Muslim sacrifices on the occasions of Id and Muharram and Muslim ceremonies. He wrote to Muslim leaders of the North that it was the duty of all educated and public-spirited citizens, to work together irrespective of caste, colour or creed, and called upon all enlightened Muslims to do what they could individually and jointly to ameliorate the conditions of the people. As long as he lived, he remained a devout Muslim, but at the same time a devoted, loyal and fearless leader of the Indian National Congress.

In 1905, the Partition of Bengal opened a new phase in the relations between the Hindu and Muslim communities. Till then, Muslim political thought was divided between two schools. On the one hand, the upper class Muslims of northern India largely tended to gravitate towards the Aligarh Movement and the views of Syed Ahmad Khan. On the other hand, the School of Deoband and the Ulama, in general, held the leadership of those who were not trained in the institutions of Western education. The nationalist Muslims shared the liberal attitude of Syed Ahmad Khan towards the West, but differed from him on the problems of political reform, the ideas of representative democratic government and methods of democratic agitation. But on the eve of the Partition of Bengal, it was difficult to say which school would ultimately triumph in the competition for leadership of the Muslim community.”

SIR PHEROZESHAH MEHTA

1845—1915

President of Calcutta Session 1890.

Pherozeshah was born in Bombay on 4th August 1845. His father was Merchant. Pherozeshah joined Elphinstone College in 1854 which then located in a place at Gowalia Tank Road known as Tanker Ville. Pherozeshah then proceeded to England for his study of Law as he got scholarship from a Trust which was established by Mr. Rustomjee Jamshetjee Jeejeebhaoy. Along with Pherozeshah, W. C. Bannerjee from Calcutta was also elected for the study abroad, From 1865-68 Pherozeshah was in England. In England he made acquaintance with Mr. William Wedderburn who later on became closely associated with the Indian National Congress. On return to India, Pherozeshah started his practise and by slow progress acquired very good practise. Pherozeshah then started taking interest in public life of Bombay. The Bombay Association was formed and Pherozeshah and Bal Mangesh Wagle were appointed first Secretaries of the new Association. Pherozeshah took keen interest in the Bombay Municipal affairs and he carried on the agitation for the Municipal reforms in 1870-71. During the regime of Lord Lytton as Viceroy, there was a great discontent on account of many measures of the Viceroy and Pherozeshah took leading part in opposing many of his measures. Lord Lytton's regime came to a close in 1898 and there was a change for better in the Government of India. When Lord Lytton retired, about the same time Sir R. Temple's tenure as Governor of Bombay also came to an end. There was a move to give him an address. Pherozeshah was one of the strong dissenters. He made up his mind to offer active opposition to the idea of a public address to retiring Governor. Pherozeshah also fought the Crawford administration in the Bombay Municipal Corporation. Lord Rippon on becoming the Viceroy of India, introduced a Criminal Law Amendment Bill known as Illbert Bill. The Illbert Bill was supported by Indian leaders. The Bill in its amended form was passed on 25th January 1884. Pherozeshah played a very significant part in placing the Bill on the Statute Book. The Indian National Congress was born on 28th December 1885. Pherozeshah was present at the first Congress. Though the gathering was small, it included Sir William Wedderburn, Mr. Justice Jardine, Prof. Wordsworth, Ramkrishna Bhandarkar, Mahadev Govinda Ranade. From Bombay there were Dadabhai Naoroji, Telang, Dinshaw Wachha and Pherozeshah Mehta. Pherozeshah was associated with the Congress right from 1885 to his last days. Along with the Congress he also took keen interest in the Bombay Municipal Corporation and fought many a memorable battle in the Corporation Hall.

Pherozeshah Mehta was the soul of the Congress in India from 1885 to 1915. When the Congress Session was held in Bombay and Sir William Wedderburn presided over it, Pherozeshah was the Chairman of the Reception Committee. The Calcutta Session of the Indian National Congress was presided over by Pherozeshah. His Presidential address was characteristic of the Bombay leader.

In 1895 a Provincial Conference was held at Belgaum. Pherozeshah attended this Conference along with President-Elect Dinshaw Wacha, Bahadurji and others. Though Pherozeshah dominated the Congress, he was not able to maintain a close and personal touch with the movement. Hence, he kept away from Congress on more than one Session. In 1904, the Session of the Congress was held in Bombay. Pherozeshah worked very hard for its success. As a matter of fact, other Provinces were hesitant at that time in inviting the Congress. Pherozeshah boldly stepped forward and offered to arrange it being held in Bombay.

Pherozeshah was the leader of the liberal school of thought in the Congress. He along with Gokhale worked hard for taking the Congress on the line of moderation. But, Lord Curzon's regime in India created dissatisfaction among young men. The partition of Bengal sparked new enthusiasm in young men like Arabindo Ghosh and others. These young men found a sympathetic soul in Tilak in Poona. They, thus formed another group in Congress which was called Nationalists. The other names given to the groups were Moderates (Liberals) and Extremists (Nationalists). The Calcutta Session of the Congress held in 1906 passed a resolution demanding Self-Government and boycott of British goods. This was not very much to the liking of the Liberals. The Congress was controlled by them. Hence the Nationalists thought that in the next Session, the Liberals might throw overboard the resolution passed at Calcutta. Therefore they mustered their strength. Sensing this kind of strategy on the part of the Nationalists, Pherozeshah changed the venue of the next Session of the Congress from Nagpur to Surat. Pherozeshah's friend, Solicitor Malvi was the Chairman of the Reception Committee. It appears that both the groups had come prepared for a showdown. The account of the Surat Congress and the first major split in the Indian National Congress are recorded in various books. Srinivas Shastri who was present in the pendal has given his own account of the great split in his book on Pherozeshah Mehta. [H. P. Mody, *Sir Pherozeshah Mehta*, p. 539.] M. R. Jayakar was also present in the pendal at that time. He has given his own version in his autobiography "Story of My Life". When the resolution for electing Mr. Rash Bihari Ghosh as President of the Session was moved, Tilak, who had given note to the Chairman of the Reception Committee seeking permission to speak on the proposal of the election of the President and conveying his desire to moving an adjournment with a constructive proposal, being denied an opportunity to address, moved to the stage and stood on on his right to the stage with a view to addressing the audience. Tilak was loudly insisting move the amendment though he was asked to resume his seat. Tilak refused to move. He folded his arms on his chest and declined to go back unless he was bodily removed. It appears that both the groups had come prepared for a showdown. Mr. Nevinson who was present throughout and was a keenly interested spectator records the event as follows :

“Suddenly something flew through the air. A shoe, a Maratha shoe reddish leather pointed toe soul studded with lead. It struck Surendranath Bannerjee on the cheek; it cannoned upon Sir Pheozeshah Mehta. It flew, it fell and as at a give signal, white waves of turbanned men surged upon the escarpment of the platform. Leaping, climbing, hissing the breath of fury, brandishing long stocks, they came striking at any head that looked to them. Moderates and in another movement between brown legs standing upon the green baize table, I got glimpses of the Indian National Congress dissolving in chaos.”

Though the Congress was dissolved at Surat in 1907 the same Session was held at Madras in 1908. The work of the Congress was carried on by the Moderates. There were attempts made for rapprochement between the moderates and Extremists but the attempts did not succeed. The Madras Session had proved to be a success. A new Constitution for the Congress was adopted at Madras. The next Session was to be held at Lahore. It was expected that a concerted opposition would be offered to the newly framed Constitution. A strong President was therefore required under the circumstances and the obvious choice was Pherozechah. However, Pherozechah declined the invitation to preside over the Session. He sent the following telegram to Lala Harkishen Lal, Chairman of the Reception Committee.

“I deeply regret that owing to a combination of unexpected circumstances, I am compelled to relinquish the honour”.

Pherozechah Mehta was in the Bombay Legislative Council and the Central Legislative Council. He was connected with the University of Bombay and on the floor of the Senate he carried on many extraordinary battles against the authorities. He took a fighting attitude on the question of examination reforms. He lent support to Ranade in his strenuous endeavours made to afford some relief to the harassed students from crushing burden of examination. Ranade had made a unsuccessful effort in the Senate to reduce the 3 examinations necessary for Graduation to two. During Lord Dufferine’s tenure, the policy of veiled hostility to the cause of higher education was adopted. Confidential and semiconfidential circulars were issued to local authorities to curtail grants to Universitites and Colleges and gradually to withdraw the State subsidy altogether. This policy has resulted in the steady reduction of the grants to Bombay University which had come down from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 5,000. Pherozechah had emphatically protested against this reduction. In the Legislative Council, he also referred to this policy and attacked the Government for the same. Pherozechah had been Fellow of the University for over 35 years. He was also later appointed the Vice Chancellor of the University. During these 35 years he rendered yeoman’s services to t he University.

Pherozechah Mehta was also associated with the Bombay Municipal Corporation. He fought many a battle on the floor of the Corporation. He always upheld dignity of the

Corporation. He was the undisputed leader in the Civil Chamber; few proposals which encountered his hostility had the chance of being carried and the Municipal Commissioner thought twice before crossing swords with him. They felt comfortable when they secured his support for their policy and measures. Pherozezshah became the Mayor of Bombay and today the Bombay Municipal Corporation has his great statue in front of the main building.

During his days, Pherozezshah was called the Lion of Bombay. It was rightly said of him, "In his devotion to Bombay, he was, we may say without exaggeration, the greatest citizen any city has ever produced. He gave to it his best for over 40 years." "The dauntless patriot and the eminent citizen" was his correct description. Even Lord Willingdon described Pherozezshah as a "Strong resourceful opponent but at the same time warm and loyal supporter if he thought that the Government was right." Pherozezshah Mehta died in 1915. It was also the year when the monopoly of the city of Bombay as regards the Congress appears to have come to an end.

RAHIMTULLAH M. SAYANI 1847 – 1902

President of Calcutta Session of the Congress (1896)

Sayani was born on 5th April 1847 in Kutch. He graduated from Elphinstone College, Bombay in 1866 and passed his M.A. and LL.B. examinations in 1868 and 1870 respectively. He passed Solicitor's examination in 1872 and started practice as Solicitor after joining an European firm named Gilbert Payme and Sayani.

Sayani began his public life as a member of the Bombay Municipal Corporation in 1876. He continued to be a member of the Corporation for 25 years. He was elected President of the Corporation in 1888. Earlier in 1885 he was appointed Sheriff of Bombay. Sayani was also elected member of the Bombay Legislative Council and of the Imperial Legislative Council. Sayani was appointed by the Government in 1874 a member of the Koja Commission to inquire into the law on intestate and testamentary succession of Koja community. Sayani was associated with the Indian National Congress since its inception and was one of the two Indian Muslims who attended the first session in 1885. He was a member of the various Congress Committees and he presided over the 12th Annual Session of the Congress held at Calcutta in 1896. In his address, Sayani expressed disapproval of "The mistaken system whereby the entire resources of 220 millions of people are placed at the disposal of able and wellbeing men who are nevertheless foreigners and are naturally, though unconsciously, drifting to the conclusion that India is to be ruled for the glory of Great Britain and not for the good of her own people." He invited the attention of the delegates to the Congress to the drain from India and its ruinous character of Indian finance. Referring to famines and agrarian

problems also, Sayani urged the Muslim to join the Congress which he regarded as representing “all that is patriotic, enlightened, influential, progressive and disinterested.”

Sayani was also a Fellow of the Bombay University and a member of its Syndicate (1891–96). He presided over the Bombay Provincial Conference at Ahmedabad in 1893. Sayani died in Bombay on June 4, 1902.

### **KASHINATH TRIMBAK TELANG 1850-1893**

First Secretary of the Indian National Congress.

Kashinath Trimbak Telang was born on 30th August 1850 and breathed his last at 1st September 1893. He was the first Indian Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bombay. He was appointed a Judge of the high Court of Bombay in 1889. His political work began in 1872. He worked as the Secretary of the Bombay Branch of East India Association founded by Dadabhai in 1868. Later, he was associated with the establishment of the Bombay Presidency Association at the commencement of 1885 and was one of Secretaries of the Association, the other two being Pherozeshah Mehta and Dinshaw Wacha. The association sent a deputation to England consisting of Chandavarkar from Bombay, Ramaswami Mudaliar from Madras and Manmohan Ghosh from Calcutta. Telang was also the Secretary of the Bombay Association which was started by Dr. Bhau Daji and others in 1848.

Telang who was the first Secretary of the Indian National Congress proposed the first resolution on Council Reforms in 1885 and reiterated it in 1886 and 1887. Telang also moved a resolution for establishment of a Military College in India. In the Allahabad session of the Indian National Congress held in 1888 Telang was asked to meet the criticism of Lord Dufferin whose initial enthusiasm for Congress has waned by the time and who denounced Congress ideals and methods. Dufferin observed; :

“Some intelligent, loyal, patriotic and well meaning men are desirous of taking, I will not say a further step in advance, but a very big jump into the unknown, by the application to India of democratic methods of government and the adoption of parliamentary system which England herself has reached by slow degrees and through many centuries.”

Telang in a dignified speech ridiculed the criticism. Telang said,—

“The various charges which His Lordship makes against the Congress are charges which remind me of certain definition once given of a crab, viz. that a crab is a red fish which walks backwards, and the criticism made upon that the definition was perfectly correct,



except that the crab was not a fish, that it was not red, and that it did not walk backwards. Now, I say that Lord Dufferin's criticism is perfectly correct, except that we have not asked for democratic methods of Government, we have not asked for Parliamentary institutions which England has got after many centuries, we have not asked for the power of the purse and we have not asked for the British Executive should be brought under subjection to us."

This was the last session attended by Telang. He became a Judge of the High Court of Bombay in 1889 and died in 1893 at the age of 43 only. Dadabhai rightly described Telang as a man of great ability, learning, eloquence, sound judgment, wise counsel and leadership".

Telang possessed innate moral health. There was a strain of conservatism in his temperament. Obedience and reverence were his first law. Telang wrote "Was the Ramayan copied from Homer", "Date of Shankaracharya", and "Was the Gita copied from the Bible". Telang never allowed the scholar, the educationist, the public man to be submerged in the lawyer. Telang delivered two speeches on social reform. They were (1) The relative importance of Shastra and Custom, and (2) Compromise in social matters. Telang was brought up in the school of Dr. Bhau Daji, Naoroji Furdoonji, Mandalik and Dadabhai Naoroji. Telang's skill in handling the works of the Committee was appreciated by Dinshaw Wacha in the following words :—

"I was in contact with the mastermind both on principles and details of great ability of inexhaustible patience, of extreme modesty and above all free from dogmatism. I also discovered his persuasive powers and his debating strength, they were such as to do credit to the most practised debater in Select Committee of the House of Commons."

Telang was a nominated member of the Bombay Legislative Council for five years. There he proved himself an effective and active critic of the Government measures. Telang objected to the very existence of India Council. His reasons were that most of its acts and deliberations were contained in secret conclave so that for good or evil its work was not easy to survey and judge. Telang was elected in 1892 as the President of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society in succession to Sir Raymond West. Telang was one of the most brilliant scholars, one of the choicest speakers and one of the best men in India. John Adams describes Telang in the following words :

"He was incorruptible patriot, the sternest critic of Government where he thought to be in the wrong, the sturdy champion to the lawful demands of his fellow citizens."



President of Lahore session 1900

Mr. Narayan Ganesh Chadavarkar : (1855-1923)

Chandavarkar contribute richly to the public and social life of the city of Bombay. He was a lawyer by profession and had taken keen interest in politics right from the start of his legal career. As a lawyer, he distinguished himself in the High Court of Bombay and on the death of Justice Ranade was appointed a Judge of the High Court of Bombay. He was also for some time Acting Chief Justice of Bombay.

Like many other Congress leader in Bombay, he also took keen interest in social reforms. He was President of the Bombay Social Reform Association for a number of years and being a Brahmo had taken keen interest in the activities of Prarthana Samaj. He was also associated with a number of educational institutions in city of Bombay and was then Vice-Chancellor of University of Bombay for some time. As a scholar he had taken keen interest in the study of Hindu Law and for that purpose he studied the original Sanskrit text on Hindu Law. He was a member of the Education Commission from 1902 to 1906. He was President of the Students Scientific and Literary Society. He was President also of the Bombay Branch of Royal Asiatic Society. He attended all Sessions of the Indian National Congress except those when he was a Judge of the High Court of Bombay. He had prepared a joint memorandum on Constitutional reform in collaboration with D.E. Wachha and N. N. Samarth. At the Calcutta Session of Indian National Congress in 1886 he advocated representative-institution for Indian and gave a clear exposition of his thesis. In 1915 in the Bombay Congress he spoke on military and naval training for Indians.

Chandavarkar influenced Bombay's public life in a remarkable way. He was a devout student of sant Tukaram and was the President of Students Brotherhood. He advocated importance of development of character of truthfulness of sobriety and enthusiasm for humanity. Chandavarkar presided over the 16th session of the Indian National Congress held in 1900 at Lahore.

GOVERNMENT CENTRAL PRESS, BOMBAY