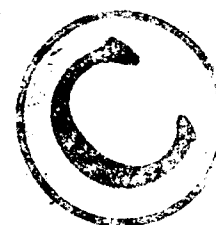


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CONGRESS SPEECHES
ON
SELF GOVERNMENT



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CONGRESS SPEECHES
ON
SELF-GOVERNMENT



SELF-GOVERNMENT

RESOLUTION XIX, on Self-Government, was introduced, says the Anglo-Indian *Madras Mail*, "amidst scenes of great enthusiasm, the speakers being repeatedly cheered, notably the Hon. Mr. Surendranath Bannerji, Mrs. Besant and the Hon. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya". The Resolution was as follows:

"That this Congress is of opinion that the time has arrived to introduce further and substantial measures of reform towards the attainment of Self-Government as defined in Article I of the Constitution, namely reforming and liberalising the system of Government in this country so as to secure to the people an effective control over it by amongst others:

- (a) The introduction of provincial autonomy including financial independence;
- (b) expansion and reform of the Legislative Councils so as to make them truly and adequately representative of all sections of the people and to give them effective control over the acts of the Executive Government;
- (c) the reconstruction of the various existing Executive Councils and the establishment of similar Executive Councils in Provinces where they do not exist;
- (d) the reform of the abolition of the Council of the Secretary of State for India;
- (e) establishment of Legislative Councils in Provinces where they do not now exist;
- (f) the readjustment of the relations between the Secretary of State for India and the Government of India; and
- (g) a liberal measure of Local Self-Government;

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That this Congress authorises the All-India Congress Committee to frame a scheme of reform and a programme of continuous work, educative and propagandist, having regard to the principles embodied in this Resolution, and further authorises the said Committee to confer with the Committee that may be appointed by the All-India Muslim League for the same purpose, and to take such further measures as may be necessary; the said Committee to submit its report on or before the 1st September, 1916, to the General Secretaries, who shall circulate it to the different Provincial Congress Committees as early as possible."

MR. SURENDRANATH BANNERJI

It was proposed by the Hon. Mr. Surendranath Bannerji, who was received with tumultuous applause. He said :

BROTHER DELEGATES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

In moving this Resolution I am confronted with an initial difficulty. A spectre is conjured up to frighten us out of this Resolution. We are told by our critics, and they are as multitudinous as the stars of heaven, and by our candid friends whose number is considerable, that to move a resolution of this kind at a time like the present and to formulate proposals of Self-Government now would be to embarrass and hamper the Government. If I could be persuaded of the soundness of this view, I, for my part, would have no part or share in this Resolution, and furthermore I would ask you to drop it. Our attitude—the attitude of the educated community—throughout the crisis of this War has been one of profound devotion to the Throne and of active co-operation with the Government. Agitation is far from our minds. We may deliberate, discuss even formulate proposals of reform, but we, men of the Congress are firmly resolved to embark upon no agitation, no controversy and not to let loose the forces of public opinion, so as to put pressure upon the Government. The War cannot last for ever and peace must come. God grant that it may come soon. We must prepare for the peace and for the situation in which we shall find ourselves at the conclusion of peace. I can think of no more patriotic task than that. We shall soon be called upon to play the part of men. Let us equip ourselves for that exalted function.

READJUSTMENT IN THE AIR

The idea of readjustment is in the air, not only here in India, but all the world over. The heart of the Empire is set upon it. It is the problem of problems upon which humanity is engaged. What is this War for? Why are these nameless sufferings endured? This is a war of readjustment, a war that will set right the claims of minor nationalities, and uphold and vindicate the sanctity of treaties, charters and proclamations—ours is one of them—and similar "scraps of paper".

"AFTER THE WAR"

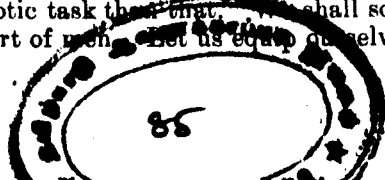
They are already talking of what will happen after the War in Canada and Australia. They are talking about it from the floor of the House of Commons, in the gatherings of public men and Ministers of State. May we not talk a little too from our standpoint? And are we to be charged with embarrassing the Government when we follow the examples of illustrious public men in all quarters of the globe, who are weighted with a sense of responsibility at least as onerous as that felt by our critics and our candid friends?

WHAT THE RESOLUTION SAYS

The Resolution says that the time has come when a definite advance should be made for the attainment of our goal, which is Self-Government. There are those who tell us that we are unfit for Self-Government, that the goal is distant, very, very distant, so distant as to be illusory, and that not even from the Sinai of hope and faith can we obtain a glimpse of the promised land. A high authority, speaking from his place in Parliament, said that, so far as his imagination could pierce, he could never conceive of a time when India would be fit for Parliamentary institutions. The same authority is the author of the Reform Scheme. I am no prophet and do not desire to be one, though my Brahmanical ancestors were, but I will say this: that it will be one of the bitterest ironies of fate that will hand down Lord Morley to distant generations as the Simon de Montford of the future Parliament of India.

ARE WE FIT?

Let us analyse the problem. Self-Government is the order of nature, the dispensation of Divine Providence. Every



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community must be the master of its own destinies. That is a part of the Divine Law and the immutable order of the moral universe, written in every line of universal history, written in characters of light by an invisible hand. Every deviation, every departure from it, is transient and transitional, and, like the compass pointing always northward, the needle steadily deflects towards the goal which is Self-Government.

THE BURDEN OF PROOF

Self-Government being the natural condition of things, it is incumbent upon those who say that we are not fit for Self-Government and that it is a distant goal, so distant as to fade away into the mists of the unseen future—I say it is incumbent upon them to prove their case. The burden of proof is upon them and not upon me. But with the chivalrous spirit characteristic of our great movement, I will come to their rescue and take upon myself the burden. I am prepared to descend from the vantage-ground which I occupy and meet my adversary in the open. I am willing to fight him with his own weapons and upon a footing of perfect equality.

SURVEY OF THE PAST

Let us survey the past, examine the present, and look around and then pronounce our verdict. In the morning of the world, before Rome had been built, before Babylon and Nineveh had emerged into the historic arena, our ancestors had founded those village organisations which represent the first beginnings of Self-Government. So well-organised were they, so tenacious of life and vitality, that they survived the crash of Empires, the subversion of Thrones, the fall of Dynasties, and lived down to our own times with a never-ending life.

NEVER FOUND TO BE WANTING

Coming down to more recent times what do we find? Wherever we have been tried we have never been found wanting. We have been tried in the matter of Local Self-Government under adverse conditions, as admitted by Lord Morley, and yet the experiment has proved successful. We have been tried in the higher regions of Self-Government under the Reform Scheme of 1909, and again we have been successful.

POSITIVE PROOF OF OUR CAPACITY

Here we have a stupendous gathering of representative men from all parts of India. Look north, south, east and west, is there any other part of the world which can present to the view an assembly equal to this? It has been observed, and rightly so, that Self-Government is government by discussion, and the discussions in this great assembly are carried on with a sense of moderation, self-restraint and regard for constituted authority which is proof positive of our capacity for Self-Government. In this great assembly, by the manner in which we conduct our deliberations, we demonstrate that we are qualified for Government by discussion.

THE BEST TRAINING GROUND

But that is not all. The best training grounds for Self-Government are the institutions of Self-Government, and Mr. Gladstone is my authority for it. He says: "Free institutions alone qualify a people for Self-Government. If you deny the people free institutions, you take away from them the most useful academies for training in Self-Government."

LOOK ABROAD

Look abroad for an illustration of this truth. Japan was given full Parliamentary institutions immediately after Japan had emerged from mediæval feudalism. Japan was not presumed to be fit for Self-Government; but after fifty years' training in the actual work of Self-Government, it is the universal verdict that the experiment of Parliamentary Government in Japan without a previous trial was fully justified.

THE PHILIPPINES

Take the Philippine Islands, which only the other day became a province of America. America has given her free institutions, and with the best results. Let not our critics start the objection that we are not qualified. When they say so, we reply: "You are out of court, because you have not given us free institutions which will serve as a training ground."

PRINCIPLES OF REFORM

The Resolution lays down the principles upon which the scheme of reform is to proceed. First and foremost is Provincial Autonomy. What is Provincial Autonomy? It is the Government of the Province, not by the bureaucracy of the Province, but by the chosen representatives of the people. It is the Government of a Province by the people of the Province for the benefit of the people of that Province.

FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

Financial independence is the basis of Provincial Autonomy. The revenues of a Province belong to the Province. Many years ago, Sir James Westland, speaking from his place in the Imperial Legislative Council, said that the revenues of India belong to the Government of India. I wholly dissent from that view. The revenues of India belong to the people of India—to you and me, held in trust by the Government of India for the benefit of the people of India. It is open to our trustees to delegate their authority to a subordinate administration in whom they have confidence. We, who represent the people and voice their throbbing aspirations, appeal to the Government of India to delegate its powers over the revenues of the Provinces and to divest itself of all control over those revenues for the Self-Government of the Provinces. You will ask me what will the Government of India do if we take away these revenues. There are Imperial revenues such as Customs, Salt, Railways, Post and Telegraphs and Opium, and they may be supplemented by rateable contributions from the Provinces if necessary. We stand on a very firm ground in asking for Provincial Autonomy, because the pledge of Provincial Autonomy is given in the great Despatch of the 25th August, 1911. An attempt has been made to attenuate the message contained in that document. Confronted with a hostile House, Lord Crewe declared—he was a bit afraid of Lord Curzon and Company—that this Despatch contained nothing more than a delegation of power from superior to subordinate authority. This view, however, is not borne out by the context. What is more, the assumption was promptly refuted by his Lieutenant who, in the free atmosphere of a Liberal Club—I am speaking of Mr. Montagu—said that this Despatch represented

a new departure in Indian policy and opened out a new vision to the people of India. Truly it is a new vision. Truly it is the beacon light that will guide us in the grand march that will lead us to the promised land. We take our stand on this Despatch and we resolutely stick to it, and in season and out of season call for its redemption.

THE MYTH OF A NON-OFFICIAL MAJORITY

There are other recommendations embodied in the Resolution to which I am speaking.

Let me refer to the expansion and re-constitution of the Legislative Councils. I am a member of two Legislative Councils, and I know something about them and their working. In my own Province it was declared with a flourish of trumpets that we had a non-official majority, a very captivating phrase, but a pure, undiluted, unqualified myth.

A NON-OFFICIAL MAJORITY DIFFERS FROM A POPULAR MAJORITY

A non-official majority is very different from a popular majority. I do not remember that we have ever been able to defeat the Government by a non-official majority, except on one occasion. Therefore that myth of a non-official majority, implying greater power in the popular representatives, must be dispelled. We must have an absolute, unqualified majority of popular representatives.

Then I come to another point. We propose resolutions—and I am one of the greatest sinners in that respect—and these resolutions are sometimes graciously accepted and as often ungraciously rejected. When they are accepted what does it matter? A resolution after all is a pious hope and aspiration. The Government is under no statutory obligation to give effect to it. I must, however, say to the credit of Lord Carmichael, that so far as His Excellency is personally concerned as the head of the Bengal Government, he is full of liberal sympathies, and a resolution accepted by his Government is not always a pious hope. But in a matter of this kind we cannot allow ourselves to

be dependent on individual discretion, which may often mean individual caprice; and we must see to it that every resolution accepted by a majority in the Legislative Councils shall be binding upon the Government and carried out. I am encouraged by the attention you have been giving me, but it involves a reciprocal duty on your part, namely, that you will do your best to bring this controversy about Self-Government to a successful and triumphant issue.

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCILS

Brother Delegates, there remain two more points. I now come to the Executive Councils. My friend the President was a member of that Council. He will not let us into the secrets of his prison-house; but I think if the depths of his heart were sounded, it is possible that we might be able to extract a residue of subconscious feeling which would tell us that at times he felt it would have been better if he were associated with an Indian colleague; and as a matter of fact Sir Ali Imam, in the admirable speech he made in reply to the dinner given in his honour by the inhabitants of Simla, told us that at times the cloud of depression hung heavily over his mind and he felt discouraged, and was only supported by the active sympathy of His Excellency the Viceroy. Therefore, I say, we, Congressmen, ought to come to the rescue of our Indian representatives on the Executive Councils, and resolve that there should be a substantial increase in the number of such representatives. Nor is this all. We think that at least one half of the members of the Executive Councils should be elected by the elected Indian representatives of the Legislative Councils. We do not want Rajas, Maharajas and Nawab Bahadurs, unless they are popular representatives who will be answerable to us.

INDEPENDENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

We have asked for Provincial Autonomy. We must also press for the independence of the Government of India. We say that the fetters imposed upon the Government of India by the India Office should be withdrawn, and that the Government of India should reflect the public opinion of India, and not that of Lancashire. If those fetters are removed, I

am confident that excise duties on Indian cotton goods will disappear.

GREETINGS TO THE LEAGUE

The Resolution says that the All-India Congress Committee is to formulate a scheme of Self-Government in concert with the Muslim League. I rejoice that the Muslim League is going to meet to-morrow in this city and hold a session. Our fraternal greetings go out to the Muslim League. We sympathise with them in their patriotic efforts. May the Divine Dispenser of all blessings preside over their deliberations. We are brothers, standing shoulder to shoulder on the same platform for the advancement of the interests of the same Mother, a Mother whom the Hindu, the Musalman, the Parsi and the Sikh alike venerate, who lies prostrate at our feet, and whom it is the sacred duty of every Indian to rejuvenate, to uplift, to elevate and to prepare for the high destiny which in the decrees of an all-wise Providence has been assigned to her among the Nations of the earth.

A UNITED DEMAND

The ideals of the Muslim League and of the Congress in the matter of Self-Government are the same. The goal is the same. We both want Self-Government within the Empire. A common demand put forward by the Muslim League and the National Congress, backed by the voice of United India, and pursued with unflinching tenacity of purpose, would be irresistible.

CONTINUED PROPAGANDIST WORK

The Subjects Committee of the Congress have authorised the All-India Congress Committee to prepare a programme of continued work of an educative and propagandist character for the spread of the ideals of Self-Government among our people. As an old Congressman, this appeals to me most forcibly. Self-Government has always formed the principal plank in the Congress platform ever since the birth of the Congress. In 1890 we sent a deputation to England, and as the result of its labours, the Legislative

Councils were reformed and expanded for the first time on a popular basis, and the Parliamentary Statute of 1892 was enacted. From Bengal we sent up a memorial to the House of Commons signed by fifty thousand persons. Again and again, Mr. Gokhale visited England as our delegate, and helped in the elaboration of the Reform Scheme. In 1914 another deputation went to England in connection with the reform of the India Council. Let us make a supreme effort at the present psychological moment to educate our people and accomplish this work of propaganda, which, I hope, will culminate in the crowning triumph that will give to us and our country the inestimable boon of Self-Government.

Mr. Asquith has observed in one of his great speeches : "The Empire rests, not upon the predominance, artificial and superficial, of race or class, but upon the loyal affection of free communities built upon the basis of equal rights." We appeal to Mr. Asquith to redeem his words in their application to India. We aspire to be a free community—enjoying equal rights with the subjects of the Crown in other parts of the Empire. Other great statesmen in the United Kingdom and even in the Colonies have spoken in the same strain. The angle of vision of the British democracy in regard to Indian affairs has, indeed, changed :—but not, I am afraid, the attitude and outlook of our officials out here in India. Their angle of vision remains the same as before. The Press Act is being worked with a severity which has caused uneasiness throughout the country. The rigours of the Arms Act remain unrelaxed; notwithstanding the prevalence of dacoities in more Provinces than one and the helplessness of the police to protect the people or to suppress the dacoities. We are barred out of the commissioned ranks of the Army, despite the fact that our soldiers are freely shedding their blood in the defence of the Empire, and that their courage, resourcefulness and power of initiative have evoked the admiration of the civilised world. We are prevented from enlistment as volunteers. In England the cry is for more men for the front, and to-day's morning papers indicate that conscription is about to be resorted to. Does not India present a most promising field for recruitment which, if properly utilised, would obviate the necessity of

conscription? The youth and the manhood of our race are eager to unsheathe the sword in the defence of the Empire; but the call has not yet come. Will it ever come? What is needed is a little more trust and confidence in the people which, I am sure, will be reciprocated with enthusiastic gratitude. Read the open page of Indian history, and note the outstanding lesson which it teaches. A stranger, the son of an adventurer, Akbar enthroned himself in the hearts of the people. What was the secret of the wonderful fascination which he exercised over the many millions of his subjects? He loved and trusted them, and they loved and trusted him in an abounding measure. Centuries have elapsed since Akbar has been laid in his grave; his princely house has disappeared: the Mughal Empire has crumbled into dust; but the name of Akbar still excites the profoundest veneration among Hindus and Muhammadans alike. But we do not despair. The British democracy are the masters of our masters, and when their angle of vision has changed we may be sure that the outlook of our officials here will undergo a similar transformation in regard to the great principles of Indian policy and administration.

WHY WE WANT SELF-GOVERNMENT

We aspire to Self-Government because we want to be a Nation, and secure for ourselves a place in the comity of Nations, so that we may fulfil the high destinies assigned to us in the Providence of God. We aspire to Self-Government for the highest ends of life, for the moral elevation and the uplifting of the character of our people. With the brand of political inferiority marked on our brow, we cannot grow to the full height of our manhood, or of our civic and moral responsibility. The campaign in which we are engaged is thus moral as well as political in its character and complexion, and we are bound to triumph. For we have with us the time forces, the sympathies of civilised mankind, the good wishes of the true and the thinking in all parts of the world, and, above all, the blessings of Almighty Providence. Thus equipped we are invincible and irresistible. That is the faith which inspires us and "faith," says the divinely inspired Founder of Christianity, "can remove mountains". Self-Government is inscribed on our banner. We hold it aloft, we invite the representatives of all creeds and races to the sound

it, and we are resolved to carry it, God willing, to an assured victory. (Prolonged cheers.)

MRS. ANNIE BESANT

Mrs. Annie Besant, in seconding the Resolution, said :

The Resolution which I have the honour to second before you to-day is, perhaps, the most momentous that has ever been laid before the National Congress during the thirty years of its splendid existence; for not only does it proclaim that a step is to be taken towards the attainment of Self-Government, but also it lays down the principles of reform which, if embodied in the Committee's report, will make Self-Government a reality, not in the distant vista of time, but within the lifetime of the present generation.

I find a bold demand is made that we should have expanded and reformed Legislative Councils to make them truly and adequately representative of all sections of the people and, most vital of all, to give them an effective control over the acts of the Executive Government. If adequate representation is given, if effective control over the Executive is granted, then it will be difficult to say that you have not Self-Government in India. It is the largest step that the Congress has ever taken, and it will make the Congress memorable in the grateful memory of the India of the future.

THE VITAL PROVISIO

Not only so, but there is the vital proviso that the All-India Congress Committee is to frame not only a scheme of reform but a programme of continuous work, work educative and propagandist; not agitation, you must understand, but educative propaganda. I am not clever enough to distinguish between that and popular agitation, but I beg you to cling to the words of the resolution, which are doubtless statesmanlike and desirable.

THREE REASONS FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT

In the brief time at my disposal I want to put to you three reasons why Self-Government is necessary. One is the practical reason, namely, the need for legislation on certain vital points; the second is the economic condition of the country,

the most pressing reason of all; the third, the historical justification for the granting of Self-Government to India.

NEED FOR LEGISLATION

As regards the first, there are certain things that press upon the Nation which would be rapidly altered if we had a majority, an effective majority, in the Legislative Councils and, if, as I hope, they are made wholly elective. What we require has been laid down for us on very useful lines. It was said, and I believe truly said, that it was impossible for England to train India on her literature and in admiration for her institutions, teach her that taxation without representation was robbery, and then expect her to remain unrepresented and without any effective control over the budgets which are passed year after year.

NO INSCRUTABLE PROVIDENCE

Sometimes people say that some inscrutable Providence has brought England to this land. I see nothing inscrutable in it, for Great Britain, when England came here, was the only free country in Europe, and Providence chose her to come that she might bring India into touch with western liberty and especially western institutions. The designs of Providence only become inscrutable when you have un-British rule in India instead of the British rule that she ought to follow. Then you may well have a conundrum that you will for ever find it impossible to solve.

COGENT FACTS

There are some facts, very cogent ones, why we believe that if we have really representative institutions we shall be able to carry the measures we desire. This Congress has been asking for thirty years for the separation of the executive and judicial functions and has not gained it, but in some Indian States that separation has already been made. Baroda has done it, Gwalior has done it, and when you have Self-Government you will not ask for it for thirty years, but you will make it in your first year. As to Panchayats, Gwalior, Baroda, Dewas, Patiala, and other States have already established

those Village Councils successfully, and yet in British India it is impossible to get them thoroughly on foot.

You will sweep away that Arms Act, of which our President has so earnestly complained. You will get rid of the Press Act, against which you have already protested. You will get rid of the Seditious Meetings Act. You will get rid of the power to intern without trial and to imprison without justification. You will get rid of that shameful revival of *lettres de cachet*, the old Bourbon Barbarism, the old Regulation (Regulation 3 of 1818) which exists only in India to-day among the civilised nations of the world. These are some of the reasons why we demand legislative assemblies, with a majority, at least, of the representatives of the people.

THE ECONOMIC REASON

Take the economic reason. Take the incidence of taxation. It is admitted by the Government that in India there is no effective margin of taxation. It has been pointed out by Mr. Gokhale, among others, that taxation in this country trenches on the subsistence of the labourer. It has been pointed out that India's production amounts to £2 per head, and we find that in 1910 the imperial taxation was 3s. 7½d. per head. You have taxation which threatens bankruptcy of India by the ruin of her agricultural population. Mr. Wacha has told us, and there is no better authority, that the indebtedness of the peasantry rises to Rs. 500 crores. Is that no reason for changing the system of Government which produces it?

MOST HEAVILY TAXED INDIA

I ask you to consider in relation to this not only the question of taxation, but the admitted fact that India is the most heavily taxed country in the world, not in amount, not in shillings or rupees, but in proportion to the production of the masses of her people. You cannot measure taxation by counting up a number of coins. You must find the produce of the labourer, and say how much you take of it as tax and how much you leave him.

MOST COSTLY GOVERNMENT

The next point is that you have admittedly the most costly Government in the civilised world in India, and therefore the necessity for this crushing taxation; nor is it only that the Government is costly, but you have to remember that the taxes that are raised go largely out of the country in what is known as "the drain"; you remember Lord Salisbury saying that they were bleeding India, and asking that the lancet should be used in the most congested places. You will have to remember that the drain runs to about £20,000,000, and such a large amount goes in various charges, interest on capital, etc., and is managed in the most extravagant fashion. You must remember that the Railway and other Companies have been dealt with by the State as no business people would deal with them, and that they had sold their shares at par to India when they did not bring in the market even as much as half.

APPEAL TO YOUNG MEN

I want you, younger men, "passionate youths" as you are, to turn your thought to these details of taxation, and understand why it is you demand Self-Government for India. Then I ask you to remember the result. Now eleven resolutions in this Congress have spoken of the horrible poverty of the people. They say that the Congress is a middle class and upper class organisation, but if the Congress were the Parliament of India, the poverty of the people would long ago have been redressed. I find that the Ninth Congress, Resolution Eight, after concurring with the views expressed in the previous Congresses, stated that fifty millions of the population, a number yearly increasing, are dragging out a miserable existence on the verge of starvations and that in every decade several millions actually perish by starvation. I find Sir William Hunter saying that more than forty millions are always on the verge of starvation. I find Sir Charles Elliot saying that half the agricultural population never know what it is to have a full meal. These, Sir, are not impatient idealists. They are historians and statesmen.

CONSIDER THE POVERTY AND THEN THINK

You have to consider that poverty, you have to realise what it means, you have to know the agony of hunger, and then realise

that, as Sir Charles Elliot has declared, one hundred millions of the agricultural population never have a full meal. Some amount of impatience is justifiable when the people are suffering to that horrible extent. For this I tell you: My fear for India is not the passionate enthusiasm of misguided youths, but the spectre of hunger which is ever looming on the horizon, the frightful spectre of coming bankruptcy, which means the most awful of revolutions, the revolution of the starving people, whom nothing can check or rein in when once they despair of help.

HISTORICAL REASON

The third reason is historical. Five thousand years ago this country was trading with ancient Babylon, and from that, three thousand years before the Christ, down to 1750 after Christ, there is no break in the commercial and industrial prosperity of India. Five thousand years of Self-Government are behind you.

NO FEAR OF WARS AND REVOLTS

"There were wars and there were revolts." Read European history before you speak too glibly about the disturbances in mediæval and ancient India. If war was here, war was there. Akbar was reigning when Elizabeth was on the throne. Queen Elizabeth gave the first Charter to a Company to trade with India. In the reign of James the First, the Company was allowed to establish itself in Surat and along the Western Coast. Since that time, in England, one King was beheaded, one exiled, and two insurrections on behalf of the Stuart family have taken place. I do not know that Indian Wars were so very much more mischievous than the Wars that prevailed over the whole of Europe during those historical times, for, after all, is it not true that village organisations went on through them all? Is it not true that villages were left untouched, save when the Huns and raiders swept down with fire and sword? Is it not on record that while soldiers were fighting, ploughmen were ploughing the land within sight of the battling army? I put this to you as a particular proposition, that the test of the goodness of Government is the wealth and prosperity of the people. While India governed herself, so long her people were so well fed that ever

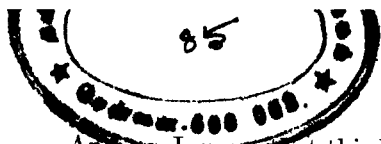
country in Europe fought for the right to trade with her; ~~that~~ was the result of Self-Government in India. Whatever ~~faults~~ might have defaced that system, our President has ~~told~~ us that India is, to-day, the most poverty-stricken country in the world.

THESE THINGS AS AN ANSWER

I put the two things before you as answer to the statement that we are not fit for Self-Government. I submit that five thousand years of success is greater than the theory of a few Englishmen who consider that Indians are not their equals.

IS INDIA A POOR CRIPPLE?

We are told, in the words of Mr. Edwin Bevan, that India is a poor cripple, with limbs broken, tissues lacerated, ~~aided~~ with splints and bandages by benevolent English physicians, and she must not move lest the wounds should not heal. India is no sick man. She is a giant who was asleep and is now awake. Are you fit for Self-Government? Are you not sure? Mr. Gokhale said, and he knew his people well, that you are compelled to live in an atmosphere of inferiority, that made the tallest of you bow your heads, and that the greatest moral wrong done to India was that she had changed in character under the present method of Government. These men, Sir, who are here, representatives of India from every part of the land, are not children of savages emerging from barbarism, needing to be trained in the elements of Self-Government by a western Nation. They are the children of heroes, the children of warriors, worthy to govern their own land—save for one reason, and that is that the noblest amongst you seems to think himself inferior to the Englishmen around you. If only you would trust yourselves, if only you would believe in your own power, in your own strength, and in your own knowledge. If Sir Satyendra Sinha can tell us that he stood face to face with the Viceroy, has been an equal man in the Executive Council, can we say that an Indian is not worthy to rule in his own land? Are we to think that he is the one swallow that does not make a summer? Are we not to believe, as I believe, ~~Sir~~, that there are hundreds like you, who would show your own ability if only they had a chance to do so?



And ~~as I hope~~ that this Resolution be thoroughly carried out, and that full representation be given in the Legislative Councils, as a means of Self-Government, to India. And I pray of you, by the memory of your past, by the possibility of the greatness of your present, by the splendid future that lies before you, if, as Pheroza Shah Mehta once said on this platform, you are not emasculated as a Nation, stand up on your feet like men. For England understands when people meet her face to face. England is a country of free men and she does not understand people being contented to be under the rule of foreign domination. Show England by your courage that you are grateful, as I know you are, for what she has done, but most grateful that she has taught you the value of free institutions, and has shown you, by the example of her history, how freedom is to be won, and how a Nation becomes Self-Governing. (Loud Cheers.)

SIR IBRAHIM RAHIMTULLA

Sir Ibrahim Rahimtulla, in supporting the Resolution, said that India was the heritage of two minor sons, known as Hindu and Muhammadan. The best and most patriotic manner in which they could reach the goal which was dear to the hearts of every one of them was through the genuine co-operation of the two minor brothers, so that they might go hand in hand and appeal to their guardian for larger and greater political privileges, which he called allowances for their maintenance. The cost of living was increasing, their needs were multiplying, and they wanted from their guardians at every step more and more substantial reforms, to take them to the goal which they had laid down for their guidance. It was a happy augury that the League and the Congress were proposing to appoint Committees, were putting their heads together, and formulating demands which might carry the Indian Nation to the goal.

MR. GOVINDARAGHAVA IYER .

Dewan Bahadur Govindaraghava Iyer, in supporting, said the Resolution accentuated their determination that they should have Self-Government by constitutional means. It also indicated that they were perfectly prepared to take their obligations and discharge them, though they might be no less onerous.

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