INDIA

SPEECHES
AND AN INTRODUCTION

By

THE RT. HON.

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'The key of India is London; the majesty of sovereignty, the spirit and vigour of your Parliament, the inexhaustible resources, the ingenuity and determination of your people —*these are the keys of India.*'

LORD BEACONSFIELD.

INTRODUCTION

AN interval of nine years separates the first of these speeches from the earliest of the others. It was delivered in circumstances very different from those in which we now find ourselves. It has even been quoted against me, as if to show an inconsistency of view. I on the contrary feel that my statement upon India would be incomplete without it. I abhor Terrorism. Nothing is to me more repulsive than the wholesale shooting of unarmed people, and nothing is less necessary for the re-establishment of British authority in India.

On the morrow of decisive victory when all foes were beaten down and all dangers seemed small by comparison with those that had been overcome, many things were done or attempted from which a calmer and more disillusioned age would have refrained. In those days the War Cabinet was supreme. Its five members —Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Bonar Law, Lord Curzon, Mr. A. Chamberlain and Mr. Barnes, (Sir Eric Geddes was added in August 1915)—alone bore constitutional responsibility for policy. The Secretaries of State and other high functionaries were expressly relieved of all responsibility except for the proper discharge of their

departmental duties. They had been appointed on this basis. They were summoned to the War Cabinet only when the affairs of their Departments were concerned. Nearly a year elapsed before normal Cabinet government was restored. It was in this interval that the Act of 1919 was framed. It was settled entirely between the members of the War Cabinet and the Secretary of State for India. The rest of the departmental heads were not formally consulted and had no ground to demand to be taken into counsel. In my own case as Secretary of State for War and Air, the demobilisation of immense forces and the reconstitution of other forces in their place, together with the disarmament of Germany and the military operations proceeding in Russia, absorbed my energies to the full. I repeatedly urged that the Cabinet system should be restored; but the eminent men who held the power were reluctant to let it go and admit a large body of colleagues to their conclaves.

The War Cabinet wound itself up at the end of October, and the normal Cabinet met for the first time on November 3, 1919. The India Bill had been introduced in the House of Commons in the preceding May, and had been remitted to a Joint Committee of both Houses, from which it had now emerged as an agreed measure. It was eventually passed through its remaining stages without a division on any cardinal issue.

The new Cabinet inherited this measure, upon which such protracted labours had been bestowed by those

concerned, only in its final phase. The subject had by this time become highly technical to those who had not been called upon to study it. Some of us like Lord Birkenhead, then Lord Chancellor, and no doubt previously consulted on the legal aspects, had misgivings and doubts. Our colleague Mr. Montagu was accustomed to point in private to the preamble of the India Bill and also particularly to clause 41 (see p. 13). He represented his plan as a mere experiment which could be arrested or reversed at any time. The Princes and peoples of India had stood loyally by us throughout the war and had paid heavily in blood and treasure. This was a graceful act of recognition, which if it did not answer, could easily be revoked. As for the assembly at Delhi, it was only 'a debating society' without power to affect the course of events in opposition to the will of the Imperial Government. These assurances seemed sufficient and were accepted by the reconstituted Cabinet in the peculiar circumstances; and that is the measure of their responsibility.

This journey into the past is a necessary prelude to the examination of the events of the last three years. Lord Birkenhead, Secretary of State for India, looking well ahead in 1927 resolved to anticipate the ten-year period for the review of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, and on this basis he secured the representation of all three parties upon the Statutory Commission which was to be appointed in accordance with the Act of 1919. After two years of labour the Commission

reached a unanimous agreement upon their report, from which all mention of 'Dominion Status' was excluded. However the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, in November 1929 saw fit to make a declaration in favour of 'Dominion Status' which completely prejudiced the report of the Statutory Commission. The leader of the Conservative party had agreed to this declaration under the impression that the members of the Statutory Commission were also favourable to it. He withdrew his agreement when he learned that they had not been consulted in the matter. At this time the attitude of many members of the late Conservative Cabinet, also of Mr. Lloyd George and Lord Reading, was resolute and sound against the concession of 'Dominion Status'; and generally the two opposition parties commanded a Parliamentary majority in the present House of Commons in resistance to far-reaching change in India. The effect of the Viceroy's declaration was however to destroy the value and credentials of the Simon Report. That was the first of the great disasters for which the present Socialist Government and those acting with them are responsible.

The second followed hard upon it. Early in 1929 Sir John Simon had proposed to conciliate Indian opinion (offended by there being no Indian members upon the Statutory Commission) by suggesting that a Round Table Conference should be held at which opinions could be interchanged. This Round Table Conference was accordingly appointed to meet in

London towards the end of 1930. Fears were entertained that the Socialist Government would at this Conference make some far-reaching promises or declarations which would gravely compromise the British position. It was therefore decided that the Conservatives and Liberals should demand representation upon the Conference. I agreed to this because I relied upon the public declarations of Mr. Lloyd George about India, and believed that the Conservative and Liberal parties acting together and commanding a majority in the House of Commons would be able to prevent unwise and precipitate action. The Indian extremists and even the more moderate Nationalist delegates objected vehemently to the inclusion of Conservative and Liberal representatives at the Round Table. They might well have spared themselves the trouble. For no sooner did the Conference meet than a veritable landslide of opinion took place. After a few days of flowery speeches, the Round Table Conference converted itself into what was practically a Constituent Assembly, and proceeded to draft, in outline at any rate, a Federal Constitution with Indian ministers responsible to an All-India assembly, the whole subject to safeguards, which, as was carefully explained, were only appropriate to the transient and transitional period before full 'Dominion status' would be enjoyed by the Indian political classes. The Conservative delegates have declared that they consider themselves and their party wholly uncommitted. On the other hand, the leader

of the Conservative party took occasion to state in the House of Commons that he would himself feel bound to 'implement' the work of the Round Table Conference and its Constitution, if he were returned to power. Here is the second great lurch downhill.

The third was its natural consequence. The extremists had not been represented at the Round Table. It was necessary to bring them in to the further stages of the negotiations. They were all in gaol for breaches of the law. Lord Irwin therefore released Mr. Gandhi and his principal associates and then proceeded to make an agreement with them for the partial suspension of lawlessness during the further stages of the constitutional discussions.

As the result of these parleys between a successful lawbreaker and the Viceroy, Mr. Gandhi became the supreme figure in Indian political life. The fame he gained by his triumph over the Government of India enabled him to dominate and control his own extremists. The moderate elements which were represented at the Round Table faded into insignificance, and the whole question of constitutional reform in India has now been converted from a decision of the British Parliament into an attempt to make a treaty with Mr. Gandhi. This is the third great disaster and degeneration of our affairs which has taken place.

When we look back over the past it seems hardly credible that we should have slid and slithered so far in so short a time, have so lamentably weakened our own

power to control events and have so enormously enhanced the prestige and authority of those who wish us ill, and who wish to bring the British regime in India to a close.

The curtain will soon rise upon a new act in the drama. The Conservative delegates at the Round Table Conference console themselves by dwelling upon the numerous and important safeguards which they consider inseparable from the grant of responsible government. All these safeguards are challenged, root and branch, in principle and in form, by the Indian National Congress and by Mr. Gandhi. The gulf which separates the two parties is entirely unbridged. No difficulty has been faced, no problem has been solved, no agreement has been reached. There is to be a further conference in London at which Gandhi will be the plenipotentiary for the political abstraction called 'India,' and at which the breaking down of the safeguards must become his sole aim. On the other hand, the Conservative leaders have again and again assured their followers that they will tolerate no weakening of these safeguards in the spirit or the letter. This then is the collision to which at an enormous cost in British authority and Indian tranquillity we are being steadily brought.

These speeches have been subjected to revision and compression to meet the difference between the spoken and printed word. In some cases the argument has been improved and strengthened, without of course altering the original purport. In a series of speeches

delivered on the same question in so short a time to audiences so different in character, the main points are reiterated in varied forms. They are offered in sincerity and in deep anxiety to those who wish to judge the episodes and events of the immediate future as they unfold or explode upon us.

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL.

May 1, 1931.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT, 1919

CHAPTER 101

An Act to make further provision with respect to the Government of India. [23rd December, 1919.]

WHEREAS it is the declared policy of Parliament to provide for the increasing association of Indians in every branch of Indian administration, and for the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in British India as an integral part of the empire:

And whereas progress in giving effect to this policy can only be achieved by successive stages, and it is expedient that substantial steps in this direction should now be taken:

And whereas the time and manner of each advance can be determined only by Parliament, upon whom

responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples:

And whereas the action of Parliament in such matters must be guided by the co-operation received from those on whom new opportunities of service will be conferred, and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility:

And whereas concurrently with the gradual development of self-governing institutions in the Provinces of India it is expedient to give to those Provinces in provincial matters the largest measure of independence of the Government of India, which is compatible with the due discharge by the latter of its own responsibilities:

Be it therefore enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

* * * * *

PART V

STATUTORY COMMISSION

41.—(1) At the expiration of ten years after the passing of this Act the Secretary of State, with the concurrence of both Houses of Parliament, shall submit for the approval of His Majesty the names of persons to act as a commission for the purposes of this section.

(2) The persons whose names are so submitted, if approved by His Majesty, shall be a commission for the purpose of inquiring into the working of the system of government, the growth of education, and the development of representative institutions, in British India, and matters connected therewith, and the commission shall report as to whether and to what extent it is desirable to establish the principle of responsible government, or to extend, modify, or restrict the degree of responsible government then existing therein, including the question whether the establishment of second chambers of the local legislatures is or is not desirable.

(3) The commission shall also inquire into and report on any other matter affecting British India and the provinces, which may be referred to the commission by His Majesty.

I

AMRITSAR

House of Commons

July 8, 1920

Decision of the Army Council

The Army Council have considered the Report of the Hunter Committee, together with the statement which Brigadier-General Dyer has by their direction submitted to them. They consider that, in spite of the great difficulties of the position in which this officer found himself on 13th April, 1919, at Jallianwallah Bagh, he cannot be acquitted of an error of judgment. They observe that the Commander-in-Chief in India has removed Brigadier-General Dyer from his employment in India and that he has been informed that no further employment will be offered to him in India and that he has in consequence reverted to half-pay, and that the Selection Board in India has passed him over for promotion. These decisions the Army Council accept. They do not consider that further employment should be offered to Brigadier-General Dyer outside India. They have also considered whether any further action of a disciplinary nature is required, and the Army Council, in view of all the circumstances, do not feel called upon from the military point of view, with which alone they are concerned, to take any further action.

THE conduct of a military officer may be dealt with in three perfectly distinct spheres. First of all, he may be removed from his employment or his appointment, relegated to half pay, and told that he has no prospect of being employed again. This may be done to him

by a simple administrative act. It is sufficient for the competent superior authority to decide that the interests of the public service would be better served if someone else were appointed in his stead, to justify and complete the taking of such a step. The officer in question has no redress. He has no claim to a court of inquiry or a court martial. He has no protection of any kind against being deprived of his appointment, and being informed that he has no further prospect of getting another. This procedure may seem somewhat harsh, but a little reflection will show that it is inevitable. There is no excuse for superior authority not choosing the most suitable agents for particular duties, and not removing unsuitable agents from particular duties. During the War, as every Member of the Committee knows, hundreds, and probably thousands, of officers have been so dealt with by their superiors; and since the War, the tremendous contraction of the Army has imposed similar hardships on hundreds, and possibly thousands, of officers against whom not one word of reproach could be uttered, and whose careers in many cases have been careers of real distinction and of invariable good service. This applies to all appointments in the Army, and, I have no doubt, in the Navy too, and it applies with increasing severity in proportion as the appointments are high ones. From the humble lance-corporal, who reverts to private by a stroke of the pen, from the regimental adjutant, if the colonel thinks he would prefer some other subaltern, up to the highest General or Field-Marshal, all officers

are amenable to this procedure in regard to the appointments which they hold.

The second method is of a more serious character, and it affects, not the employment of an officer, but his status and his rank. Here it is not a question of choosing the right man for a particular job, but of retiring an officer compulsorily from the Service, or imposing on him some reduction or forfeiture in his pension or retired pay. In this case the officer is protected, under Article 527 of the Royal Warrant, by the fact that it is necessary for three members of the Army Council to approve the proceeding, and by certain rights of laying his case before them. All the same, the Secretary of State for the time being, by virtue of his office, has the power to make a submission direct to the Crown, and advise that an officer be retired compulsorily, or simply that his name be removed from the list, His Majesty having no further use for his services.

The third method is of a definitely penal character. Honour, liberty, life, are affected. Cashiering, imprisonment, or the death penalty may be involved, and for this third category, of course, the whole resources and protection which judicial procedure, lawful tribunals, and British justice accord to an accused person are brought into play. Those are the three different levels of procedure in regard to the treatment of the conduct of officers.

Coming to the case of General Dyer, it will be seen that he was removed from his appointment by the

Commander-in-Chief in India; that he was passed over by the Selection Board in India for promotion; that he was informed, as hundreds of officers are being and have been informed, that there was no prospect of further employment for him under the Government of India; and that, in consequence, he reverted automatically to half-pay. These proceedings were brought formally to the notice of the Army Council by a letter from the India Office, which recommended, further, that he should be retired from the Army, and by a telegram from the Commander-in-Chief in India, which similarly recommended that he should be ordered to retire.

However we may dwell upon the difficulties of General Dyer during the Amritsar riots, upon the anxious and critical situation in the Punjab, upon the danger to Europeans throughout that province, upon the long delays which have taken place in reaching a decision about this officer, upon the procedure that was at this point or at that point adopted, however we may dwell upon all this, one tremendous fact stands out—I mean the slaughter of nearly 400 persons and the wounding of probably three or four times as many, at the Jallianwallah Bagh on April 13. That is an episode which appears to me to be without precedent or parallel in the modern history of the British Empire. It is an event of an entirely different order from any of those tragical occurrences which take place when troops are brought into collision with the civil popu-

lation. It is an extraordinary event, a monstrous event, an event which stands in singular and sinister isolation.

Collisions between troops and native populations have been painfully frequent in the melancholy aftermath of the Great War. In this particular series of disturbances there were thirty-six or thirty-seven cases of firing upon crowds in India, and there have been numerous cases in Egypt. In all these cases the officer in command is placed in a most painful and difficult position. I agree with the discription given by the Adjutant-General in India, of the distasteful, painful, embarrassing, torturing situation, mental and moral, in which the British officer in command of troops is placed when he is called upon to decide whether or not he opens fire, not upon the enemies of his country, but on those who are his countrymen, or who are citizens of our common Empire. No words can be employed which would exaggerate those difficulties. But there are certain broad lines by which an officer in such cases should be guided. First of all, he may ask himself, Is the crowd attacking anything or anybody? Surely that is the first question. Are they trying to force their way forward to the attack of some building, or some cordon of troops or police, or are they attempting to attack some band of persons or some individual who has excited their hostility? Is the crowd attacking? That is the first question which would naturally arise.

The second question is this: Is the crowd armed? That is surely another great simple fundamental question. By armed I mean armed with lethal weapons. Men who take up arms against the State must expect at any moment to be fired upon. Men who take up arms unlawfully cannot expect that the troops will wait until they are quite ready to begin the conflict or until they have actually begun fighting. Armed men are in a category absolutely different from unarmed men. An unarmed crowd stands in a totally different position from an armed crowd. At Amritsar the crowd was neither armed nor attacking. [*Interruption.*] I carefully said that when I used the word 'armed' I meant armed with lethal weapons, or with firearms. There is no dispute between us on that point. 'I was confronted,' says General Dyer, 'by a revolutionary army.' What is the chief characteristic of an army? Surely it is that it is armed. This crowd was unarmed. These are simple tests which it is not too much to expect officers in these difficult situations to apply.

There is another test which is not quite so simple, but which nevertheless has often served as a good guide. I mean the doctrine that no more force should be used than is necessary to secure compliance with the law. There is also a fourth consideration by which an officer should be guided. He should confine himself to a limited and definite objective, that is to say to preventing a crowd doing something which they ought not to do, or to compelling them to do something which they

ought to do. All these are good guides for officers placed in the difficult and painful situation in which General Dyer stood.

My right hon. Friend (Sir E. Carson) will say it is easy enough to talk like this, and to lay down these principles here in safe and comfortable England, in the calm atmosphere of the House of Commons or in your arm-chairs in Downing Street or Whitehall, but it is quite a different business on the spot, in an emergency, confronted by a howling mob, with a great city or a whole province quivering all around with excitement. I quite agree. Still these are good guides and sound, simple tests, and I believe it is not too much to ask of our officers to observe and to consider them. After all, they are accustomed to accomplish more difficult tasks than that. Over and over again we have seen British officers and soldiers storm entrenchments under the heaviest fire, with half their number shot down before they entered the position of the enemy, the certainty of a long, bloody day before them, a tremendous bombardment crashing all around—we have seen them in these circumstances taking out their maps and watches, and adjusting their calculations with the most minute detail; and we have seen them show, not merely mercy, but kindness to prisoners, observing restraint in the treatment of them, punishing those who deserved to be punished by the hard laws of war, and sparing those who might claim to be admitted to the clemency of the conqueror. We have seen them exerting themselves

to show pity and to help, even at their own peril, the wounded. They have done it thousands of times, and in requiring them, in moments of crisis, dealing with civil riots, when the danger is incomparably less, to consider these broad, simple guides, really I do not think we are taxing them beyond their proved strength. I do not think it is too much to ask a British officer in this painful, agonising position, to pause and consider these broad, simple guides—I do not even call them rules—before he decides upon his course of conduct. Under circumstances, in my opinion, infinitely more trying, they have shown themselves capable of arriving at right decisions.

If we offer these broad guides of a positive character to our officers in these anxious and dangerous times, there is surely one guide which we can offer them of a negative character. There is surely one general prohibition which we can make. I mean a prohibition against what is called 'frightfulness.' What I mean by frightfulness is the inflicting of great slaughter or massacre upon a particular crowd of people, with the intention of terrorising not merely the rest of the crowd, but the whole district or the whole country. We cannot admit this doctrine in any form. Frightfulness is not a remedy known to the British pharmacopœia. I yield to no one in my detestation of Bolshevism, and of the revolutionary violence which precedes it. I share with my right hon. and learned Friend (Sir E. Carson) many of his sentiments as to the world-wide

character of the seditious and revolutionary movement with which we are confronted. But my hatred of Bolshevism and Bolsheviks is not founded on their silly system of economics, or their absurd doctrine of an impossible equality. It arises from the bloody and devastating terrorism which they practise in every land into which they have broken, and by which alone their criminal regime can be maintained. Governments who have seized upon power by violence and by usurpation have often resorted to terrorism in their desperate efforts to keep what they have stolen; but the august and venerable structure of the British Empire, where lawful authority descends from hand to hand and generation after generation, does not need such aid. Such ideas are absolutely foreign to the British way of doing things.

These observations are mainly of a general character but their relevance to the case under discussion can be well understood, and they lead me to the specific circumstances of the fusillade at the Jallianwallah Bagh. Let me marshal the facts. The crowd was unarmed, except with bludgeons. It was not attacking anybody or anything. It was holding a seditious meeting. When fire had been opened upon it to disperse it, it tried to run away. Pinned up in a narrow place considerably smaller than Trafalgar Square, with hardly any exits, and packed together so that one bullet would drive through three or four bodies, the people ran madly this way and the other. When the fire was directed

upon the centre, they ran to the sides. The fire was then directed upon the sides. Many threw themselves down on the ground, and the fire was then directed on the ground. This was continued for eight or ten minutes, and it stopped only when the ammunition was on the point of exhaustion, enough ammunition being retained to provide for the safety of the force on its return journey. If more troops had been available, says the officer, the casualties would have been greater in proportion. If the road had not been so narrow, the machine guns and the armoured cars would have joined in. Finally, when the ammunition had reached the point that only enough remained to allow for the safe return of the troops, and after 379 persons, which is about the number gathered together in this Chamber to-day, had been killed, and when most certainly 1,200 or more had been wounded, the troops, at whom not even a stone had been thrown, swung round and marched away. I deeply regret to find myself in a difference of opinion from many of those with whom, on the general drift of the world's affairs at the present time, I feel myself in the strongest sympathy; but I do not think it is in the interests of the British Empire or of the British Army for us to take a load of that sort for all time upon our backs. We have to make it absolutely clear, some way or other, that this is not the British way of doing business.

I shall be told that it 'saved India.' I do not believe it for a moment. The British power in India does not

stand on such foundations. It stands on much stronger foundations. I am going to refer to the material foundations of our power very bluntly. Take the Mutiny as the datum line. In those days, there were normally 40,000 British troops in the country, and the ratio of British troops to native troops was one to five. The native Indian Army had a powerful artillery, of which they made tremendous use. There were no railways, no modern appliances, and yet the Mutiny was effectively suppressed by the use of a military power far inferior to that which we now possess in India. Since then the British troops have been raised to 70,000 and upwards, and the ratio of British to native troops is one to two. There is no native artillery of any kind. The power and the importance of the artillery has increased in the meantime ten and perhaps twenty-fold. Since then a whole series of wonderful and powerful war inventions have come into being, and the whole apparatus of scientific war is at the disposal of the British Government in India—machine guns, the magazine rifle, cordite ammunition, which cannot be manufactured as gunpowder was manufactured by a non-scientific power, and which is all stored in the magazines under the control of the white troops. Then there have been the great developments which have followed the conquest of the air and the evolution of the aeroplane. Even if the railways and the telegraphs were cut or rendered useless by a strike, motor lorries and wireless telegraphy would give increasingly the means of concentrating

troops, and taking them about the country with an extraordinary and almost undreamed-of facility. When one contemplates these solid, material facts, there is no need for foolish panic, or talk of its being necessary to produce a situation like that at Jallianwallah Bagh in order to save India. On the contrary, as we contemplate the great physical forces and the power at the disposal of the British Government in their relations with the native population of India, we ought to remember —as a warning—the words of Macaulay upon an earlier period—

'and then was seen what we believe to be the most frightful of all spectacles, the strength of civilisation without its mercy.'

Our reign in India or anywhere else has never stood on the basis of physical force alone, and it would be fatal to the British Empire if we were to try to base ourselves only upon it. The British way of doing things has always meant and implied close and effectual co-operation with the people of the country. In every part of the British Empire that has been our aim, and in no part have we arrived at such success as in India, whose princes spent their treasure in our cause, whose brave soldiers fought side by side with our own men, whose intelligent and gifted people are co-operating at the present moment with us in every sphere of government and of industry. It is quite true that in Egypt last year there was a complete breakdown of the relations between the British and the Egyptian people. Every class and every pro-

fession seemed united against us. What are we doing? We are trying to rebuild that relationship. For months Lord Milner has been in Egypt, and now we are endeavouring laboriously and patiently to rebuild from the bottom that relation between the British administration and the people of Egypt which we have always enjoyed in the past, and which it was so painful for us to feel had been so suddenly ruptured. It is not a question of force. We had plenty of force, if force were all that was needed.

What we want is co-operation and goodwill, and I beseech hon. and right hon. Gentlemen to look at the whole of this vast question, and not merely at one part of it. If the disastrous breakdown which has occurred in a comparatively small country like Egypt, if this absolute rupture between the British administration and the people of the country had taken place throughout the mighty regions of our Indian Empire, it would have constituted one of the most melancholy events in the history of the world. That it has not taken place up to the present is, I think, largely due to the constructive policy of His Majesty's Government, to which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for India has made so great a personal contribution. I was astonished by my right hon. Friend's sense of detachment when, in the supreme crisis of the War, he calmly journeyed to India, and remained for many months absorbed and buried in Indian affairs. It was not until I saw what happened in Egypt, and, if you like, what is going on in Ireland

to-day, that I appreciated the enormous utility of such service, from the point of view of the national interests of the British Empire, in helping to keep alive that spirit of comradeship, that sense of unity and of progress in co-operation, which must ever ally and bind together the British and Indian peoples.[1]

. . . . .

It is quite true that General Dyer's conduct has been approved by a succession of superiors above him who pronounced his defence, and that at different stages events have taken place which, it may well be argued, amount to virtual condonation so far as a penal or disciplinary action is concerned. General Dyer may have done wrong, but at any rate he has his rights, and I do not see how in face of such virtual condonation as is set out on page 20 of this able document, it would have been possible, or could have been considered right, to take disciplinary action against him. For these reasons the Cabinet found themselves in agreement with the conclusions of the Army Council, and to those moderate and considered conclusions we confidently invite the assent of the House.

[1] I do not recede from this statement of general principle taken in its full context. But since Mr. Baldwin has quoted these two last paragraphs with such marked approval to justify his own policy, it is necessary to point out first that the Mission to Egypt resulted, in spite of my resistance, in the abrogation of our Protectorate in 1921, and led directly to the present lamentable position; and secondly, that high authorities now attribute the Indian disorders of 1920 to the unrest caused by the Montagu-Chelmsford policy and this very Act of 1919.

II

DOMINION STATUS

WRITTEN FOR THE 'DAILY MAIL'
November 1929

IT is time that the British nation should rouse itself from the political apathy into which it has been lulled and face without illusion the momentous crisis and ordeals which are approaching in India. Already in Egypt the Socialist Government have made proposals to the Egyptian Nationalists which consummate a long process of abdication of moral and practical responsibilities. The British garrison in Cairo, which for nearly fifty years has been the means by which the peace and progress of the Egyptian people have been secured, is, if the Socialists have their way, to dig itself in along the Suez Canal and leave this unhappy country, whose improving civilisation was once our pride, to confusion, retrogression, and foreign intrigue. Already the Government have declared themselves eager to wash their hands of all obligations in respect of foreign interests and the protection of minorities. The first fruits of this proclamation of evacuation and

surrender have been witnessed in the sanguinary disorders and cruel murders which broke out in Palestine.

Egypt, though very important and in a sense cardinal, is tiny compared with India. The rescue of India from ages of barbarism, tyranny, and intestine war, and its slow but ceaseless forward march to civilisation constitute upon the whole the finest achievement of our history. This work has been done in four or five generations by the willing sacrifices of the best of our race. War has been banished from India; her frontiers have been defended against invasion from the north; famine has been gripped and controlled, and by a patiently evolved and now marvellous organisation the failure of crops in one district is replaced by the surplus of another. Justice has been given—equal between race and race, impartial between man and man. Science, healing or creative, has been harnessed to the service of this immense and, by themselves, helpless population. And by the new streams of health and life and tranquillity which it has been our mission to bring to India, the number of its people has grown even in our own lifetime by scores of millions.

Progress would have been more swift, health and prosperity more abounding, if the British civil and technical services in India had not been hampered by the forbearance we promised to observe towards Indian religious and social customs. It has in the present century been impeded by the growing lack of confidence at home in the reality of our mission and by the

undermining repercussions of these doubts upon British officials in India. Nevertheless what has been done is a monument worthy of the respect of all nations.

It has been, since the Great War and the comradeships and loyalties arising out of it, a declared object of the British nation to aid the peoples of India to become consciously identified with the whole process of their own elevation and advance. No limits have been assigned within the broad constitution of the British Empire to the assumption by Indians and by India of full responsible government, except those limits—hard, physical, obvious, and moral—arising from Time and Facts. A vast expansion of self-administering and self-governing duties was accorded to the Indian political classes ten years ago by the Montagu Constitution. That Constitution has now, in pursuance of an Act of Parliament, to be reviewed and to be revised in the light of all that has happened since and of the facts as we know them now. The Simon Commission has been entrusted with this solemn task. They have studied the problem and deliberated here and in India for two years. Parliament and the nation await with earnest attention the approaching result of their labours. Neither Parliament nor the nation will be necessarily bound by the report of the Simon Commission; but evidently it will be one of the most important State papers ever penned.

It is at this moment that the Socialist Government have chosen, amid all the Utopian dreams and predatory

appetites and subversive movements excited by their presence, to make in Parliament and through the Viceroy in India a new declaration. The question which everyone is asking in Great Britain, in India, and throughout the British Empire is: 'What is the purpose and meaning of this new declaration?' The formal letter which Mr. Baldwin has drawn from the Prime Minister by his direct questions has given an answer as clear and explicit as the English language can convey. The Viceroy's declaration, we are assured, involves no new departure from the preamble of the Act of Parliament of 1919.[1]

[1] *Mr. Baldwin to the Prime Minister*

11th November, 1929.

It will be within your recollection that the Debate on Thursday last in the House of Commons concluded without any answer being given by the Secretary of State for India to my second question—namely, 'Whether this statement (i.e. the Viceroy's declaration) implies any change in the policy hitherto declared, or in the time when this status may be attained.'

It is true that this question was answered in the House of Lords, but I feel that the answer should equally be given by the Prime Minister in his capacity as Leader of the House of Commons.

The Prime Minister to Mr. Baldwin

November 11th, 1929.

I am grateful to you for your letter. The answer to both parts of the question 'Whether the Viceroy's declaration implies any change in the policy hitherto declared, or in the time when this status may be attained' is 'no.'

The policy, as you will remember, is set out in the Preamble of the Government of India Act, 1919, and it stands unchanged unless and until Parliament decides to amend that Act.

I trust that we may find that Mr. Macdonald's Government are in no way abusing our confidence in so grave a matter. If that be so, it is all the more due to the Viceroy that he should be protected from the measureless evils of a misunderstanding of his words in India. This misunderstanding has certainly arisen. The most prominent leaders of the Indian National Congress have chosen to construe Lord Irwin's phrases as if they implied that an extension of Dominion status to India at the present time was within the range of practical politics and is now about to take place, and that the forthcoming conference will actually be concerned with the drafting of such a law. Now nothing could be more fatal to the relations between the Indian political classes and the British Parliament than that there should be any foundation afforded for the reproach of deceit, pretence, or bad faith. Nothing could be worse than that words should be spoken by Ministers of the Crown which are meant and understood to mean one thing in Great Britain and which are, however, unjustifiably, understood to mean something else in India. No man has greater sincerity of character and purpose than Lord Irwin. No man would be more cruelly injured if those to whom he spoke found themselves mocked with false hopes. There are no doubt serious differences of views between the Indian political classes, themselves a handful in an immense population, and British public opinion. These alone may lead to stress and sorrow in the future. Let us make sure

they are not aggravated by the poison of misunderstanding.

It is therefore the duty of public men and of political parties to make it plain without delay that the extension of Dominion status to India is not practicable at the present time and that any attempt to secure it will encounter the earnest resistance of the British nation. There is no need, indeed we have no right, to close the long avenues of the future; but the idea that Home Rule for India or Dominion status or full responsible government for India can emerge from anything that is now being done or inquired into is not only fantastic in itself but criminally mischievous in its effects. A warm sympathy for the peoples of India spreads throughout the United Kingdom. We hail with gladness every sign of their progress to civilisation, competence, and self-discipline. But an immense journey lies in front of us all before they could undertake, without hideous disaster to hundreds of helpless millions, the supreme and plenary control of Indian affairs. We need not attempt to measure this journey in years or generations. The speed with which it is accomplished depends upon the self-discipline and self-regeneration of the Indian peoples themselves. Our faithful and friendly aid will not at any stage be denied them. But Dominion status can certainly not be attained by a community which brands and treats sixty millions of its members, fellow human beings, toiling at their side, as 'Untouchables,' whose approach

is an affront and whose very presence is pollution. Dominion status can certainly not be attained while India is a prey to fierce racial and religious dissensions and when the withdrawal of British protection would mean the immediate resumption of mediæval wars. It cannot be attained while the political classes in India represent only an insignificant fraction of the three hundred and fifty millions for whose welfare we are responsible.

Against the perpetration of such a crime as the immediate grant of Dominion status it is necessary without delay to marshal the sober and resolute forces of the British Empire, and thus preserve the life and welfare of all the peoples of Hindustan.

'However much the Hindus may have honoured the profession of arms and however full their histories may be of wars, conquests, sieges, battles, victories and defeats, it is nevertheless remarkable that no nation has shown at every epoch in its history so little skill in military science. When pitiless conquerors at the head of savage and warlike hordes forced their way over the northern mountains and spread themselves like a devastating torrent over the fertile provinces of India, the peaceable and docile inhabitants were unable to offer any effectual resistance; they saw their towns and villages ravaged by fire and sword, while rivers of blood ingloriously and fruitlessly spilt, deluged their fields. The readiness with which they bent their necks beneath the oppressor's yoke, and the feebleness of the efforts which they put forth to recover their independence, proved how inferior they were in courage and discipline to the proud Tartars who invaded and conquered them.'

ABBÉ DUBOIS, 1806.

III

THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

Cannon Street, City of London
December 12, 1930

This was the first meeting organised by the Indian Empire Society. The Round Table Conference had ceased its open sittings, and was divided into Committees engaged in making a Federal constitution.

WE have thought it our duty to hold this meeting in order, so far as we can, to draw the attention of the country to the altogether unwarrantable change in the estimation of the facts and values of the Indian problem which has marked the last disastrous twelve months. From many quarters we hear statements that opinion in India has advanced with violent speed. Full Dominion status with the right to secede from the British Empire and responsible control of the executive Government are clamoured for by even the moderates represented at the Round Table Conference. The extremists who are, and will remain, the dominant force among the Indian political classes have in their turn moved their goal forward to absolute independence, and picture to themselves an early date when they will obtain

complete control of the whole of Hindustan, when the British will be no more to them than any other European nation, when white people will be in India only upon sufferance, when debts and obligations of all kinds will be repudiated and when an army of white janissaries, officered if necessary from Germany, will be hired to secure the armed ascendancy of the Hindu. All these absurd and dangerous pretensions have so far been met in speech with nothing but soft deprecatory and placatory words by the British Government in India, or at home. Vague high-sounding phrases about 'full Dominion status'; 'India a great world power' have filled the air. British-owned newspapers in India—of which there are still some—have been forced to the conclusion that Parliament will agree to anything that Indians can agree upon among themselves, provided that India remains nominally at least a part of the King's dominions. The effect of the speeches delivered during the five days' open session of the Conference has certainly been to give the impression that a vast extension of self-government is immediately contemplated and that all that remains is to settle the detail and method of the transference of powers, and to make some provision for the protection of minorities.

It has therefore become necessary, in order that this landslide of opinion should not lead to undue disappointment, that the basic facts should be restated in unmistakable terms. The British nation has we believe no intention whatever of relinquishing effectual control of

Indian life and progress. The Round Table Conference now sitting has no power to frame a constitution for India. No agreement reached at the Conference will be binding in any degree, morally or legally, upon Parliament. No agreement of the Conference is necessary to authorise the framing of a new Government of India Act. The responsibility for framing such an Act will rest entirely with the British Government, and the decision upon their proposals will rest with the House of Commons and the House of Lords, which for this purpose must be considered a body of at least equal authority. Even in the present House of Commons with its Socialist minority Government, there is a substantial majority against the extension, in any period which it is profitable to consider, of anything like Dominion status. It seems certain that a new House of Commons will have come into existence before a Government of India Act can be introduced, and it is highly probable that that new House of Commons will be far more representative of the strong, patriotic elements of our country than the present. Therefore the persistent attempts to avoid stating unpalatable truths, and to shirk facing the stern facts of the situation, can only excite false hopes which may afterwards lead to strife and suffering.

So much for the facts in England! What are the facts in India? We are told that the opinion of India has changed. But the facts of India have not changed. They are immemorial. The political classes of India

are a mere handful compared to the population. The Western ideas they have gathered and reproduced have no relation whatever to the life and thought of India. The vast majority can neither read nor write. There are at least seventy different races and even more numerous religions and sects in India, many of them in a state of antagonism.

'Our rule in India,' said Lord Randolph Churchill, 'is as it were a sheet of oil spread out over and keeping free from storms a vast and profound ocean of humanity.'

The withdrawal or suspension of British control means either a Hindu despotism supported by an army of European mercenaries or a renewal of those ferocious internal wars which tortured the Indian masses for thousands of years before the British flag was hoisted in Calcutta. Left to herself, India would rapidly degenerate to the condition of China at the cost of measureless suffering among three hundred and fifty million people. I do not believe there is any responsible and independent man among the thousands in this country who are well acquainted with India, who will dispute these facts.

Yet we are told Indian opinion has changed so rapidly. India has found her soul at last. Classes, races, creeds, opposed for centuries, are now uniting in a common desire to terminate the British connection. What is the cause of this change? We certainly should not blame our Indian fellow-subjects for it. It is the weak-

minded and defeatist tendency of our present politics which must bear the main responsibility. In one way or another in the last few years the impression has been spread far and wide throughout India that the British regime is coming to an end and that a new regime and authority are soon going to be erected. On the one hand, you have had the ever-mounting demands; on the other, the ever more apologetic responses.

Our defeatists eagerly point to the changed attitude of the princes, so long our faithful allies—not feudatories, but allies—joined to us by Treaties. The princes, we are told, are all now in favour of a vast change. But surely the explanation is simple! Once it is believed that British authority is about to be replaced by something new, that the Great Power which has hitherto ruled with irresistible force over all India and kept it quiet and safe from harm is about to wind up its affairs and depart, naturally, even its most loyal adherents must address themselves to a new situation, must prepare themselves for a new system. If the British Raj is to be replaced by the Gandhi Raj, the rulers of the native states must prepare themselves for a relationship with the new power at least as intimate as that which they have had with the old. The same is true of the Moslems. Why, even the representative of the depressed classes at the Round Table Conference, the representative of sixty million persons denied by the Hindu religion even the semblance of human rights,

has spoken in favour of a responsible self-governing constitution. Naturally, all have to consider what will happen when we are gone or have ceased to function. Once the signal of retreat and departure has been given, all who are left behind must make terms with the new power. The next to be affected will be the Indian officials of the Civil Service, hitherto so skilful and loyal. After them will be affected that admirable police, who, amid every discouragement and in the face of every menace or temptation, have done their duty and kept order with hardly any loss of life except their own. And lastly, there will be the native army, who, when their allegiance is disowned by Great Britain, will be forced to transfer it to another centre, with consequences so horrible that we hardly care to dwell on them to-day.

The cause of all this change in Indian opinion is not a change of facts in the problem of India. It is the apparent lack of will-power and self-confidence exhibited by the representatives of Great Britain. I warn our Indian fellow-subjects and honoured friends not to be deceived by these superficial appearances. Underneath the smooth platitudes and euphemisms of Western democratic politics and all this airy Round Table talk, the actual process of governing India has been tardily but rigorously carried on. Twenty-four thousand Indian politicians or their dupes are in gaol. Everywhere disorder has been repressed. The Gandhi Movement, which measured its strength with the Government of India, has been for the moment, to a large

extent, mastered, even by the most long-suffering of administrations—I thank God, with hardly any blood-shed and almost without the employment, except on the frontier, of any British troops ! I invite the British nation to realise their own undoubted power of giving wise and good government to India. That power is overwhelming, until it is cast away. The shame is that our moral and intellectual guidance should not have been exerted as firmly as our material power. It is the contrast between the vague and soothing political sentiments on the one hand, and the rough, practical measures which have to be taken, and have been taken, in emergencies, on the other, which has produced a volume of avoidable punishment and suffering.

If the British Government and its servant and projection, the Government of India, had maintained a true contact with realities, three-quarters of the distress caused to the politically-minded classes in India could have been avoided. If, instead of raising alluring hopes of speedy Dominion status, we had concentrated upon practical steps to advance the material condition of the Indian masses; if the Congress at Lahore which burnt the Union Jack had been broken up forthwith and its leaders deported; if Gandhi had been arrested and tried as soon as he broke the law; if the will to rule had been firmly asserted, there would have been no necessity for the immense series of penal measures which have, in fact, been taken. Again, I appeal for confirmation to all those in England who really know India.

Even now, at any time, the plain assertion of the resolve of Parliament to govern and to guide the destinies of the Indian people in faithful loyalty to Indian interests would in a few years—it might even be in a few months—bring this period of tantalised turmoil to an end.

Where, then, do we stand? The word of the King-Emperor is inviolable. We are pledged not only to labour for the welfare of India, but perseveringly to associate Indians of every race and creed with the processes of their own development. The Act of 1919 is a rock which cannot be removed. By that Act we conferred great and new constitutional powers upon the Indian political classes and we pledged ourselves to extend those constitutional powers honourably and perseveringly. We have assigned no theoretical limit to the extension of Indian constitutional development within the Empire. But by that same Act we reserved to ourselves an equal right to restrict, delay, or, if need be, for a spell to reverse that process. So far as there exists any contract between a people conquered by force in former times, and the modern Parliament of a benevolent nation vowed to promote their welfare, that is the contract, and there is no other.

Let us examine the problem upon this basis and in the light of practical events. The far-reaching extensions of self-government with which Mr. Montagu's name is associated were a bold experiment. They have not succeeded. The ten years which have passed have

been years of failure. Every service which has been handed over to Indian administration has deteriorated; in particular, Indian agriculture, the sole prop of the life of hundreds of millions, has certainly not advanced in accordance with the ever-growing science and organisation of the modern world. The Indian political classes have not accepted the Montagu constitution. Even those for whose especial benefit and pleasure that constitution was devised have derived no satisfaction from it. Either they have refused to co-operate, or they have used the liberties which it conferred not for the purpose of improving the well-being of India, but merely as convenient tools and processes for political agitation and even sedition. There has resulted unrest, impoverishment and discontent, drawing with them repressive measures and curtailments of civic liberties, which did not exist before the political liberties were widened.

In these circumstances, a new Parliament will have to decide what is now to be done. Our right and our power to restrict Indian constitutional liberties are unchallengeable. Our obligation to persevere in associating the peoples of India with their own government is undoubted. We are free to call a halt. We are free, for the time being, to retrace our steps, to retire in order to advance again. So long as the continuous purpose is sincerely and unswervingly pursued, Parliament has entire discretion. It is evident that our first efforts to create an all-India constitution have been ill-conceived.

It may well be that our duty and our course now lie in curtailing the functions of an all-India body and in building up in each province more real, more intimate, more representative organisms of self-government. It may well be that these organisms, when developed and established, will form a surer foundation for an all-India Government than the present crude and unduly Westernised conception.

But here I must draw attention to a very grave danger. The Indian gentlemen and notabilities who are attending the Round Table Conference are in no way representative of the real forces which challenge British rule in India. It is true that, drifting with the tide, many of them have become the mouthpiece of extreme demands, but they have no power to pledge the Indian Congress Party to sincere acceptance of any agreement that may be outlined. The danger is that in an unwise endeavour to reach an agreement here in London, the Socialist Government will commit itself to concessions and extensions of self-government which will weaken our hands in the future, without in any way procuring the assent of the ruthless forces of sedition and outrage. Our concessions will, therefore, only be used as the starting-point for new demands by revolutionaries, while the loyal elements and the masses of the people will be the more unsettled by further evidences of British weakness. The truth is that Gandhi-ism and all it stands for will, sooner or later, have to be grappled with and finally crushed. It is no use trying to satisfy a tiger by

feeding him with cat's-meat. The sooner this is realised, the less trouble and misfortune will there be for all concerned.

Above all, it must be made plain that the British nation has no intention of relinquishing its mission in India, or of failing in its duty to the Indian masses, or of parting with its supreme control in any of the essentials of peace, order and good government. We have no intention of casting away that most truly bright and precious jewel in the crown of the King, which more than all our other Dominions and Dependencies constitutes the glory and strength of the British Empire. The loss of India would mark and consummate the downfall of the British Empire. That great organism would pass at a stroke out of life into history. From such a catastrophe there could be no recovery. But we have yet to learn that the race and nation which have achieved so many prodigies and have faithfully discharged so many difficult tasks, and come safely and invincibly through all the perils of the centuries, will now fall a victim to their own lack of self-confidence and moral strength.

'No one of either race ought to be so foolish as to deny the greatness of the contribution which Britain has made to Indian progress. It is not racial prejudice, nor imperialistic ambition, nor commercial interest which makes us say so plainly—it is a tremendous achievement to have brought to the Indian sub-continent and to have applied in practice the conception of impartial justice, of the rule of law, of respect of equal civic rights without reference to class or creed, and of a disinterested and incorruptible Civil Service. These are essential elements in any State which is advancing towards well-ordered self-government. In his heart even the bitterest critic of British administration in India, knows that India has owed these things mainly to Britain.'

Report of the Statutory Commission.

IV

THE LANDSLIDE

House of Commons
January 26, 1931

It was in reply to this speech that Mr. Baldwin made his declaration pledging himself and the Conservative party to 'try to implement' the Constitution outlined by the Round Table Conference.

I DESIRE, if the House will permit me, to approach this question from a different angle from that which is now fashionable and from a somewhat different angle even from that which guided the right hon. and learned Member for Spen Valley (Sir John Simon), in his impressive and instructive speech. But first, I should like to pay a tribute to the Conservative delegates upon the Round Table Conference for the skill, patience, and tact with which they extricated themselves from an exceedingly difficult situation, and for the manner in which they have preserved our party free to use its judgment upon future events. Although my language would not be theirs, nor theirs mine, I thank them for the care they have taken to safeguard our liberty of action. I must, of course, first of all make it quite clear that I do not speak for the official Opposition nor for my right hon. Friend the

Leader of the Opposition. I speak solely as a Member of Parliament, of some service in this House, who holds views upon this matter which ought not to go unrepresented in this discussion.

I hold that the handling of Indian affairs during the last eighteen months has been most unfortunate and has led already to results which will be long lamented. I will make the briefest review which is necessary. Lord Birkenhead, with foresight and with wisdom, antedated by two years the setting up of the Commission laid down in the Act of 1919 for the reviewing of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. The Commission was set up by Act of Parliament, all the three parties co-operated in its setting up, and all three were represented on the Commission. The Commission, after immense labours, journeys, and studies, presented a report which was unanimous, and it presented that report to the Houses of Parliament which had called it into being. What has happened to that report of our Commission? Why has it been thrust altogether—though compliments have been paid to it—out of the sequence of events?

One would have thought that that report would have been debated by Parliament, probably on a series of Resolutions; that we should have heard, not for the first time, as we have done to-day, but repeatedly, the advice of the distinguished men of all parties who contributed to that report; and that the Government would then, guided by the Resolutions of the House and by the advice of those whom the House had charged, and

whom the Act of 1919 indicates should be charged, with the duty of advising Parliament, have framed a Bill. It was also contemplated and generally agreed that this Bill, after being presented to Parliament and read a Second time, should be the subject of a Joint Committee of both Houses, to which Indian representatives of every shade of opinion should be invited to have recourse; and, finally, the Bill would have been passed through its stages and presented for the Royal Assent.

Such was the procedure marked out, coolly, calmly, and far in advance, and marked out by general assent. Why is it that we have departed from it? It is, I suppose, because the Viceroy, moved or influenced by His Majesty's Government—I do not know, I cannot tell—determined to make a pronouncement in the winter of 1929, opening up in general, guarded, but still spacious terms the idea of Dominion status. I hold that this pronouncement—I am afraid I must ask the House to permit me to state, with the candour which we have been invited to adopt, my point of view—was uncalled for, that it was an interruption of the procedure prescribed by law, and that it was an intervention between Parliament and their Commission. Everyone had agreed to await the Report of the Commission, and it is most regrettable that Parliament and Indian opinion also were not permitted to receive that Report unprejudiced by prior declarations. For this, the accountable responsibility rests with the Government of the day; but as the result, see what happened.

The Report was profoundly prejudiced before its publication, and when it was seen that the Commissioners had deliberately and unanimously excluded the expression 'Dominion status' from their Report, a very painful difference was disclosed between the Viceroy and the Government of India on the one hand and our Statutory Commission on the other. At the same time, there was an enormous leap forward in the demands of the Indian political classes. What had been accepted before was now brushed aside. Moderate men adopted opinions which hitherto had been considered extreme. Outbreaks of disorder and lawlessness occurred in many parts of India, culminating in the Nationalist Congress at Lahore, at which the British flag was insulted with every circumstance of formality and publicity and, I may add, insulted with impunity.

Some time before, when it had been made a grievance that Indians were not represented upon the Simon Commission—if I may be permitted to use that term—the Commissioners themselves suggested a Conference in London as a preliminary to a Bill, and that all sections of Indian opinion should be invited thereto. That Conference has eventually assembled, but under very different conditions from anything foreseen by the Statutory Commission. Not only was the Report, with all its thought and study and with all its strong, bold, practical plan of constructive advance, going further than many of us would care to go in some respects—not only was the Report completely shelved, but the right hon. and

learned Member and his colleagues, who sit about on various benches, were invidiously excluded from the whole of the Conference proceedings. This was done, as we all know, in the hopes of persuading the representatives of the Indian Congress and other extremists to attend. Our trusted friends and lawful, formal and authoritative advisers were set aside in order to placate those who are the bitterest opponents of British rule in India. Nevertheless, they would not come. The Congress Party refused to attend the Conference even though it was mutilated as I have described to suit their prejudices.

What happened then? The Government of India thereupon collected a number of notables as representative as possible of all the various phases of Indian life, but with no delegated authority, so far as the forces with which we have to deal are concerned, no power to conclude an agreement, and still less any power to enforce it. These representatives, together with the Indian princes, met in London. This body, thus composed, without any representative authority from the Indian Congress, without advice from the Statutory Commission, without any guidance in the first instance and even without any effective agenda from His Majesty's Government, proceeded rapidly and almost unconsciously to form itself into what I can only call a would-be and wholly unauthorised Constituent Assembly. Quite true it was not to frame a constitution in every detail, but this document here,[1] which is its work, cannot be considered

[1] Round Table Conference. Short Blue Book.

as anything else but the work of a would-be and unauthorised Constituent Assembly; and His Majesty's Government, eagerly catching their mood, set to work without more ado to frame a federal constitution for all India, embodying the principle of a responsible Indian Ministry at the summit and centre of Indian affairs, the whole leading up speedily to that full Dominion status with all that it entails, including—as one of the members of the Conference, Mr. Sastri, was careful to remind us—as one of its most important features, the right to secede from the British Empire. While all the world wondered, the Sovereign Power which had created modern India and which was still its sole support and defence, smilingly, blandly and no doubt in most statesmanlike language, engaged in unlimited hypothetical discussions about how to unite all the existing forces of Indian life, so as to be able to hand over to them the executive powers of the central Government and the title-deeds of the British position in India. It was even pretended, or at any rate allowed to appear, that Indian disunity was the only or main obstacle to our speedy departure.

Such proceedings, such conclusions were utterly unforeseen only a year ago in almost any quarter of the House. They would have been scouted and condemned by almost all classes of British opinion only a few months ago. The principle of responsible Government, involving all the proved disadvantages of Dyarchy at the centre, is, of course, contrary to the recommendations of the Commission. It is applied by an entirely different

method in this Blue Book, and carried to a further point than was recommended in the alternative scheme submitted by the Viceroy and Government of India. We have, first of all, an immense body of knowledge represented by the Simon Commission and its Report, and, secondly, that great body of reason and authority represented by the Government of India, all set aside after a few weeks, almost a few days, of discussions and orations at the London Conference, until finally we are confronted with the constitution outlined in this Blue Book. In this hysterical landslide of opinion, the Conservative delegates almost alone kept their heads. I must admit that the Prime Minister showed a measure of deep foreboding in some of his utterances, although, of course, thickly veiled in flowery language. It is quite true that the acceptance by His Majesty's Government and by Lord Reading, representing the Liberal party, of these proposals and all their implications of speedy Dominion status and full responsible Government, was accompanied by a host of important reservations and is contingent upon many conditions some of which are unlikely to be fulfilled.

Could there be a worse way of dealing with so grave a problem? Here for weeks all the foundations of British power in India have been laid bare, and every principle has been treated as an open question. The orb of power has been dangled before the gleaming eyes of excitable millions and before the powerful forces of implacable hostility with whom we have, as is well

known, to cope in India, while at the same time in the background, treated as if they were matters of machinery, are a whole series of formidable reservations and conditions. Thus, on the one hand the claims and expectancy of those in India have been raised to the highest pitch by sweeping concessions on general questions of principle, while on the other the rugged facts which have emerged in the speech of my right hon. and learned Friend (Sir John Simon) who preceded me, have all been kept in the shade by clouds of ceremonious and benevolent generalities. Meanwhile, the rapid landslide in British opinion and policy at home has been accompanied in India by a steady development of unrest, disorder, disloyalty and assassination. The well-meaning and high-minded Viceroy has had to couple with his kindly speeches and sentiments a succession of repressive measures and of restrictions on civil liberty without precedent in India since the Mutiny, except in some days of the Great War. Many of thousands of Indians are in prison in connection with political agitation. The world depression which has reached India is accentuated by the prolonged uncertainty, by the growing disaffection, by the widespread feeling that all the things which they have known for generations are about to be thrown into the melting pot, by the feeling that some enormous change is impending and that violent times are ahead. The result has been suffering and misfortune on a very large scale and as a prelude, as I fear, to even greater troubles, because this uncertainty about all the founda-

tions of social and political life is not over. It is going to be prolonged indefinitely. This constitution, this Blue Book is now going to be paraded round India and discussed there. All the promises and concessions will be set at their maximum; all the safeguards narrowly canvassed with a view to demanding their diminution. All this uncertainty and agitation is going to continue not for months only, but possibly for years.

I have now completed my recital of the catalogue of errors and disasters which have brought us to our present position. Here I must make it perfectly clear that I accept not only the preamble of the Act of 1919, but also Section 41 of that Act. The preamble shows the ultimate goal to which we declare that India may aspire, and Section 41 shows precisely the full and uncompromised right of Parliament to advance or to divert or, if necessary, to restrict this forward movement in the development of constitutional government. Let us take the two together. I am quite willing fully to accept the implications of both. Of course, we assign no limits to the future potential development of our Indian fellow-subjects. We enlist their co-operation —have we not been doing so continuously?—in every branch of Indian administration and of Indian life. It all depends on time and on facts. My submission to the House to-night is that the time for this extension is premature, and that the facts are adverse.

In the upshot, let us see what it is that the Indian

Nationalists are expecting to receive. I take from *The Times* of two days ago a quotation from a manifesto of the Indian Nationalist members of the Legislative Assembly. This is the conclusion which they have drawn from the proceedings here. They welcome the policy which the Government propose to adopt of giving effect to their views:

'in establishing a new constitution which will advance India to full responsibility for her own government and give her the equal status of a dominion among the British Commonwealth of Nations. . . . It is also pleasing to note that His Majesty's Government recognise that the reservations which are to be placed upon the full powers of the Legislature are not only to be transitory but are to be so framed and exercised as not to prejudice the advance of India to true responsibility for her own government. In particular, we are emphatically of opinion that the reservations in the matter of financial adjustment must not in the least degree hamper the effective control of Indian Ministers over the finances of India. . . . While welcoming the declaration of policy, we trust its realisation will be immediate, which alone can really satisfy.'

These are the opinions of the more moderate representatives of the Indian Nationalists. Now that Mr. Gandhi is again at large, no doubt he will contribute a further gloss upon the Government's proposals. Anything which falls short in time or in fact of these expectations will be a cause of fierce reproaches. I remember the right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George) in November 1929 warning the

House and the Government of the dangers of charges of breaches of faith and of perfidy, and he said that nothing could be worse than that in our relations with India. If that were the danger then, how much more is it a danger now, when you contrast this kind of expectation entertained by the Indian Nationalists with the immense catalogue of important safeguards cited to by the right hon. Member for Chelsea (Sir Samuel Hoare), and consider them in the light of the unsolved difficulties enumerated by the right hon. and learned Member for Spen Valley (Sir John Simon). The right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs dilated then upon the dangers of Dominion status and vague talk about it. Of course, we have always contemplated it as an ultimate goal, but no one has supposed that, except in a purely ceremonial sense, in the way in which representatives of India attended conferences during the War, that principle and policy for India would be carried into effect in any time which it is reasonable or useful for us to foresee. The right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs wrote an article a year ago in the *Daily Mail* entitled—the phrase was taken from his own text—' Jerrybuilding for a crash in India.'

It is no good the right hon. Gentleman shaking his head, for I have already armed myself with the article for greater accuracy. When I heard the concluding portion of the speech of the right hon. and learned Member for Spen Valley, I could not help feeling how

very apt was the title his leader and colleague chose for his article in the *Daily Mail.* The right hon. Gentleman a year ago poured his scorn upon the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Baldwin), because he alleged he had gone too far in lending countenance to the idea of Dominion status, which in a particular sense has always been commonly agreed to be the final goal of Indian relationships. A year has passed. I have always cherished the hope that the right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs would on this Indian matter come to the rescue of the country as he did in war-time days; but politics exercise a bewitching fascination upon him, and when politics come in at the door, his zeal for the retention of India flies out by the window. He is now actually supporting Lord Reading's proposals, which go further than those to which the Conservative delegation . . . [Mr. Lloyd George dissented.] Certainly, they go further in several respects than the Conservative delegation or the Leader of the Opposition is prepared to go.

What reason is assigned for the sudden downward lurch in British opinion? It is, as we all know, the action of the Indian Princes at the Conference. Of course, I must not seek unduly to impute or assign motives, but is that a reassuring action? Is it a sign that our position is better in India, and that our dangers in that country are less? It strikes me as being the most disquieting feature of all. The action of the Princes may well be due to the belief, now spread-

ing so widely throughout the masses of India, that the British Raj will shortly cease to function, and that it will be succeeded by the Congress Raj or the Gandhi Raj or some other form, and that Great Britain under the Socialists and under universal suffrage, if pressed enough, if squeezed enough, if kicked enough, if worried enough, will acquiesce in such a revolution. In face of this, having to provide for themselves and for their States under the new regime, they have expressed their willingness to enter a federal parliament, and this is paraded as a justification for a new and sudden departure. No greater proof, in my judgment, could be shown of the increasing degeneration of our affairs. So far from justifying a greater confidence, it ought to reveal to us how very near the precipice we have already come.

Will these proposals, after they have been subjected to prolonged discussion, be accepted by the Indian political classes? I read a very remarkable account by the *Manchester Guardian* correspondent who was at the Conference, and I will read one most illuminating passage:

'The attitude of the older Congress leaders is the least part of the danger. Young India, including the women newly come into politics, is not in a mood to be reasoned with. It regards the Conference simply as a conspiracy of four devils—the devil of British Imperialism, the devil of the States' mediaeval autocracy, the devil of Moslem separation, and, worst of all, the devil of reason and moderation. It will listen to no proposals coming from this quarter.

It has acquired the true war mentality, and the unexpected concessions made by Lord Reading'—

I commend this to the Liberal party, because it is taken from the *Manchester Guardian*, the most distinguished and consistent advocate of Liberal opinion—

'are merely taken by it as an indication of weakness and fear, and will serve to inflate young India's pretensions and confirm its determination to insist on the enemy's unconditional surrender.'

He says later on:

'To put the whole position briefly, we have to remember that we are now retreating in the face of an active and elated enemy. Before abandoning any position we should be careful to put our Allies firmly in possession of it.'

What then will be the answer? Will it be an acceptance or a rejection? I apprehend that it will be neither the one nor the other. I apprehend that it will be a dusty answer. Some will accept, and some will reject these proposals. Those who accept them will take them as a means of helping them towards their goal, and those who do not accept them will be busy in seeing that those who have accepted them do not flag in their efforts. Great Britain will be committed and weakened, and the Indian Nationalists will be reinforced, armed with new weapons and free to use them.

Parenthetically, let me address myself to the party opposite. No one can pretend that this draft of a constitution is based upon any democratic conception,

or that the Indian Executive and Assembly will in any way represent the masses of India. These masses will be delivered to the mercies of a well-organised, narrowly elected, political and religious oligarchy and caucus. Those 300,000,000 people[1] who are our duty and trust are often forgotten in these political discussions. Those 300,000,000 people, who depend for their humble and narrowly-scraped livelihood upon the peace and order which Britain has brought in the years that are past and upon British justice, will be largely removed from our impartial protection, and they will be utterly powerless themselves to control or to make their wishes felt by their new rulers. Already the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms have produced a deterioration in every service which has been transferred. They have produced increasing irritation and unrest, and, of course, they have produced an acute revival of the quarrels and rivalries of Moslem and Hindu. This process must continue, and for all the resulting discontents the Viceroy, and the safeguards, and the British officials will get the blame.

It will be so easy for these future rulers or part rulers of India to represent all the inevitable evils and unpopularity of carrying on the Government as due to the slow rate at which the British officials and British Government are removing themselves from the country. It is upon them that the odium and onus will fall in the future. The Viceroy is contemplated here as a sort of

[1] Actually the latest estimates place the Indian population at nearly 350,000,000.

figure far uplifted above the ordinary range of human capacity, foresight and intelligence, as someone who knows exactly when and how to act, who never acts too soon or too late. He holds enormous powers in his hands. Month after month, it may be year after year, the Viceroy will be exposed to all the inevitable unpopularity which attaches to the process of governing, and he will be in the position in which the French revolutionists in 1792 placed the King, 'Monsieur Veto,' directing upon him all the popular displeasure and odium when he resisted, as he was constitutionally charged to do, measures which were injurious.

Sir, I am no stranger to these problems of self-government: I was the Minister in charge in this House of the Transvaal Constitution Act in 1906, and I happened also to be the Minister in charge of the Irish Free State Act in 1922. I was also directly concerned in the administrative processes and executive steps necessary to bring both those most remarkable departures in self-government into operation. Of course, there are no parallels between South Africa and Ireland on the one hand and India on the other. No one has pointed that out more clearly and forcibly than the right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs. But there are two lessons which I, personally, think my experience enables me to draw. The first is, as has been emphasised from many quarters to-day, the importance of blunt candour in dealing with those to whom the powers are being transferred, of knowing exactly

how far you mean to go and knowing, also, exactly where you intend to stop. The other lesson which has been impressed upon me has been that, once the principle is conceded, safeguards and reservations very often prove of no lasting value. I remember the nominated second chamber for the Transvaal. What labour we expended in building that up ! I remember some of my most distinguished Liberal colleagues comfortably persuading themselves, on a nice calculation of electoral possibilities, that a non-Boer Government in the first instance would be returned. All those calculations and devices were swept away. Similarly, in Ireland, once we had decided to place the responsibility on Mr. Griffiths and Mr. Collins we could not be too quick in withdrawing our police and military and leaving the new Authority to bear the whole force and burden of the task they had assumed.

Nothing of this sort is possible in India ; nothing of this kind is contemplated in India, not even by the most forward Member of the present Government. We are not relieving ourselves of burdens and responsibilities in India. We are merely setting the scene for a more complicated controversy, merely creating agencies which will make it more difficult for us to discharge our task. On the one hand, there will be the all-India Parliament, which may well be dominated by forces intent on driving us out of the country as quickly as possible. There will be a Ministry charged with such grave matters *inter alia* as the maintenance of law and order

and control of the police. There will be that Ministry, responsible to this all-India Parliament and dependent upon its vote. You hug to yourselves the assurance that there must be a two-thirds majority before the Government can be turned out. How long will that last? It is perfectly clear that even if the Government does not resign because there is not a two-thirds majority, nevertheless a hostile majority can make the course of business in all other matters virtually impracticable.

Simultaneously with these tremendous steps at the centre, full responsible Government, in accordance with the recommendations of the Simon Commission, is to be conferred upon the provinces. So you will have what many of the wisest judges thought should be avoided, a double concurrent convulsion. It might have been thought well to build up those organisms in the provinces, before at the same time undertaking this higher and further organisation at the summit. You will have that on the one side; and on the other hand you will have the Viceroy with the Army and with the finance of the Army, which, I am told, may well involve 80 per cent. of the whole expenditure; a Viceroy largely deprived of the machinery and sources of information which now enable him to forestall crime and unrest, and to smooth away difficulties before they come to a head; a Viceroy disembodied and divorced from many vital and intimate functions, but armed, nevertheless—of course, in the last resort—with that overwhelming physical force of the Army which it should be the care and thought of every

man wherever he sits not to employ against the natives of India. The one great aim and object of every Indian administration has been to prevent the British Army being brought into direct contact with Indian disorders.

Undoubtedly this scheme is no solution, and it affords the prospect of no solution, it is no resting-place, it is no settlement. The clash and agitation in India will continue, but they will no longer be confined to rioting in the streets or demonstrations in the Legislature. They will invade the heart and the brain of the Government of India. There, at the summit of this wonderful creation, an instrument which, with all its shortcomings, has given peace and progress to nations more varied than the nations of Europe and populations in the aggregate almost as large as China—there, at the summit, by constitutional and Parliamentary weapons now, the process of gnawing and cutting down the safeguards will proceed, stimulated, perhaps, from outside by a continuance of lawlessness and rioting and of worse crimes, for the prevention of which you will no longer have the primary responsibility. What, may I ask, will be your line of moral and logical resistance then? You have declared that the safeguards are only transitory, they are temporary expedients, apologetically adopted pending what to anyone who reads this Blue Book, and notes the emphasis assigned to its various parts, can only mean the rapid and speedy realisation of full Dominion status. The struggle will go on; it will only be aggravated; it will proceed under conditions

in which British rule will be shorn of all its argument and of half its apparatus. It will proceed steadily towards the goal which those who are driving this policy forward, both here in this country and in India, no longer hesitate to avow, namely, the goal of complete severance between Great Britain and India of every tie except tradition, which in India is adverse, and sentiment, which in India is hostile. Sir, I say that is a frightful prospect to have opened up so wantonly, so recklessly, so incontinently and in so short a time.

How will the British nation feel about all this? I am told that they do not care. I am told that from one quarter or another. They are all worried by unemployment or taxation or absorbed in sport and crime news. The great liner is sinking in a calm sea. One bulkhead after another gives way; one compartment after another is bilged; the list increases; she is sinking; but the captain and the officers and the crew are all in the saloon dancing to the jazz band. But wait till the passengers find out what is their position! For thirty years I have watched from a central position the manifestations of the will power of Great Britain, and I do not believe our people will consent to be edged, pushed, talked and cozened out of India. No nation of which I am aware, great or small, has ever voluntarily or tamely suffered such an overwhelming injury to its interests or such a harsh abrogation of its rights. After all, there are British rights and interests in India. Two centuries of effort and achievement, lives given on a hundred fields,

far more lives given and consumed in faithful and devoted service to the Indian people themselves! All this has earned us rights of our own in India. When the nation finds that our whole position is in jeopardy, that her whole work and duty in India is being brought to a standstill, when the nation sees our individual fellow-countrymen scattered about, with their women and children, throughout this enormous land, in hourly peril amidst the Indian multitudes, when, at any moment, this may produce shocking scenes, then I think there will be a sharp awakening, then, I am sure, that a reaction of the most vehement character will sweep this country and its unmeasured strength will once more be used. That, Sir, is an ending which I trust and pray we may avoid, but it is an ending to which, step by step and day by day, we are being remorselessly and fatuously conducted.

'There is, I know, a school of thought who say that we might wisely walk out of India and that the Indians could manage their own affairs better than we can. Anybody who pictures to himself the anarchy, the bloody chaos that would follow from any such deplorable step might shrink from that sinister decision.'

JOHN MORLEY. House of Commons.

V

A GENERAL VIEW

FREE TRADE HALL, MANCHESTER
January 30, 1931

This was the second meeting held under the auspices of the Indian Empire Society. Its expense was largely defrayed by the sale of tickets at popular prices. Large numbers of persons were unable to find room. All parties were represented in the audience.

WE have come here to Manchester to utter our solemn warning against the policy which the Socialist Government has pursued in India. It is our conviction that unless this policy is arrested it will bring a fatal disaster upon the British Empire and entail endless misery to hundreds of millions of harmless Indian subjects of the King. I feel obliged to claim complete party independence upon the Indian crisis, and I come here, where so much of my political work has been done, to ask for your earnest attention upon matters which are the deep concern of the nation.

. . . . .

A draft federal Constitution for India with Dyarchy and responsible Government at the centre has been

framed. In the words of the Socialist Lord Chancellor, 'the responsibility for the Federal Government of India will in future'—mark the words 'in future'—'rest on Indians themselves.' This Constitution was very loosely put together. Not one of the thorny problems of Indian life or the real difficulties of machinery was settled. The gaps and faults in the structure were covered up with clouds of perorations and pious platitudes, and the result, embodied in a small Blue Book, is now to be hawked around India, already in a dangerously excited condition, in the hopes of winning more acceptance. It is this scheme which we are told the Conservative party will have to implement when it comes back into office. Of course, we are assured there are all kinds of safeguards. What is given in the word is taken back in the fact; what is given with one hand is taken away with the other. Sir Samuel Hoare, speaking with great ability in the House of Commons, laid down a list of safeguards and reservations which if they were made effective would reduce responsible government of India by Indians and early Dominion status for all India to very small dimensions. We are told to rely upon these safeguards, and that we shall all fight solidly together for them. I hope it may be so, but the Prime Minister is already apologising to the Indian newspapers for the safeguards, and the Secretary of State for India (Mr. Wedgwood Benn) says that we shall be 'compelled' to give full self-government to India.

It is also argued that we cannot afford to have party divisions in this country about India, because then the Socialist party will when in Opposition make the government of India impossible. This is a very grave argument, and everyone should give full weight to it. Nevertheless, I do not think we can accept it, because it means that the Socialist party in practice will be the final deciding factor in the whole of our policy towards India, and the Conservative party will be simply tied to its tail. I think upon this supreme question of India, which is no ordinary question of politics but involves the life of the British Empire, we ought to stand up for what we believe and face the consequences, whatever they may be. If the worst comes upon England and her Empire, let us make sure, above all things, that it does not come through us. Moreover, experience shows that the only safe plan for human action is to act with great simplicity, and give judgment on the merits of questions at each particular stage. I fear very greatly, if we continue to drift and jog along with the Socialists in their Indian policy, that when the time comes and we can go no further, our resisting power will be gone, and they will drag us all over the precipice with them.

But now let us see what has been happening in India. The Viceroy, a well-meaning man of the highest personal character, has had to cope with steadily increasing disorder. He put off arresting Mr. Gandhi as long as possible. Eight months ago, however, Gandhi's law-

lessness became so flagrant that Lord Irwin was forced to lock him up. Instead of bringing him to trial and punishing him according to law, he locked him up as a State prisoner, and then tried to negotiate with him while he was in gaol. Gandhi, who is a fanatic and an ascetic of the fakir type well known in the East, rejected these overtures with contempt. But you can imagine how his prestige throughout India was raised by the fact that the mighty Indian Government first made him a martyr in the eyes of his fellows, and then, while he was actually their captive, solicited his aid. Now that the Round Table Constitution has been drafted and sent out to India 'on approval,' Gandhi and thirty of his leading fellow-conspirators and revolutionaries have been set at liberty, unconditionally, in the hopes that they will at any rate say some kind words about the scheme.

As might have been expected, Gandhi was received rapturously by his followers. He has been made a martyr under very comfortable conditions, and a national hero without running any risk, and he now emerges on the scene a triumphant victor. It did not take him long to launch his new defiance at the Government of India. Nearly 25,000 of his followers had already been imprisoned under the Socialist policy of conciliation. Gandhi, of course, demands that they shall be released. He insists that the picketing of British shops and factories, the breaking of the law about salt, the boycotting of foreign cloth—you in Lancashire have

something to do with that, I believe—and civil disobedience generally must continue. If the Government of India accept this and withdraw all the ordinances they have had to pass to keep the peace, then he will, perhaps, be graciously pleased to examine how far the new Constitution falls short of his declared aim of absolute and speedy independence for India. We have yet to learn what the answer of his Majesty's Government and the Government of India will be to these demands and to this situation. Surely the situation ought to have been expected. In fact, if the Viceroy and the Socialist Government had wished to manufacture and foment disorder instead of hoping to quiet it, they could hardly have acted otherwise than they have done.

The reason why, in my judgment, Lord Irwin, for all his virtue and courage, has not succeeded in India as he deserved to, is that he has been proceeding upon a wrong mental theme. His attitude towards India has throughout been an apology. He has not shown sufficient confidence in the indispensable work which our country has done, and is doing, for India, or in British resolution that it shall not be interrupted or destroyed. That is the sole foundation upon which the peaceful and successful administration of India can be based. It is never possible to make concessions to Orientals when they think you are weak or are afraid of them. If they once think they have got you at a disadvantage all their moods become violent, concessions are treated as

valueless, and necessary acts of civil repression often only add fuel to the flames. This Viceroy, who meant so well and tried so hard, and has always been perfectly fearless where he himself was concerned, has had to enact more repressive measures and inflict more punishments and make greater curtailments of liberty and imprison more thousands of people than has ever happened before in India. And yet all these severities have been no more effective than his concessions and kindly words. Things have gone from bad to worse, and they are now all to be aggravated again.

What is wanted at this moment in India is not more repression or more concession. It is a fundamental change in the intellectual and moral attitude of Great Britain and of the Government of India, which is a reflection of Great Britain. Instead of proclaiming, as this unwise Constitutional Blue Book does, that our object is to wind up our affairs and hand over the government of India to the tiny oligarchy of Indian politicians who have raised this agitation, we ought to begin now by making it perfectly clear that we intend to remain the effective rulers of India in every essential for a very long and indefinite period, and that though we welcome co-operation in every branch of government from loyal and faithful Indians, we will have no truck with lawlessness or treason, and will, if necessary, suspend even the most moderate Constitutional changes while there is a bad spirit abroad.

Now you will rightly say to me, 'Is this not contrary to all our experience of the self-governing Dominions of the British Empire, and is it not contrary to what you did yourself in South Africa and in Ireland?' I answer, 'Yes, it is contrary.' The problem of Indian government is entirely different from any of the problems we have hitherto faced in any part of the world. India is a continent nearly as large as Europe, and, like Europe, it has now between three and four hundred millions of people. There are scores of nations and races in India and hundreds of religions and sects. Out of the three hundred and fifty millions of Indians only a very few millions can read or write, and of these only a fraction are interested in politics and Western ideas. The rest are primitive people absorbed in the hard struggle for life. They are dependent for their livelihood and for the happiness and peace of their humble homes upon the rule of a very small number of white officials who have no personal interests of their own to serve, who are quite impartial between race and race, and who have built up in 150 years an organisation which has given these enormous masses peace, justice, and a substantial increase in material well-being, which would have been even greater except for the vast increase in their numbers. This organisation and the great services by which it operates depends for its efficiency, and indeed for its existence, upon its authority. If that authority is weakened, or discredited, or loses confidence in itself, or is hampered

and broken up, measureless disasters will descend upon these three hundred and fifty million perfectly helpless poor folk. They will soon be reduced to the miserable condition of the people of China, where anarchy has now reigned for many years and tyranny for ages.

We have, therefore, a supreme moral duty to discharge to the Indian people. We have no right whatever to hand them over to a comparatively small and utterly unrepresentative political faction, to be the prey of misgovernment, of deterioration in every public service, of religious bigotry of a kind not dreamed of for generations in the West, and finally of civil war. While we have strength we must discharge our duty. Neither taunts nor blandishments should move us from it. When we can no longer discharge our duty, then our reign in India is done, and many other great things in the history of the British Empire will come to their close at the same time.

But I shall be asked, 'Have we the strength to carry out our task? Will not great numbers of soldiers be required and terrible events take place?' I reply it is not a case for warlike force. Do not allow yourselves to be frightened from your duty by language of that kind. In all the disasters that have occurred in the last eighteen months hardly a single British battalion has been used in India and not a shot has been fired, except on the frontier, by British troops. The admirable Indian police, for whose fidelity and restraint no praise

is too great, has been quite sufficient to cope with every disorder, and hardly any life has been lost or blood shed in the almost ceaseless mob tumult which has occurred in so many places. Confidence in ourselves and in our mission, and firm support of our faithful agents and officials, patience and perseverance, have only to be displayed—and displayed upon the theme that Britain intends to govern India for many years to come—to save reinforcements of troops or serious bloodshed. In fact, this will be the only way by which such evils can be averted.

If, however, you continue to spread far and wide throughout the vast plains and cities of India the doctrine that the British are handing over their power to some new regime as a preliminary to clearing out of the country, and as part of the decline and fall of the British Empire, then, indeed, you may have upon your hands a situation of the most terrible kind. Then, indeed, you may find your police, hitherto so loyal and trustworthy, and your native Army thrown into a profound state of perturbation, asking one another what their future is to be, and how their new masters will view their actions, and then at any moment you may find yourself in a catastrophe of a character more horrible than anything we have experienced even in the awful times through which we have lived.

Finally, you will ask me what, then, are we to make of our promises of Dominion status and responsible government. Surely we cannot break our word! There

I agree. The formal, plighted word of the King-Emperor is inviolable. It does not follow, however, that every Socialist jack-in-office can commit this great country by his perorations. In the very Act of Parliament in 1919 where responsible government is mentioned in the preamble there is also a special clause, Clause 41, which makes it plain that all progress towards responsible government must only be at the discretion of the British Parliament, and that Parliament can, if it chooses, stop the progress, or slow it down, or turn it into another channel, or even retrace our path if that were necessary. Therefore, until another Act of Parliament receives the Royal assent, there is no ground whatever on which we are committed to any particular step at any particular time.

As for this expression 'Dominion status,' about which there has been so much misunderstanding: the abstraction called India, composed of so many different nations and States, is in a ceremonial sense a Dominion already. Indian representatives sit on the Imperial Conferences; they participated in the Imperial War Cabinet, and are represented in the British delegation of the League of Nations. With every mark of honour and dignity we have welcomed the aid and co-operation of eminent men among our Indian fellow-subjects. But except as an ultimate visionary goal, Dominion status like that of Canada or Australia is not going to happen in India in any period which we can even remotely foresee. It certainly could never happen until the mass of the

Indian people were as well able to look after their own interests as are the Australians and Canadians of to-day. It is most dangerous and improvident of British political leaders of any party to try to smooth difficulties over in India by making believe that full Dominion status can possibly come to India in our time.

On the contrary, it is their duty now, while time remains, to make it clear that these ideas play no part in the important practical steps which should now be taken in constitutional reform. We should immediately proceed to build up in the provinces of India organisations of local government which will be truly related to the populations they represent and seek to serve. That is the task which, if it should succeed, will perhaps at a later stage enable another step to be taken with sureness and safety. And if it fails, if any disorders and collapses occur, the Central Government, having preserved its authority intact, will be able to come to the rescue and tow the ship off the shoals again. We should be wrong to complicate this hopeful task by trying at the same time to set up a make-believe responsible Government at the centre and summit of Indian affairs, and still more by using loose and vague language in this critical year about Dominion status. Lord Birkenhead said: 'Tell the truth to India.' Yes, indeed, tell her no more than the truth.

The loss of India, however arising, would be final and fatal to us. It could not fail to be part of a process which would reduce us to the scale of a minor Power.

Holland, once our equal, was outmatched in the world in spite of all her sturdy domestic strength, and became a small continental state. But Holland suffered this eclipse without having acquired the population of a modern first-class State. We have forty-five millions in this island, a very large proportion of whom are in existence because of our world position, economic, political, imperial. If, guided by counsels of madness and cowardice disguised as false benevolence, you troop home from India, you will leave behind you what John Morley called 'a bloody chaos'; and you will find famine to greet you on the horizon on your return.

VI

A DISEASE OF THE WILL

PHILHARMONIC HALL, LIVERPOOL
March 5, 1931

This is an extract from a speech which, being delivered in support of the Conservative candidate at a by-election, necessarily dealt with other political issues.

THERE is a certain school of historians who argue that many of the great events of history have been caused by particular diseases. They attribute for instance the decline and fall of the Roman Empire to malaria. It is an interesting theory. But what is the disease we are suffering from now in this island? It is a disease much more dangerous than malaria. It is a disease of the will power. We have carried the franchise to limits far beyond those who are interested in politics. Our Parliamentary institutions are in a state of decay. Our party system, which worked so well with two parties, is for the time being paralysed by three. Our problems are far graver and more delicate than those of any other great power. We are definitely passing through a dangerous period of our history. Is there any real attempt to think out economic,

trade, finance and currency problems as they ought to be thought out? Are we addressing ourselves to our difficulties with the mental energy of our forefathers? Are we not just drifting along, slipping, sliding down slopes which it will be very hard to climb again? Are we losing our art of governing Oriental countries? Are we losing confidence in ourselves and in our mission? All these haunting questions force themselves upon us as we contemplate the present political situation.

Is there any other country in the world which would submit to have its vital business affairs on which the livelihood of its crowded population depends, or the government of its great empire, entrusted to a minority of socialists, who no longer represent even those who returned them to Westminster? Is there any other country in the world which would tamely submit to be pushed out of its rights and duties in the East? Would France be chattered out of Indo-China; would Italy relinquish her North African possessions? Would the Dutch give up Java to please the Javanese? Would the United States be hustled out of the Philippines? All these countries assert themselves, and insist that their rights and wishes in their own sphere shall be respected. We alone seem afraid of our own shadow. The British lion, so fierce and valiant in bygone days, so dauntless and unconquerable through all the agony of Armageddon, can now be chased by rabbits from the fields and forests of his former glory. It is not that our strength is seriously impaired. We are suffering from

a disease of the will. We are the victims of a nervous collapse, of a morbid state of mind. Remember the story of the Spanish prisoner. For many years he was confined in a dungeon. He pondered upon his melancholy fate. He longed to escape. But the years passed by and his life and strength ebbed away. One day it occurred to him to push the door of his cell. It was open; it had never been locked! He walked out free.

It is my firm belief that we have only to stand erect and face our difficulties as in the days of yore, for those same difficulties to be halved, if not indeed solved.

'There is no part of the world in which more devoted work is done by Civil servants than in British India, and the reputation of their officers, whether British or Indian, with the mass of the people stands deservedly high, it ought to be effectively sustained. Whatever may be the future of this vast sub-continent, it seems to us very necessary that greater facilities should be provided for spreading a true version of public affairs, and for sustaining the foundations upon which orderly government must in all circumstances depend. It is one of the great claims of British rule in India that it has brought a peace and unity hardly ever before known in the peninsula, and has substituted for a congeries of warring States a single India united by a common allegiance to the Crown, although one part only is directly under British rule.'

Report of the Statutory Commission.

VII

CONSERVATIVE DIFFERENCES ON INDIA

WINCHESTER HOUSE

February 23, 1931

The Council of the West Essex Conservative Association was called together to receive the explanation of their representative upon the attitude he had adopted upon Indian matters. The Council passed unanimously a resolution of confidence and approval.

YOU have been called together at my desire in order that I may lay before you the reasons why I have felt it my duty to take an independent line about India and to withdraw from the Business Committee of the Conservative party of which I had the honour to be a member. The Business Committee is a very sensible name for the small group of those members of both Houses with whom Mr. Baldwin is accustomed to consult on the general policy of the party and its conduct in Parliament. I valued highly the privilege of being included in it, and also it gave an opportunity of continuing in close, confidential touch with several of my principal colleagues and personal friends in the late Conservative Government. I was therefore very sorry to have to cut myself off from this interesting and

agreeable work, and I can assure you I should not have done so without due cause. I still propose, if that is desired, to remain Chairman of the Conservative Finance Committee and to conduct the criticism of the Budget and other financial measures of the Socialist Government.[1] I need scarcely say that I intend to do my utmost to assist our leader in the opposition to the Government in the House of Commons. I shall do my utmost to turn them out at the earliest opportunity, and procure their condign punishment and defeat at the general election, and to bring about by every means in my power a decisive victory for a united Conservative party. I found, however, that while I remained a member of this small inner circle I could not give full effect to my convictions about India. Naturally when men sit round a table and discuss political matters in intimate confidence they are largely bound by the decisions which are taken, and although there is more latitude out of office than in a Cabinet, nevertheless it is most undesirable that differences should appear among those who are thus associated.

Now let us see what these differences are. I agreed to our Conservative delegates taking part in the Round Table Conference, as I thought they would keep the Socialist Government from committing us to any dangerous or unwise departure. This our delegates tell us they have done, and I agree with them that they may justly claim that we are not committed by any

[1] Mr. Baldwin has since relieved me of this task.

action of theirs to the scheme of a new constitution for India which emerged from the Round Table Conference. I was however surprised and alarmed at the sudden landslide of opinion which took place upon that Conference and at the impression which was created throughout this country and in India that all the three parties were in agreement in principle to set up a federal constitution under Indian ministers responsible to an all-India Assembly. Still more was I alarmed when this enormous departure was itself presented as only a temporary and transitory arrangement soon to give place to what is called 'full Dominion status' for India carrying with it the control not only of law and order and of finance, but of the Army, and the right to secede from the British Empire. I do not think it is wise to hold out any hopes of any such position being reached for many generations to come. At any rate, I hold it of the utmost importance that we should make it clear that there is no chance of such a goal being reached in our lifetime, or in any period which it is profitable for us to consider. Secondly, I much regret to have to state that I disapprove altogether of the policy pursued by the present Viceroy of India, which as I shall show you presently has been attended by results already disastrous and threatening greater evils in the future.

These difficulties came to a head when Mr. Baldwin expressed his complete disagreement with the speech I made in the House of Commons at the end of last month, and when he said that it would be the duty of

the Conservative party if returned to power to try to 'implement' the scheme put forward by the Round Table Conference. It was quite evident to everyone after that speech that the differences between us upon India were not merely matters of emphasis or procedure, but that they were profound and practical differences covering the whole field of Indian Policy and affecting the whole mood and spirit in which we discharge our duty to India. In the words which Lord Hartington, afterwards Duke of Devonshire, used to Mr. Gladstone in 1886 about Ireland, I can only say that upon India Mr. Baldwin and I 'do not mean the same thing.' I am sure you will agree that in these circumstances I had no choice but to separate myself upon this single question in the most friendly manner from a leader for whom I entertain both high respect and regard.

Having taken up this position in public about India I must inform you that it is my intention to go through with it. I shall endeavour to marshal British opinion against a course of action which would bring in my judgment the greatest evils upon the people of India, upon the people of Great Britain, and upon the structure of the British Empire itself. It follows therefore of course that I should not be able to serve in any Administration about whose Indian policy I was not reassured. I would far rather be a loyal private member of the Conservative party than bear official responsibility for actions and events which might well involve a mortal injury to the greatness and cohesion of our Empire.

I invite you to endorse this attitude upon my part, and I hope you will find yourselves able to give me your full approval and even encouragement in acting in this matter in accordance with my convictions.

The Indian problem at the present time divides itself into two parts. There is the question of a new constitution for India, and there is the question of the day-to-day administration of that country and the proper maintenance of British authority. If you will permit me, I will say a few words on both these matters. In dealing with Oriental races for whose well-being you are responsible it is a mistake to try to gloss over grave differences, to try to dress up proposals in an unwarrantably favourable guise, to ignore or conceal or put in the background rugged but unpleasant facts. The right course on the contrary is to state soberly and firmly what the British position is, and not be afraid to say 'this would not suit us,' 'that would not be good for you,' 'there is no chance of this coming to pass,' 'we shall not agree to that being done.' All these firm negatives ought to be stated frankly and plainly so that false hopes are not excited unduly and lead to disappointment and reproaches. We should always try to be better than our word and let any concessions we make be real and true. The Socialist Government on the other hand has been trying to deal with the Indian Nationalist politicians by the same sort of blarney and palaver which sometimes passes muster in Parliament or on British political platforms. I do not want to

see the Conservative party, which is the main instrument by which the British Empire can be defended, dragged any further in their wake. I do not want to see the Indian politicians misled as to what our real intentions are.

Now you will observe that statements have been made within the last few days upon Mr. Baldwin's authority that we are not committed to anything except to give fair consideration to any proposals that may be made. I was very glad to hear those statements. After all, it is everybody's duty to give fair consideration to any proposals on any subject which are sincerely advanced. But that is very different from the impression which the country has sustained, and it is very different from the impression conveyed to the Indian politicians. Our leader's phrase about 'implementing' the constitution prepared by the Round Table Conference and the whole purport of his speech were cabled to the Indian delegates on the ship by which they were returning to India. We are told that they were overjoyed at what they read, and naturally they assumed that the great Conservative party was in agreement with the Socialist and Liberal parties and was prepared to implement a federal constitution with responsible government at the centre. On the strength of this they proceeded to draft a manifesto to the Indian Congress, and have ever since been labouring to persuade the more extreme elements to come and join them in a further conference to be held in India. They ought to be told, as we are told, that the Conservative party

is wholly uncommitted, and that they have been unintentionally misled. But Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, the Prime Minister, is also evidently under a misapprehension; because he said in answer to a question which I put him in the House of Commons last week that on the subject of India the Government considered that they 'had got their marching orders from the House': meaning thereby that all parties were agreed. It seems to me important that these misapprehensions, if such they be, about the official attitude of the Conservative party, should be corrected both here and in India on the highest authority and with the least delay.

The proper constitutional course for Parliament to adopt is to proceed to consider the Simon Report which was signed by the representatives of all parties. There are no doubt many things in that report which would have to be very carefully examined, some of which are no longer applicable; nevertheless it forms the only proper constitutional basis upon which discussion of the reform of Indian government should proceed by the joint action of all parties. The Round Table Conference may have thrown some new and interesting light upon Indian affairs of which of course full notice should be taken. But the whole foundation for the joint treatment of the Indian problem by the three British parties is the Simon Report, and once that report has been put on one side, as it has been almost contemptuously by the Socialist Government, it is imperative that the Conservative party should recover the fullest

possible liberty of judgment. So much for the constitutional aspect.

Now I come to the administration of India. In my opinion we ought to dissociate ourselves in the most public and formal manner from any complicity in the weak, wrong-headed and most unfortunate administration of India by the Socialists and by the Viceroy acting upon their responsibility. It is alarming and also nauseating to see Mr. Gandhi, a seditious Middle Temple lawyer, now posing as a fakir of a type well-known in the East, striding half-naked up the steps of the Viceregal palace, while he is still organising and conducting a defiant campaign of civil disobedience, to parley on equal terms with the representative of the King-Emperor. Such a spectacle can only increase the unrest in India and the danger to which white people there are exposed. It can only encourage all the forces which are hostile to British authority. What good can possibly come of such extraordinary negotiations? Gandhi has said within the last few weeks that he demands the substance of independence, though he kindly adds that the British may keep the shadow. He declares that the boycott of foreign cloth must be continued until either prohibition or a prohibitive tariff can be put up against it by an Indian national Parliament. This, if accepted, would entail the final ruin of Lancashire. He has also pressed for the repudiation of the Indian loans, and has laid claim to the control of the Army and foreign affairs. These are his well-known aims. Surely they form a

strange basis for heart-to-heart discussions—'sweet' we are told they were—between this malignant subversive fanatic and the Viceroy of India.

All this is intended by the Socialists to be the preliminary to another Round Table Conference in India to which it is hoped to persuade the extremists to come. At this new gathering the far-reaching and half-baked recommendations of the Round Table Conference will be taken only as a starting-point. From this starting-point will begin the attack upon the safeguards which have hitherto been kept apologetically in the background. I think it vital that the Conservative party should without delay get itself into a strong position of resistance, and should begin to arouse public opinion throughout the country against these most unwise and dangerous proceedings. I intend at any rate to do my best, and I shall be much strengthened if you put your whole weight behind me. India is no ordinary question of party politics. It is one of those supreme issues which come upon us from time to time. When they arise the men and women who faithfully guard the life of Britain and her Empire in every rank and employment, in every part of the country, feel the same vibration. They felt it on August 4, 1914. They felt it in the General Strike. They feel it now.

Our responsibility in India has grown up over the last 150 years. It is a responsibility for giving the best possible chance for peaceful existence and progress to about three hundred and fifty millions of helpless

primitive people who are separated by an almost measureless gulf from the ideas and institutions of the Western world. We now look after them by means of British Officials on fixed salaries who have no axe to grind, who make no profit out of their duties, who are incorruptible, who are impartial between races, creeds and classes, and who are directed by a central Government which in its turn is controlled by the British Parliament based on twenty-nine million electors. It is now proposed to transfer these British responsibilities to an electorate comparatively small and almost entirely illiterate. The Indian Congress and other elements in this agitation represent neither the numbers, the strength nor the virtue of the Indian people. They merely represent those Indians who have acquired a veneer of Western civilisation, and have read all those books about democracy which Europe is now beginning increasingly to discard. There are among them many estimable and clever people, and it has always been and always must be our policy to associate them as much as we possibly can with the machinery of Indian Government. But it would be altogether wrong to entrust the welfare of the great masses to the Indian political classes. That would not be 'India for the Indians'; that would only be India for some Indians, that would only be India for a very few Indians. Undoubtedly any such abrogation on our part of our duty would mean that the Indian peoples would be exploited, oppressed and cast down in the scale of the world's affairs as the proletariat of China

is cast down in misery to-day. At present the Government of India is responsible to the British Parliament, which is the oldest, the least unwise and the most democratic parliament in the world. To transfer that responsibility to this highly artificial and restricted oligarchy of Indian politicians would be a retrograde act. It would be a shameful act. It would be an act of cowardice, desertion and dishonour. It would bring grave material evils, both upon India and Great Britain; but it would bring upon Great Britain a moral shame which would challenge for ever the reputation of the British Empire as a valiant and benignant force in the history of mankind.

The faithful discharge of our duty in India is not only a cause, but a symbol. It is the touchstone of our fortunes in the present difficult time. If we cannot do our duty in India, be sure we shall have shown ourselves unworthy to preserve the vast Empire which still centres upon this small island. The same spirit of unimaginative incompetence and weak compromise and supine drift will paralyse trade and business and prevent either financial reorganisation or economic resurgence. What we require to do now is to stand erect and look the world in the face, and do our duty without fear or favour. A decisive opportunity may soon be at hand. Victory may once again reward the Conservative party. Let it be a victory with a real meaning behind it. Let it be a victory which proclaims to all the world that the heart of the Empire is true and that its hand is just—and strong.

'"There may be civil war and serious communal strife when we get 'swaraj,' but only for a little while. If your Army will not help us (as mercenaries), then it may perhaps end itself in the exhaustion or destruction of one community or the other. But it is better that we should fight our own battles."'

This was the sense of a passage in an interview which the *Statesman* representative at the Congress had with Mr. Gandhi in Karachi. Mr. Gandhi had previously agreed that the Indian Army would need some British officers and perhaps some British regiments and our representative had asked him why he expected that they would serve under an alien Government. He replied:

'"Well, we have known of mercenary armies in Europe in the past and though the inspiration of patriotism has supplanted pure mercenarism, the soldier still asks for and receives the monetary wages of his service. Why should he not be willing to lend his services on similar terms for the common good of humanity?"'

Extract from 'The Statesman,' April 2nd, 1931.

VIII

THE GANDHI-IRWIN PACT AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

House of Commons

March 12, 1931

In order to interest Conservative private members in the work of opposition, a number of party Committees have been formed upon the various spheres of policy. Towards the end of February the India Committee passed a resolution deprecating the inclusion of a Conservative delegation in any further conferences to be held in India in pursuance of the Round Table scheme. On this resolution being conveyed to Mr. Baldwin he stated that he did not propose to send such a delegation, but asked that his decision should be kept secret for the time being. On March 9 the India Committee reaffirmed their previous view and welcomed the assurances they had received from the leader of the party. It was left to Mr. Baldwin to decide upon the time and manner of publication, and any wishes which he had expressed would certainly have been accepted by the Committee. Fearing however, not without reason, that leakage to the newspapers would take place, Mr. Baldwin authorised the immediate issue on Monday night of the resolution which was in the following terms :—

'That this Committee welcomes the decision of Mr. Baldwin that the Conservative Party cannot be represented at any further Round Table Conferences to be held in India, as now foreshadowed by His Majesty's Government.'

This bald statement without any explanation, such as might so easily have been added, was a startling shock to all those elements at home and in India who are working for far-reaching constitutional change. They concluded that the three party

co-operation along the lines of the Round Table Conference was at an end. This was certainly not Mr. Baldwin's intention, and went far beyond anything implied by the resolution of the India Committee. The refusal of the Conservative Party to send a delegation to India was nevertheless highly important. Lord Irwin had asked for it: the Prime Minister had asked for it. It was indeed the natural outcome of the Round Table Conference and implicit in the policy of carrying on its work. In order to correct the extensive impression produced by the announcement, Mr. Baldwin thought it necessary to make a speech in the House of Commons explaining that no change of policy had occurred and emphasising the importance of making constitutional concessions to the Indian political classes 'in no niggling spirit.' These were the circumstances of the debate from which the following speech, which I have both abridged and condensed, was made.

MUCH has happened, although only a bare six weeks has passed, since we last debated the Indian question in the House of Commons. I admit there is some cause for mutual congratulation among those who are eager to establish an all-India Federation, with responsible government, as the precursor of full Dominion status. They have some grounds for pleasure at the progress made. Less enthusiasm may perhaps be pardoned in those who view these processes as premature, dangerous, and ill-thought out, and believe that they are likely at an early date to lead to confusion and even disaster.

I will briefly survey the sequence of events during the last six weeks: not a lengthy period. The Round Table Conference had ended, and in order to carry on its work, the Viceroy released Mr. Gandhi and his principal associates from prison. That was the first event

in the last six weeks. After I had spoken on January 26, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Baldwin) felt it his duty to express serious difference from my view, and he made that memorable statement in which he said that the one duty of the Conservative party, if returned to power, would be to try to implement the work of the Round Table Conference.

That speech was of memorable importance. It was an event in the chain which is unrolling. It was telegraphed all over India. It was sent by wireless to the ship upon which the Indian delegates to the London Conference were returning to their homes. Everywhere it was accepted as a proof that the Conservative party was in line with the Socialist and Liberal parties, and that, apart from a few die-hards and reactionaries, and other untouchables, Great Britain was united upon a policy of framing and bringing into being the constitution outlined at the Round Table Conference. The Indian delegates on board their ship were greatly encouraged by the tidings they received. They drafted a manifesto, sinking some differences among themselves, appealing to the extremists and the Congress party that all should join together in further discussions in India in order to frame the constitution which had been outlined. Then there followed the conversations between Gandhi and the Viceroy, the result of which was announced last Thursday. That is the sequence of events of the last six weeks.

In order to appreciate the agreement reached in the Gandhi-Irwin conversations it is necessary to consider both its object and its terms. The object is quite clear: it is to bring about such conditions of truce and armistice between the Government of India and the law-breakers as will enable all sections to sit down amicably at the Conference table in India so that they can proceed to frame the new constitution as a precursor to full Dominion status, or, as Mr. Gandhi prefers to call it, 'independence.'

There was a general feeling of satisfaction, or at any rate of relief, in this House when the terms of the White Paper were read out on Thursday last. A hope was entertained that now that the boycott of British goods is not to be political, but only economic, that picketing is only to be peaceful, there will be some recovery in our Lancashire trade, certainly a matter for general satisfaction. There was a feeling that the settlement of the Salt Law question was in the nature of a compromise, and lastly there was great relief, even enthusiasm, when it was known that although the Viceroy had been forced to let the rioters out of prison, he had firmly and successfully resisted the proposal to lock up the police in their place. Nothing could more painfully, and I may say more pitifully, illustrate the ceaseless descent in British Parliamentary opinion than that these modest achievements should give so much pleasure, that they should even be hailed as 'a miracle of statecraft.' It only shows that we are be-

coming accustomed to be thankful for small mercies and glad when anything is saved from the wreck of our great estates.

I am not particularly concerned to-day to cavil at the details of the terms to which the Viceroy has agreed. Once it is judged an aim of high policy to persuade the extremists to come to a Conference, of course the necessary price has to be paid. I daresay, having regard to the objects in view and to the policy he is pursuing, Lord Irwin made the best bargain he could in the circumstances. The price, however, is heavy, and it must be examined. Although the boycott and civil disobedience have been partially called off, they remain suspended over us and can be loosed at any moment by the mere lifting of Mr. Gandhi's little finger. The violation of the Salt Law was specially selected by Mr. Gandhi a year ago as the means of defying the Government of India, as the one means which would be most deeply and widely comprehended throughout the land. His lawless act has now been made lawful. Any dweller by the sea may now make salt from the sea. There is little of material importance in this point. I am told that salt which is made in this way is unpalatable, and even makes people ill, and so no serious loss to the revenue need be expected. At any rate, the Government of India have increased the duties on Europeans, and put up the Lancashire cotton duties by 5 per cent. in the Budget, so no doubt they are in a good position to meet any slight loss that may occur

from the salt concession. But neither can it be pretended that this concession is of the slightest benefit to the working masses of India. It was never intended to be. When Mr. Gandhi went to the seashore a year ago to make salt, he was not looking for salt; he was looking for trouble. He was looking for means of flouting the Government and compelling them to arrest him. Now he has compelled the Government to recognise the propriety of his action. He has elevated his deliberately selected breach of the law into a trophy of victory, the significance of which will be appreciated from the Himalayas to Ceylon.

The Leader of the Opposition said that these terms, this White Paper, was a victory for moderation over extremism. It was a victory for breaches of the law against the Government responsible for enforcing the law. It was a victory of law-breakers, who have consented for the time being partially to lay aside their law-breaking because hopes have been held out that before very long they will be law-makers. Let us see what an Indian Liberal leader and the only non-Swarajist mayor of Calcutta has to say about it. After complimenting the Viceroy and Mr. Gandhi, he says:

'In this settlement, however, the outstanding fact remains that the Liberals in the future will be wiped out, and from now onwards no Indian will think it worth while to have any faith in constitutional agitation. I am afraid that the process of arriving at this settlement is such as to undermine in the minds of the masses respect for authority.'

It would seem to have been at best a Pyrrhic victory which was won for moderation over extremism. Mr. Gandhi and the Congress party were well advised to come to terms. They have played their cards singularly well. They have secured, I am told, substantially and almost exactly the terms demanded by the Congress[1] as a condition of their coming to the London Conference—terms which were then pointedly and unquestionably refused; now they will go to discussions in India or to a further conference in London in which they have everything to gain and nothing to lose. Yes, they were well advised indeed.

I notice that Mr. Gandhi speaks of Lord Irwin in terms of strong approbation. It is no more than just. In the course of this year the Viceroy has fostered the growth of Mr. Gandhi's power to an extent almost inconceivable, first, by neglecting to arrest him until his breaches of the law had gradually attracted and rivetted the attention of all India; secondly, by arresting him when he did for his breaches of the law; thirdly, by not trying him upon any known charge or proceeding against him by any recognised process of the law but confining him under some old Statute as a prisoner of State; fourthly, by attempting to negotiate with him when he was still in prison; fifthly, by releasing him unconditionally; sixthly, by negotiating with him as an equal and as if he were the victor in some warlike encounter; seventhly, by conceding to him as a per-

[1] In December 1929, a few days before the Lahore Congress.

manent emblem of triumph the legalisation of the very practice which he had selected for the purpose of affronting the Government.

This series of steps ought to be preserved as a patent prescription for building up the reputation of a revolutionary leader. By this most elaborate process, undertaken no doubt, at each stage, from the highest and most well-meaning motives, Mr. Gandhi and Congress have been raised before the eyes of hundreds of millions as the champions of Indian nationalism against the white intruder, and henceforward they are the dominant and recognised power with whom we have immediately to deal. They have been raised to a towering pedestal of fame and eminence in the eyes of all disloyal elements in India as having inflicted upon the mighty Government, on whose functioning the safety of the whole country depends, such humiliation and defiance as has not been known since the British first trod the soil of India. They have been lifted to a position far above the Moslems and other religions and classes in the East. Gandhi has become the symbol and the almost god-like champion of all those forces which are now working for our extrusion from India.

That is not a very satisfactory series of events which I have had to record in their sequence, and I am glad I have not to stop here. There is, however, one event which makes amends for much. The Conservative party is not to be represented at any Round Table Conference in India. The continuance of the Round

Table Conference in India was the next step in the contemplation of His Majesty's Government. It was to facilitate such a Conference and the discussions incidental thereto that Mr. Gandhi was released and that the Gandhi-Irwin miracle was performed. Now the Leader of the Opposition has decided that the Conservative party cannot participate in such a Conference. It has been suggested that this is not a decision of great importance, but a mere matter of procedure and convenience of method. I cannot understand how anyone who is looking at the facts of this question can for a moment be blind to its importance. It has, in fact, reversed the whole programme upon which the Government here and the Government of India had set their minds. The crystal palace which they were erecting has been shivered and shattered. I agree that this does not decide finally the question of whether the Conservative party should participate in any further Conference which may be held in London. I would not ask that that decision should be taken now. It would, obviously, be rash to prejudge what we should do months hence in circumstances which we cannot possibly foresee. There is, in short, agreement on both sides of the House, and in all parties, that the Conference in India should be dropped and that inquiries and discussions of a less formal character should proceed.

The unity of all parties upon a policy dictated by the Socialist Government would, in my opinion, be worse even than disunity of parties upon the Indian question.

The foundation of three-party unity on the question of India is the report of the Statutory Commission. Together we joined hands to create that Commission. Together we appointed our representatives, and those representatives, working together, unanimously arrived at a common report. There is the basis on which your three-party unity was founded; but from the moment the Government side-tracked the Statutory Report, the original basis of the three-party action ended, and I submit that the Conservative party is entitled to regain its unfettered freedom of judgment upon events as they arise. That does not mean that we shall not give a loyal and fair consideration to any proposal that the Government may put forward, or that may emerge from any inquiries or discussions which they may conduct; but it does mean, I trust, that the Opposition will not continue any longer to be burdened with the responsibilities of the executive Government.

Too long have the Conservative party been exploited and carried on from point to point. Too long have they been made responsible for events in the shaping of which they have no control. Too long have they been prevented from exercising that proper restraint which belongs to a powerful Opposition probably at no great distance of time about to assume power. We need not be alarmed if the Government say, 'Very well, things will be decided without you.' Nothing can be decided without Parliament. As long as the Conservative party are independent and free, their wishes

will carry weight both in this Parliament and still more perhaps in the next. There will be plenty of opportunities to make our view effective, or to give way and to make necessary concessions, or to arrive at any general agreed solution. There will be plenty of time, at least two years, for full and careful discussion. It will be found, I predict, that from the moment the Conservative party regain their freedom, they will also regain their power.

The next task of the Government is to clear up some of the principal questions which were left over from the Round Table Conference. The safeguards should certainly form a subject of discussion in India now. Take the question of the financial safeguards. We had a speech from Sir George Schuster, the Finance Member, in which he said in effect that we were winding up our affairs and handing them over to new proprietors, and he hoped they would be indulgent to their predecessors, and so forth. But he did not make it clear to the Assembly that in the proposals which were discussed at the Round Table Conference, 80 per cent. of the finances will rest under the authority of the Viceroy. No conference is needed to explain that to Mr. Gandhi. It can be done by a few friendly talks, but it ought to be explained. It is no use misleading him and covering all up with vague phrases.

There is the question of the two-thirds majority, and the other devices which limit the power of removing Ministers. Mr. Gandhi may not take quite the same

view of the advantage of these proposals as the Government. Then there is my right hon. Friend (Mr. Baldwin's) declaration about British trade—a most robust declaration which he made at Newton Abbot, and which I read with satisfaction. It is a very far-reaching declaration; it certainly is not consistent with anything which exists in the Dominions which enjoy full Dominion status, though I agree that in every respect it is necessary. Then there is the question of the Viceroy's powers. The Secretary of State should begin to discuss these with Mr. Gandhi and his associates. The powers reserved are enormous and, as has been pointed out, they will be quite inoperative unless with the powers is given the apparatus necessary to enable them to be exercised. None of these points require a conference; they are far better approached in private. There are besides all those other questions which were left over—the franchise, communal representation of Hindus and Mohammedans, the representation of the native States, and a whole host of other matters.

Whatever view we take, there is no use drifting without any clear idea and concealing awkward facts from the other side, and hoping something will turn up if we only go on making flowery speeches. The Indian revolutionaries, with whom the Government has now to deal, will invite the British representatives to quit the cloud of platitudes and perorations in which they have hitherto lain concealed, and give further and better particulars of what they really mean by 'Responsible Government,' by

a 'transition period,' and by 'Full Dominion status.' Their smallest demand will be for concessions on safeguards. Their full demand is for independence.

The chances of an agreement which will unite all sections in India, and which will be ratified by the British Parliament, are remote and slight. The probabilities of a breakdown are enormous. All over India, expectations, aspirations and appetites have been excited and are mounting. Already Mr. Gandhi moves about surrounded by a circle of wealthy men, who see at their finger-tips the acquisition of the resources of an Empire on cheaper terms than were ever yet offered in the world. Sir, the Roman senator, Didius Julianus, was dining at a restaurant when they told him that the Praetorian guard had put the Empire up to auction and were selling it in the ditch of their camp; he ran out, and, according to Gibbon, bought it for £200 sterling per soldier. That was fairly cheap; but the terms upon which the Empire is being offered to this group surrounding Mr. Gandhi are cheaper still.

Now I must ask a question of my own friends and colleagues. I would ask them to consider, in the months that lie before us, was it worth while to throw such issues open on the chance of an agreement being reached? Was it worth while to throw the issues of the Round Table Conference open in the hopes of getting in a Diet of Notables a rather more convenient Parliament at the centre of Indian Government? No, sir, we have been most imprudent to depart from the prescribed

constitutional course which had been laid down, upon which all parties had agreed, and to which they were bound.

The responsibility for what is going to happen rests with those who are having their way: it rests with those who are having their policy tried out: it does not rest with those who vainly protest against the course of events. The responsibility rests on those who are having their way; on them alone descends the reckoning which is gathering.

The Secretary of State for India charges me with being an advocate of violent repression. He says that my policy is the lathi, the bayonet, the machine-gun and artillery. It is easy to say such things, and easy to cheer them when they are repeated, but they are not true, and they are not just. The quotations which my right hon. Friend (Mr. Baldwin) did me the honour to read from my speech in the Dyer Debate might at least have been borne in mind. I am no advocate of brutal force in India; indeed, I hold that no more physical force is needed in the solution of the Indian question. A tithe of the force and the punitive measures which the Socialist Government and the present Viceroy have vainly employed would have sufficed if they had been part of a firm and coherent policy of the simple maintenance of law and order; if they had not been accompanied by disturbing the minds of the masses with the belief that all the institutions and the whole world around them were to be thrown into the melting-pot;

if they had not been accompanied by the building up of a belief in the minds of the masses that the Government of India, and the Socialist Government here, were squeezable, and that enough pressure would make them give way stage after stage. A tithe of those measures and of the suffering they entailed would have had their effect if they had been accompanied by a confident and sober policy.

The Indian problem does not require more force. May I take as an example two teams of coach-horses? Under one driver they go along beautifully, happily, and in a most elegant manner. Under another, who perhaps uses more strength, the horses are driven mad and gallop down the street causing a disaster. [An HON. MEMBER: 'Men are not horses!'] No, I am illustrating a point. If the hon. Gentleman does not like that illustration, let me take the illustration of two ships in the Royal Navy. In one ship there is a strict discipline, and yet everyone is happy and smiling and everything is all right. In another ship the punishment book is loaded with cases of men punished in every way, and the crew is driven almost into mutiny: yet the ship is not efficient. Obviously, something more is involved than the mere use of force.

Let us compare the conditions in Calcutta and in Bombay. In Calcutta there is a very active seditious movement, much revolutionary feeling, much anti-British feeling. It is a centre of danger, and yet there has not been there, I think I can say with safety, a

fraction of the police charges and arrests, of Indians committed to prison and Indians bruised by the blows of the police, that have been witnessed in Bombay. Why is that? In Calcutta we have had a man, Sir Charles Tegart, as Chief of the Police—only Chief of the Police, but he has nevertheless been able to give firm, steady guidance to the masses and has prevented matters from getting into a shocking state of disorder. In Bombay, under the weakest possible control at the summit, a policy has been pursued of pandering to disorder and sedition, alternating with knocking people about on a very considerable scale, and then going round and pandering to them again. The result is that the amount of misery and suffering inflicted upon the Indians in Bombay is ten times as great as upon those in Calcutta. It is my abhorrence of the use of physical force which leads me to resist a policy which will gradually reproduce over large parts of India the lamentable conditions of Bombay, and I say it is not I, but the Secretary of State and those who think with him, who are bringing bloodshed and confusion ever nearer to the masses of Hindustan.

It is not true that those who do not like the way in which the constitutional problem is being handled by the Government have no constructive policy. We take our stand upon the views almost universally accepted before the present Socialist Government came into office. We take as our point of departure the report of the Statutory Commission. Why is that so

very shocking? On the one hand, we assign no potential limits to the ultimate progress of Indians in every form of civilisation and self-government. On the other hand, we hold that the responsibility for the well-being of the Indian masses rests here, with this Parliament, and that it is for all practical purposes inalienable. Any constitutional changes which Parliament may decide to make do not depend upon procuring the agreement of the extreme sections of Indian opinion, or, indeed, of any section, although their agreement would be welcome. They depend only upon our right discharge of our mission to the Indian masses. If further discretionary power is to be given, as no doubt it should be given, and soon, to Indians, it should be delegated power experimentally bestowed, capable of continual supervision and capable of effective recall if that power is abused or misapplied.

All the absurdities and illusions so airily and facilely entertained are now approaching their inevitable collision with reality. The first contact upon the Indian question was manifested when the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Baldwin) published his decision on Monday night not to allow the Conservative delegates to take part in the Conference in India. Many more contacts with reality will be made as the weeks go by, and it is for these impending shocks that I am anxious that opinion both in Great Britain and in India should be thoroughly prepared.

'When nations thus divided are under a despotic Government *which is stranger to all of them*—which . . . *chooses its instruments indifferently from all, in the course of a few generations* identity of situation often produces harmony of feeling and the different races come to feel towards each other as fellow-countrymen, particularly if they are dispersed over the same tract of country, but if *the era of aspiration to free Government arises before this fusion has been effected* the opportunity has gone by for effecting it.'

JOHN STUART MILL, *Representative Government.*

IX

OUR DUTY IN INDIA

ALBERT HALL
March 18, 1931

This meeting was held under the auspices of the Indian Empire Society. The Duke of Marlborough presided.

I THINK it hard that the burden of holding and organising this immense meeting should be thrown upon the Indian Empire Society. One would have thought that if there was one cause in the world which the Conservative party would have hastened to defend, it would be the cause of the British Empire in India. One would have expected that the whole force of the Conservative party machine would have been employed for months past in building up a robust, educated opinion throughout the country, and in rallying all its strongest forces to guard our vital interests. Unhappily all that influence, and it is an enormous influence, has been cast the other way. The Conservative leaders have decided that we are to work with the Socialists, and that we must make our action conform with theirs. We therefore have against us at the present time the

official machinery of all the three great parties in the State. We meet under a ban. Every Member of Parliament or Peer who comes here must face the displeasure of the party Whips. Mr. Baldwin has declared that the three-party collusion must continue, and in support of that decision he has appealed to all those sentiments of personal loyalty and partisan feeling which a leader can command. Is it not wonderful in these circumstances, with all this against us, that a few of us should manage to get together here in this hall to-night?[1]

Our fight is hard. It will also be long. We must not expect early success. The forces marshalled against us are too strong. But win or lose, we must do our duty. If the British people are to lose their Indian Empire, they shall do so with their eyes open, and not be led blindfold into a trap. Already in our campaign we have had a measure of success. The movement and awakening of opinion in the Conservative party have already caused concern to our leaders. They feel they have to reckon with resolute forces in the party and far beyond it, who will not be easily quelled. Already they have rejected[2] the plan of sending a three-party delegation out to India for which Lord

[1] An allusion to the great numbers who filled the building.

[2] Actually I used the word 'abandoned.' It has however been pointed out to me that the word 'abandoned' suggests a change under pressure of opinion of a decision by Mr. Baldwin and his colleagues on this specific point, whereas no decision to send a delegation had ever been taken by them. I have therefore substituted the word 'rejected.'

Irwin pleaded so earnestly. For the moment, therefore, we have a breathing space. The Socialist and subversive enemy have been thrown into disarray by the breakdown of their scheme to entice the Conservatives out to India. They are arranging their forces for a renewed attack. Mr. Gandhi, their supreme hope, is to come to London, as soon as they can persuade him to come, and here in the centre of the Empire he will discuss with British ministers and politicians the best means for breaking it up. But by that time we shall be ready too. We shall not be taken by surprise, as the country was during the Round Table Conference. We are not entirely defenceless or without means of expression. We have behind us the growing strength of Conservative opinion. We have the prospect at no great distance of a Conservative victory. Nothing will turn us from our path, or discourage us from our efforts; and by the time Mr. Gandhi has arrived here to receive the surrender of our Indian Empire, the Conservative party will not be so ready to have its name taken in vain.

What spectacle could be more sorrowful than that of this powerful country casting away with both hands, and up till now almost by general acquiescence, the great inheritance which centuries have gathered? What spectacle could be more strange, more monstrous in its perversity, than to see the Viceroy and the high officials and agents of the Crown in India labouring with all their influence and authority to unite and weave

together into a confederacy all the forces adverse and hostile to our rule in India? One after another our friends and the elements on which we ought to rely in India are chilled, baffled and dismissed, and finally even encouraged to band themselves together with those who wish to drive us out of the country. It is a hideous act of self-mutilation, astounding to every nation in the world. The princes, the Europeans, the Moslems, the Depressed classes, the Anglo-Indians—none of them know what to do nor where to turn in the face of their apparent desertion by Great Britain. Can you wonder that they try in desperation to make what terms are possible with the triumphant Brahmin oligarchy?

I am against this surrender to Gandhi. I am against these conversations and agreements between Lord Irwin and Mr. Gandhi. Gandhi stands for the expulsion of Britain from India. Gandhi stands for the permanent exclusion of British trade from India. Gandhi stands for the substitution of Brahmin domination for British rule in India. You will never be able to come to terms with Gandhi. You have only to read his latest declarations, and compare them with the safeguards for which we are assured the official Conservatives will fight to the end, to see how utterly impossible agreement is. But let me tell you this. If at the sacrifice of every British interest and of all the necessary safeguards and means of preserving peace and progress in India, you came to terms with Gandhi, Gandhi would at that self-same moment cease to count any more in the

Indian situation. Already Nehru, his young rival in the Indian Congress, is preparing to supersede him the moment that he has squeezed his last drop from the British lemon. In running after Gandhi and trying to build on Gandhi, in imagining that Mr. Ramsay Macdonald and Mr. Gandhi and Lord Irwin are going to bestow peace and progress upon India, we should be committing ourselves to a crazy dream, with a terrible awakening.

No ! Come back from these perilous paths while time and strength remain. Study the report of your own statutory commission headed by Sir John Simon and signed unanimously by the representatives of all the three parties in the State. Let us take that as our starting-point for any extensions we may make of self-government in India. It is very wrong that the vast majority of Conservative electors throughout the country, and the vast majority of all those who are acquainted with and have practical experience of India, and of that enormous mass of patriotic people not attached to any party, should have these vital questions settled over their heads by an agreement or an understanding between the two front benches in the House of Commons, and have their future settled as if they were a lot of sheep. We are told that three-party unity must be preserved at all costs. What does that mean ? Up to the present it has only meant one thing, namely, that the Conservative party has had to toe the Socialist line, and has been dragged at the Socialist tail. Here are

these Socialists, maintained in office only on sufferance or by intrigue, expecting all other parties to serve them, and to dance to their tune. We are here to-night to say 'No, that shall not be.' We have a right to our own convictions; we are entitled to act in accordance with them. We will certainly make our faith apparent by every means in our power, and in every quarter of the land.

I repudiate the calumny which our opponents level at us that we have no policy for India but repression and force. Do not be deceived by these untruths. Do not be disquieted by exaggerations of the difficulty of maintaining order in India which are spread about for interested motives by the Socialist ministers and their allies. In the whole of the disturbances of the last year—except on the frontier—scarcely a British soldier has been required. Very few people have been killed or severely wounded in the rioting. But how did the most of them get hurt? They got hurt not by the Indian police, but in religious fights between Moslems and Hindus. The great body of expert opinion which is represented upon the Indian Empire Society will support me when I say that a calm, capable, determined Viceroy properly supported from home could maintain peace and tranquillity in India year after year with a tenth of the repressive measures which Lord Irwin in his misguided benevolence has been compelled to employ.

Neither is it true that we have no constructive policy. We take our stand upon views almost universally

accepted until a few months ago. We believe that the next forward step is the development of Indian responsibility in the provincial governments of India. Efforts should be made to make them more truly representative of the real needs of the people. Indians should be given ample opportunities to try their hand at giving capable government in the provinces; and meanwhile the central Imperial executive, which is the sole guarantee of impartiality between races, creeds and classes, should preserve its sovereign power intact, and allow no derogation from its responsibility to Parliament. Is that Diehardism? That is the message of the Simon report, unanimously signed by the representatives of the three parties. That is the purport of the alternative scheme submitted a few months ago by the Viceroy himself.

After all, it opens immediately an immense and fertile field for Indian self-government. The provinces of India are great states and separate nations comparable in magnitude and in numbers with the leading powers of Europe. The responsible government of territories and populations as large as Germany, France, Poland, Italy or Spain is not a task unworthy of Indian capacity for self-government, so far as it has yet been displayed. It is a task the successful discharge of which would certainly not conflict with the ultimate creation of a federal system. On the contrary it is the indispensable preliminary without which no federation, desirable or undesirable, is possible. Why, the very word 'federal' signifies a *foedus* or treaty made between hitherto sovereign

or autonomous states. All federations have arisen thus. In the United States of America, in Canada, in Australia, in South Africa, in every case the units have first been created. Why should these unpractised, unproved, unrepresentative, self-chosen groups of Indian politicians disdain the immense possibilities offered within the limits of the Statutory Commission's report, and demand an immediate setting up of an United States of India, with themselves in control, and the British army at their orders? Before a Federal system for India could be set up there must be first the self-governing constituent provinces; and secondly, far greater, more real, more representative contact between the Indian political classes and the vast proletariat they aspire to rule. Even Europe cannot achieve such a united organisation. But what would be said of a scheme which handed the federal government of the United States of Europe over to political classes proportionately no larger than the inhabitants of Portugal, and no more representative of the needs and passions of a mighty continent than the inhabitants of a single city like Rome? Such are the follies we are forced to expose. We therefore resist upon the highest experience and authority the viewy hysterical megalomania of the Round Table Conference.

Why is it that the principles of Government and lessons of history which we have learnt in our experience with the great self-governing dominions, which we have learnt in Canada, in South Africa and in Ireland, apply only in a limited degree to India? It is because the

problem of Indian government is primarily a technical one. In India far more than in any other community in the world moral, political and economic considerations are outweighed by the importance of technical and administrative apparatus. Here you have nearly three hundred and fifty millions of people, lifted to a civilisation and to a level of peace, order, sanitation and progress far above anything they could possibly have achieved themselves or could maintain. This wonderful fact is due to the guidance and authority of a few thousands of British officials responsible to Parliament who have for generations presided over the development of India. If that authority is injured or destroyed, the whole efficiency of the services, defensive, administrative, medical, hygienic, judicial; railway, irrigation, public works and famine prevention, upon which the Indian masses depend for their culture and progress, will perish with it. India will fall back quite rapidly through the centuries into the barbarism and privations of the Middle Ages. The question at stake is not therefore the gratification of the political aspirations towards self-government of a small number of intellectuals. It is, on the contrary, the practical, technical task of maintaining the peace and life of India by artificial means upon a much higher standard than would otherwise be possible. To let the Indian people fall, as they would, to the level of China, would be a desertion of duty on the part of Great Britain.

But that is not all. To abandon India to the rule

of the Brahmins would be an act of cruel and wicked negligence. It would shame for ever those who bore its guilt. These Brahmins who mouth and patter the principles of Western Liberalism, and pose as philosophic and democratic politicians, are the same Brahmins who deny the primary rights of existence to nearly sixty millions of their own fellow countrymen whom they call 'untouchable,' and whom they have by thousands of years of oppression actually taught to accept this sad position. They will not eat with these sixty millions, nor drink with them, nor treat them as human beings. They consider themselves contaminated even by their approach. And then in a moment they turn round and begin chopping logic with John Stuart Mill, or pleading the rights of man with Jean Jacques Rousseau.

While any community, social or religious, endorses such practices and asserts itself resolved to keep sixty millions of fellow countrymen perpetually and eternally in a state of sub-human bondage, we cannot recognise their claim to the title-deeds of democracy. Still less can we hand over to their unfettered sway those helpless millions they despise. Side by side with this Brahmin theocracy and the immense Hindu population—angelic and untouchable castes alike—there dwell in India seventy millions of Moslems, a race of far greater physical vigour and fierceness, armed with a religion which lends itself only too readily to war and conquest. While the Hindu elaborates his argument, the Moslem

sharpens his sword. Between these two races and creeds, containing as they do so many gifted and charming beings in all the glory of youth, there is no intermarriage. The gulf is impassable. If you took the antagonisms of France and Germany, and the antagonisms of Catholics and Protestants, and compounded them and multiplied them ten-fold, you would not equal the division which separates these two races intermingled by scores of millions in the cities and plains of India. But over both of them the impartial rule of Britain has hitherto lifted its appeasing sceptre. Until the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms began to raise the question of local sovereignty and domination, they had got used to dwelling side by side in comparative toleration. But step by step, as it is believed we are going to clear out or be thrust out of India, so this tremendous rivalry and hatred of races springs into life again. It is becoming more acute every day. Were we to wash our hands of all responsibility and divest ourselves of all our powers, as our sentimentalists desire, ferocious civil wars would speedily break out between the Moslems and the Hindus. No one who knows India will dispute this.

But that is not the end. The Brahmins know well that they cannot defend themselves against the Moslems. The Hindus do not possess among their many virtues that of being a fighting race. The whole south of India is peopled with races deserving all earnest solicitude and regard, but incapable of self-defence. It is in the

north alone that the fighting races dwell. Bengal, for instance, does not send from her forty-five million inhabitants any soldiers to the native army. The Punjab is, on the other hand, and the Pathans, togeters with the Ghurkas and the Sikhs, who are entirely exceptional sects of Hindus, all dwelling in the north, furnish three-quarters of the entire army in the time of peace, and furnished more than three-quarters of it in time of war. There can be no doubt therefore that the departure of the British from India, which Mr. Gandhi advocates, and which Mr. Nehru demands, would be followed first by a struggle in the North and thereafter by a reconquest of the South by the North, and of the Hindus by the Moslems. This danger has not escaped the crafty foresight of the Brahmins. It is for that reason that they wish to have the control of a British army, or failing that, a white army of janissaries officered, as Mr. Gandhi has suggested, by Germans or other Europeans. They wish to have an effective foreign army, or foreign-organised army, in order to preserve their dominance over the Moslems and their tyranny over their own untouchables. There, is the open plot of which we are in danger of becoming the dupes, and the luckless millions of Indians the victims.

It is our duty to guard those millions from that fate.

Let me just direct your attention once more upon these untouchables, fifty or sixty millions of them, that is to say more than the whole population of the British Isles; all living their lives in acceptance of the validity of

the awful curse pronounced upon them by the Brahmins. A multitude as big as a nation, men, women and children deprived of hope and of the status of humanity. Their plight is worse than that of slaves, because they have been taught to consent not only to a physical but to a psychic servitude and prostration.

I have asked myself whether if Christ came again into this world, it would not be to the untouchables of India that he would first go, to give them the tidings that not only are all men equal in the sight of God, but that for the weak and poor and downtrodden a double blessing is reserved. Certainly the success of Christianity and missionary enterprise has been greater among the untouchables than among any other class of the Indian population. The very act of accepting Christianity by one of these poor creatures involves a spiritual liberation from this obsession of being unclean; and the curse falls from their minds as by a miracle. They stand erect, captains of their fate in the broad sunlight of the world. There are also nearly five million Indian Christians in India, a large proportion of whom can read and write, and some of whom have shown themselves exceptionally gifted. It will be a sorry day when the arm of Britain can no longer offer them the protection of an equal law.

There is a more squalid aspect. Hitherto for generations it has been the British policy that no white official should have any interest or profit other than his salary and pension out of Indian administration. All con-

cession-hunters and European adventurers, company-promoters and profit-seekers have been rigorously barred and banned. But now that there is spread through India the belief that we are a broken, bankrupt, played-out power, and that our rule is going to pass away and be transferred in the name of the majority to the Brahmin sect, all sorts of greedy appetites have been excited, and many itching fingers are stretching and scratching at the vast pillage of a derelict Empire. I read in the *Times* newspaper, in the *Times* mind you, only last week of the crowd of rich Bombay merchants and millionaire millowners, millionaires on sweated labour, who surround Mr. Gandhi, the saint, the lawyer, Lord Irwin's dear colleague and companion. What are they doing there, these men, and what is he doing in their houses? They are making arrangements that the greatest bluff, the greatest humbug and the greatest betrayal shall be followed by the greatest ramp. Nepotism, back-scratching, graft and corruption in every form will be the handmaidens of a Brahmin domination. Far rather would I see every Englishman quit the country, every soldier, every civil servant embark at Bombay, than that we should remain clutching on to the control of foreign relations and begging for trading facilities, while all the time we were the mere cloak of dishonour and oppression.

If you were to put these facts, hard, solid indigestible facts, before Mr. Ramsay Macdonald or Mr. Wedgwood Benn, or Sir Herbert Samuel, they would probably

reply by pointing to the follies of Lord North in the American revolution, to the achievements of Lord Durham in Canada, or to what has happened in South Africa or in Ireland. All the Socialists and some of the Liberals, together with, I am sorry to say, the official Conservatives, have got these arguments on the tip of their tongue. They represent all of us and the millions who think with us, and the instructed Anglo-Indian administrators on whose advice we rely, as being mere dullards and reactionaries who have never been able to move with the age, or understand modern ideas. *We* are a sort of inferior race mentally deficient, composed principally of colonels and other undesirables who have fought for Britain. *They* are the sole possessors and monopolists of the spirit and of the message of our generation. But we do not depend on colonels—though why Conservatives should sneer at an honoured rank in the British army I cannot tell—we depend on facts. We depend on the private soldiers of the British democracy. We place our trust in the loyal heart of Britain. Our faith is founded upon the rock of the wage-earning population of this island which has never yet been appealed to, by duty and chivalry, in vain.

These great issues which arise from time to time in our history are never decided by the party caucuses. They are decided by the conscience and the spirit of the mass of the British people. It is upon the simple faith and profound unerring instinct of the British people, never yet found wanting in a crisis, that we must put

our trust. We are deliberately trying to tell our story to the British masses, to the plain and simple folk to whom the fame of the British Empire is ever dear. In assailing the moral duty of Great Britain in India, the Socialist Government and all who aid and abet Mr. Ramsay Macdonald and his Socialist Government, or make their path smooth, will find they have stumbled upon a sleeping giant who, when he arises, will tread with dauntless steps the path of justice and of honour.

Resolution of the Indian Moslem Conference

This conference deplores the wanton aggressiveness of the Hindus, culminating in the riots at Benares, Agra, Mirzapur, Cawnpore, and elsewhere, accompanied by brutal and callous murders of innocent and defenceless Moslems, including women and children. This conference is convinced that the so-called non-violence of the Congress Satyagrahis, consisting in many cases of students of colleges and schools, is a mere sham, and but little short of an unclean political stratagem adopted in the face of superior organised forces of the State and cast off in dealings between the communities. This conference is of opinion that a continuance of this attitude of the majority community will lead to a state of civil war in India, and warns the Governments in Great Britain and this country that their spineless handling of the situation, due to their continued pandering to the Congress, will create a condition of things in India which will spell the complete ruin of this unfortunate country.

'*The Times*,' *April 7th*, 1931.

X

TOWARDS THE DEADLOCK

CONSTITUTIONAL CLUB

March 26, 1931

THINGS are not going well. We have had two shameful and disastrous years. They have been years in which we have not merely been standing still; we have been galloping down the slope. They have been years in which even deeper anxieties have entered our hearts than we felt in the darkest days of the Great War. No great country is maltreating itself as we are and doing less justice to itself. Look where you will, on the continent of Europe or across the Atlantic, you will see our competitors, some ready to be our successors, in many of the great fields in which we have shone, concentrated upon the problems of marshalling their strength and defending with vigour their national interests. Here a sort of moral palsy seems to have descended upon us. We seem to be afraid to call our souls our own. The Socialist minority Government is only kept in being by all kinds of weaknesses and divergences among the strong forces which have hitherto maintained the life of the country.

But, wherever you may look, the worst scene of Socialist mismanagement and depredation is in their conduct and administration of our Indian Empire. There is the great target which Conservatives all over the country should steadily and remorselessly fire upon. I cannot accept the suggestion that we ought to keep India out of party politics, if it only means we are going to lose India with decorum and dignity. To lose India would be far worse than to bring it into party politics. How else are those who do not agree with what has been done by the Socialist Government in India to make their point of view effective except by public speech and action? I do not intend to mince my words. I wish to make it perfectly clear I am going to attack the Socialist record and policy in India. Nothing will turn me from it, and I have cheerfully and gladly put out of my mind all idea of public office. I intend to fight this question during the next two or three years, in which it will be the culminating issue in British politics, without regard to any aspect but the merits.

I am told I am alone among men who have held high public office in this country in the view I take about the Indian policy. If that were so it would be a great honour for me, because I should be left alone to plead a majestic cause, and I should be left alone to represent the opinions of many millions of British men and women in every party who are deeply concerned at the trend of events in the East. If I am alone I am going to receive shortly an ally—a very powerful

ally—an ally whom I dread—an ally with a sombre title—his title is THE MARCH OF EVENTS. The march of events in India will be grim and may possibly be rapid. You have only to read your papers to-day to see how the situation there is steadily darkening.

Where was it that we went wrong in our treatment of the Indian question? In my judgment it was when we abandoned the principle of the Simon Statutory Commission Report, and when we allowed the Round Table Conference, which was set up merely for consultative purposes, to convert itself quite improperly and wholly without authorisation into a kind of Constituent Assembly. It is the commonest fallacy of present discussions to speak of India as if it were the home of a strongly-coherent united race. It makes me sick when I hear the Secretary of State saying of India, '*She* will do this and *she* will do that.' India is an abstraction, represented by a handful of politically-minded classes who have no means of intercourse with each other except in the English language, who have no real contact with the masses, who are incapable of giving them the guidance they require, and are animated in the main by very great hostility to this country. India is no more a political personality than Europe. India is a geographical term. It is no more a united nation than the Equator.

The great error was made when, almost unperceived, the process of extending reform and self-government to India by Parliament was converted into a will-o'-the-

wisp search after this abstraction called India and an attempt to negotiate with the various agitated figures who are cast up from the Indian Congress and the various Indian revolutionary or political organisations. That has changed the whole centre of gravity of the discussion. It was a frightful injury both to British and to Indian interests.

I have been blamed for saying that the three-party co-operation has simply meant that we have been made to toe the Socialist line. But lately we have had a revelation. Mr. Malcolm Macdonald, the son of the Prime Minister, attached in a secretarial capacity to the Round Table Conference, has written articles for the newspapers of his constituency in which he lays bare how the whole Conference was manipulated and manœuvred by the Socialist party so as to achieve the result they had set before themselves from the beginning—namely, the conferring of responsible Government at the centre upon Indians.

Let me quote you his words:

How accurate was (the Government's) calculation of what would be the ultimate conclusions of the Conference, and of what policy it would finally be able to announce with the approval of all delegations, is illustrated by an interesting fact. *The drafting of the Prime Minister's concluding statement of the Government's policy, actually delivered on January 19, was already in hand before Christmas.* The text of the statement was completed during two all-day conferences between the Prime Minister and his principal Government

advisers, which I attended at Chequers on *December 27 and 28. This was several days before the Conference itself began to consider the all-important question of Indian responsibility in the Central Government. It was before the Indians themselves had stated their ideas in detail,* before Lord Reading had made his famous speech announcing the Liberal Party's support of the Indian claims, *and before the Conservatives' definition of their policy. Yet only minor alterations had to be made in the Government's statement as a result of these events following its original drafting. So much for the tactics of the Government.*[1]

See what happens when you get upon the slippery slope, when instead of the Conservative party putting its hand on the brake, it puts its foot on the accelerator.

We are told we are not committed to anything. But events are moving on and each week it is assumed that we are committed to more. Mr. Benn, in the House of Commons yesterday, treated the question as one that was settled, and said there would soon be a responsible Indian Minister to deal with the Customs. Thus, while the Conservative leaders remain tongue-tied, the whole position is being transformed.

The Gandhi-Irwin agreement was the natural and logical outcome of the Round Table Conference. Gandhi, with deep knowledge of the Indian peoples, by the dress he wore—or did not wear, by the way in which his food was brought him at the Viceregal Palace, deliberately insulted, in a manner which he knew everyone in India would appreciate, the majesty of the

[1] My italics—W. S. C.

King's representative. These are not trifles in the East. Thereby our power to maintain peace and order among the immense masses of India has been sensibly impaired. As a part of the agreement made in these circumstances we have legalised the boycotting for economic pretexts, as apart from political pretexts, of Lancashire cotton goods. That is an astounding thing for us to have had to do. We have legalised it, and it is more effective than ever, now that it is legal and pursued for economic purposes. I have no doubt that this process of boycotting Lancashire cotton goods is a criminal conspiracy in restraint of trade, and ought never to be accepted or legalised. A company has even been formed at Gandhi's instigation to help the merchants to get rid of British merchandise already landed in India and cast it down in East Africa or elsewhere, provided the merchants sign an undertaking that in no circumstances will they import any British goods again. Are we going to put up with that? Or are we going to use every resource of influence and policy to make sure we are allowed fair intercourse in trade and commerce in India?

But that is only the beginning. These are the first drops of the storm. Gandhi has resolved, and those who work behind him and through him are still more resolved, to bring practically all British importations, certainly all Lancashire importations, to an absolute end. That spells the doom of Lancashire. The coastwise trade, the great enterprises and business institutions

which we have founded in India, are all in succession to be swept away. As for the hundreds of millions of loans which we have advanced to create the railways and irrigation services and public works of India, in consequence of which the Indian population has increased by 30,000,000 in the last twenty years, all this is in jeopardy. Unless you are prepared to defend your rights and interests in India, you will be stripped of every vestige you possess and expelled with ignominy from its shores.

Wednesday's massacres at Cawnpore, a name of evil import, are a portent. Because it is believed that we are about to leave the country, the struggle for power is now beginning between the Moslems and Hindus. A bloody riot broke out in which more than two hundred people lost their lives with many hundreds wounded, in which women and children were butchered in circumstances of bestial barbarity, their mutilated violated bodies strewing the streets for days.[1] The British troops are now pacifying and calming the terrified and infuriated populace. But the feud is only at its beginning.

Let the Conservative party regain its freedom. Let there be no more co-operation with the Socialists. First of all I am asking that we should regain our full discre-

[1] It is now declared that the dead exceeded one thousand; and many horrible details are emerging from the Censorship which the guilty conscience of the Government of India is striving to enforce.

tionary power. We must be free to rouse the people of our country to the approaching peril and to get our own forces into line.

You are in favour of tariffs. They are necessary on economic and financial grounds. But still more are they necessary as a part of a reassertion of our will to live and reign in the modern world. They are only a part. There is no use in uniting the Empire by trade preferences and losing India. The loss of India would destroy all that we have built up. Surely our generation which sent its brothers and sons and watched its fathers march to France and Flanders should be the last to be guilty of such a failure. We must weave together the strong forces in our island which have carried us through the tribulations of the past and which united are invincible.

A venerable member of the Conservative Party, one of my father's friends—in fact at one dramatic moment his only friend, Mr. Arthur Baumann—penned the other day some sentences with which I will now end. 'Surely,' he wrote, 'an effort should be made to save his kingdom for the Emperor of India. Let us set up a standard around which the brave and the loyal can rally. More than that we cannot do. The rest is in the hands of God.'

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[*Those who feel in sympathy with the views set forth in these pages are invited to join the Indian Empire Society, the constitution and aims of which are here printed.*]

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The promoters of the Indian Empire Society are ex-Governors of Indian Provinces, intimately acquainted with Indian conditions, and with all sections of the vast populations for whose welfare the British people have become responsible. Already support has been promised by many eminent people, variously interested

in the maintenance of British rule in India; leading Members of both Houses of Parliament; distinguished Indian administrators; British and Indian gentlemen of position; and prominent business men directly concerned in Indian commerce and industry.

It will be the duty of the Society to support all measures that make for peace, order, and progress in the Indian sub-continent, reserving to itself at the same time the right, should occasion arise, to draw public attention to any proposal which appears to endanger the fulfilment of primary obligations.

There is no idea of withdrawing any pledges to which the British people may be said to stand committed, either those of Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858, or those contained in the Government of India Act, 1919, and there is no suggestion of amending the Act otherwise than is provided for in the Act itself.

AIMS AND OBJECTS

To organise, consolidate, and diffuse accurate information in regard to all matters affecting the welfare of the Indian Empire, in order

(1) To secure towards the peoples of British India, without distinction of race, creed, or caste, the discharge of the responsibilities, moral and financial, incurred by this country since the assumption of control by the Crown; and in particular, while conserving existing territorial rights, to safeguard the rights of the peasantry, artisans and industrial workers, and of the minority and backward communities, who are incapable of protecting their own interest under any elective system.

(2) To ensure the faithful observance of the Treaties and Sanads which link the Indian States to the Crown.

(3) To insist on (*a*) Security, external and internal, which is vital to the progress of India:

(*b*) the maintenance in the administration of the highest standards of integrity and impartial justice, which are the greatest needs of her peoples;

(*c*) such conditions as shall ensure the continuous recruitment to the Public Services of a British element adequate, by reason of its strength and qualifications, to guarantee the discharge of these obligations; and thus to promote 'the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples' for which the British Parliament has declared itself responsible.

QUALIFICATIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

Acceptance of the following principles:

(*a*) That the Society should be a non-party organisation;

(*b*) That the primary aim of the British administration in India should continue to be as defined in Queen Victoria's Proclamation, viz., 'To administer the Government of the Country for the benefit of *all* our subjects resident therein'; and that, to this end, any constitutional advance should be subject to the conditions laid down in the Announcement of 1917 and embodied in the Government of India Act, 1919, and in particular to the provision that India should remain an integral part of the British Empire;

(*c*) That the British connection should be of so binding a nature as to ensure the adequate discharge by His Majesty's servants in India of the responsibilities referred to in the 'Aims and Objects' of the Society;

(*d*) That all measures directed to promote constitutional development should be strictly subordinate to the fulfilment of our primary obligations;

(*e*) That members should pay a subscription of 10*s*. per annum, or £1 if they wish to receive the publications of the Society.