

The Internal Policy of the Indian Government

1885 - 1898

BY

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Foreword

This thesis is concerned with the study of British Indian internal policy between 1885 and 1898. The growth of English education, the Press, and swift means of communication brought the British Government into contact with developing Indian opinion, which called for a new approach. The difficulty of reconciling the principles of equality and of freedom of expression and association with the circumstances of an automatic foreign rule was fundamental.

This study does not cover all important aspects of British policy. The addition of a few more topics, such as, the fiscal policy of the Government, more particularly the question of import duties on cotton goods, relations between the Supreme and Provincial Governments, and social legislation including tenancy reforms, would have certainly made the picture complete. It was, however, not possible to discuss them within the limits of a thesis. Even the topics included here have not been treated in all their aspects. The chapter on the problem of Indianisation, for instance, deals only with the Indian Civil Service in two aspects: the mode of recruitment and the scope of Indian employment.

The present study is not concerned with organisational details. Statistics have been given only where absolutely necessary.

In the examination of British policy of so recent a period as the present one, it is easy to exaggerate things either way. This study is, however, an attempt to view them in an objective and sympathetic manner.

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Introduction

The Mutiny closed the era of internal wars and was followed by a long period of peace. Except for the Afghan War of 1878-80, the Burmese War of 1885, and the North-West Frontier campaigns of the 'nineties no important military operations took place during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The progress of English education, the Press, commercial development, and swift means of communication brought the British Government into contact with forces which called for a new approach to Indian questions. The problem therefore was not merely one of consolidation but also of adjustment.

The period of our study covers fourteen years (1884-98) during which Dufferin, Lansdowne, and Elgin were Governors-General, and in England the Conservatives were in office for ten years, and the Liberals for four years. Dufferin and Elgin were appointed by a Liberal and Lansdowne by a Conservative ministry. One finds, however, a good deal of continuity in policy. Their attitudes to questions of the Indianisation of the services and legislative development were more or less the same.

The period is immediately preceded by four years of Ripon's viceroyalty which was marked by a sympathetic approach to certain questions. Judged by actual results he did not accomplish much, but he became very popular partly because of his liberal views and partly because of the opposition of his own countrymen to the Ilbert Bill. He was subjected to insults and ultimately had to yield to their pressure. It was indeed a lesson in race-relations which, as Coupland aptly remarks, no educated Indian could forget.¹ The most important achievement of his period was

1 R. Coupland, Britain and India (1600-1941), 42.

the development of local institutions which gave the people a greater and more real share in the management of their own affairs. Another popular measure was the repeal of the Vernacular Press Act which restored to newspapers written in Indian languages the freedom which they had enjoyed before Lytton. Despite this modest record of achievements Ripon came to be regarded as an ideal Viceroy. His popularity is to be attributed not to what he achieved but to what he was believed to have stood for.

Ripon was succeeded by Dufferin who had a long career in politics and diplomacy as Governor-General of Canada, and as ambassador at St. Petersburg and Constantinople. On the one hand, he was called upon to calm the agitation engendered by the controversy over the Ilbert Bill, and on the other, to continue the policy of his predecessor. In a letter of June 1884 to Gladstone, Ripon had emphasised that his successor should be a man of "really liberal opinions," adding that in the existing condition of India a "truly and broadly liberal policy" was essential to the security of British power.¹ Dufferin was on the whole in general agreement with Ripon's liberal policy but was also careful that European settlers should be given no cause of resentment. Early in 1886 he expressed the view that the objects even of more advanced party in India were "neither very dangerous nor very extravagant."² His sympathy towards the national movement in the beginning and his strong advocacy of Council reform show that he was aware of the forces which had been at work.

1 Ripon to Gladstone, 25 June 1884, Add. MSS, 44, 287, 27.
 2 Quoted in Lyall, Dufferin, ii, 151.

Dufferin's successor was Lansdowne who before his appointment as Viceroy had also been Governor-General of Canada. He initiated no new policies, and was content to continue the old ones. He strongly supported Dufferin's scheme of Council reform including the introduction of election. His term of office passed without any "sensational incidents."¹

Lansdowne was succeeded by Elgin whose appointment was made when Sir Henry Norman asked to be relieved of the office only a few days after he had accepted it. Queen Victoria was not in favour of Elgin's selection. She wrote to Gladstone: "He is very shy and most painfully silent, has no presence, no experience whatever in administration. He would not command the respect which is necessary in that office."² His dependence on his colleagues and subservience to Whitehall are evident from his correspondence. Curzon's estimate of his character, in a letter to George Hamilton, deserves mention: "He (Elgin) was a painstaking, upright, sagacious man, who, knowing nothing whatever either of India or of administration, decided that the safest thing was to place himself in the hands of his officials. He stuck to them most manfully, and rewarded them lavishly, and they stuck to him. But I cannot find that he communicated one new idea to Government or left any question more forward than he found it, except in so far as that result was brought about by the compulsion of events or the march of time."³ Later in 1902 he characterised Elgin's

1 Dict. National Biography (1922-1930), 669.

2 To Gladstone, 12 Aug. 1893, Buckle, Letters, Third Series, ii (1931), 300

3 Curzon to Hamilton, 5 April 1900, Pr. Cor. Ind., XVI, 294.

administration as "the apotheosis of bureaucracy."¹ Even after making due allowance for the element of exaggeration into which Curzon often slips, Elgin's career as Viceroy was marked by no initiation. Unfortunately a number of calamities, such as, earthquakes, plague and famine, made his work still more difficult. The currency position during half the term of his office remained a cause of anxiety. The problems of his administration would indeed have put to the severest test the qualities of even much abler men.

British Indian policy cannot be studied in isolation from affairs in England. India was a British dependency pure and simple. Not only matters of policy but even details of administration were controlled from London. As Indian affairs were kept outside the limits of party politics and the grant of political concession was not contemplated, the authority of the Secretary of State remained undiminished.

The later nineteenth century was a period when Britain enjoyed an unrivalled financial and commercial prosperity. She had a vast empire covering about one-fourth of the surface of the globe and possessed the most powerful navy. Even the closing decades of the century witnessed a vigorous imperial activity in Africa and the Far East. The revival of British imperialism, which took place under the leadership of Disraeli in the 'seventies', continued its onward march. It was then that Queen Victoria assumed the title of Empress of India. Besides seeking to produce a psychological effect on the Indian Princely class, the event was significant in revealing the place of India in the imperial structure.

1 Curzon to Hamilton, 26 Oct. 1900, Pr. Cor. Ind., XXIV, 123.

During the long period of Conservative rule, which lasted from 1886 to 1905 (with only one interregnum of three years of Liberal rule) no efforts were made to introduce any change in this relationship. It is more than doubtful whether Liberal rule would have been different in this respect. British political parties were unanimous on the question of India's position in the Empire. No attempts were made to score party points on Indian matters.

The British looked upon India as a permanent possession. While in the pre-Mutiny period men like Munro, Elphinstone and Henry Lawrence envisaged the withdrawal of British power, though no doubt at a distant date, rulers of the second half of the century believed in its permanence. To ensure its stability, the British kept all the higher administrative offices in their hands and devised a system of military organisation which reduced the chances of combination against them to a minimum. Moreover, two-fifths of the army, all the arsenals, and practically the entire artillery were in British hands.

The character of the British Government in India, under such circumstances, could not but be autocratic. Lytton characterised it as "personal and paternally despotic."¹ In August 1885 Lord Randolph Churchill, then Secretary of State for India, described it as "purely irresponsible and despotic."² The British Government was despotic not in the sense that Indians had no freedom of expression and association, and equality before the law, but in the sense that the executive was responsible to London. As early as 1871 Lord Mayo, then Governor-General, explained

1 Minute, 16 May 1880, para. 66.

2 Hansard, ccc, Third Series, 1302.

this point thus: "There is a great deal of nonsense talked about despotic rule in India. If despotic rule means the unrestrained and unregulated will of any one man or any body of men, I say no such thing exists. Here, private rights and individual liberty is guarded as strictly as it is in any country in the world. Everywhere Freedom of action and of thought prevails. But we cannot conceal from ourselves the fact that we administer a system of Government under which the rulers are appointed by a Sovereign who by her responsible ministers rules in a far and distant land."

Difficulty arose from the fact that British rulers sought to reconcile the principles of autocracy with certain conditions which they themselves had created. Lord Hamilton, the Secretary of State, gave expression to the view that a free press and uncontrolled education were incompatible with autocracy. In a letter of January 1901 to Curzon, he said that "the most serious difficulties and dangers ahead in India are not inherited, or even inherent in Indian society, but are our own creation." British rulers were placed in a great dilemma caused by a lack of direction in their policy. They had acknowledged the principle of equality of their own accord but were unable to implant it in the circumstances of an autocratic rule. Educated Indians found no difficulty in showing that there lay a vast gap between theory and practice.

1 Progs. of the Leg. Council of India (1871), 436.

2 See below, 310. 21

3 Hamilton to Curzon, 9 Jan. 1901, Pr. Cor. Ind., VI, 9.

The most important principle of British policy was embodied in the Charter Act of 1833 and in the Queen's Proclamation of 1858. Curzon wrote that ever since 1858 the Proclamation had been regarded as "the Charter of Indian rights and liberties."¹ One finds innumerable references to these documents in the speeches and writings of Indian leaders of the late nineteenth century. Their claim to a share in the administration was immeasurably strengthened - at any rate on a theoretical basis - by the British acceptance of the principle of racial equality.

It is difficult to say how far the authors of these documents would have been prepared to go in the direction of political concessions. It is true that Macaulay gave expression to fine sentiments in his speech in Parliament in July 1833,² but the facts of British rule should not be confused with the views of a few individuals. So far as the Proclamation was concerned, it is well known that Queen Victoria wished that it should contain some pledges which her future reign was to redeem, and accordingly, the draft Proclamation was altered, but she can hardly be credited with having a broad outlook towards India's constitutional progress. Even after thirty years of intellectual progress in India she was not in favour of the Government of India's proposal for the introduction of the elective principle in the constitution of the Councils.³ Viewed in the context of conditions then prevailing, these pronouncements can

1 Curzon to Hamilton, 15 Oct. 1902, Pr. Cor. Ind., XXIV, 103.

2 "It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown that system; that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government; that, having become instructed in European knowledge, they may, in some future age, demand European institutions." Hansard, XIX (1833), 536.

3 Queen Victoria to Lansdowne, 28 June 1889, Buckle, Letters (1886-1890), Third Series, 507.

be said only to have removed certain racial barriers. They had their strength as well as their weakness as principles of a vague and indefinite character always have. While the British Government could point out that it had recognised the principle of equality and that it was up to Indians to make themselves fit for any office, it was exposed to attack on the ground that it gave effect to it in a very imperfect manner. Lytton's scheme of an exclusive Indian service fitted in with the actual working of British policy though it was at variance with the principle of equality.¹

The inconveniences of the Proclamation were expressed by Lytton, Hamilton and several others. In a letter to Elgin, Hamilton said that forty years of practice had shown "the extreme difficulty of giving effect to the academic utterances as to equality of races."² Nevertheless, the repeal of the Proclamation was out of the question.

The maintenance of British supremacy was not a point at issue even among those who advocated the grant of political concessions. Indeed it was regarded as the foundation-stone of all reform. The question was how far British policy should be adapted to changing circumstances. Writing in 1883, a few months after his retirement from the Finance membership of the Government of India, Sir Evelyn Baring said that two policies were possible in India, the one was the policy of those who were against the freedom of the Press and dreaded the progress of education, and the other was the policy of those who

1 See below, 22.

2 Hamilton to Elgin, 7 May 1897, Pr. Cor. Ind., ii, 187.

supported the admission of Indians to a share in the administration. He emphasised that the problem was how to deal with the new-born spirit of progress. He strongly advocated the adjustment of the administrative system to new conditions.¹ In introducing his scheme of local self-government, Ripon had laid strong emphasis on the political education of the people. He maintained that the British Government could be made popular by a sympathetic approach to Indian questions. Curzon, on the other hand, did not believe in the policy of political concessions. Efficiency of administration was to him "a synonym for the contentment of the governed." Broadly speaking, the principle of efficiency persisted throughout the period. Curzon's contribution lay in pushing it too far. He sought to resolve the dilemma by ignoring the forces which had been at work for a pretty long time and by introducing economic reforms designed to improve the condition of the masses.

The area of State activity was still based on the principle of minimum interference with the social and economic life of the people. Internal and external peace, the establishment of law and order, the development of communication, and the organisation of famine relief were the main functions of the Indian Government. Explaining the policy of the British Government in India, James Stephen, a former Law Member of the Government of India, wrote in 1883: "Now the essential parts of European civilisation are peace, order, the supremacy of law, the prevention of crime, the redress of wrong, the enforcement of contracts, the development

1 Article on "Recent Events in India," The Nineteenth Century, Oct. 1883, 585-86, 589.

and concentration of the military force of the state, the construction of public works, the collection and expenditure of revenue required for these objects in such a way as to promote to the utmost the public interest, interfering as little as possible with the comfort, or wealth of the inhabitants, and improvement of the people." ¹ These functions are obviously what are termed the essential functions of the State. And indeed the British Government, in reply to its critics, laid the greatest emphasis on the blessings of peace and order. The benefits of security conferred by British rule were fully acknowledged by Indians. They had no desire to replace British by any other rule.

laissez faire remained the accepted policy of the British Government in India. The Indian demand for protection was not accepted. In the 'nineties a fierce controversy arose over the question of tariff. In 1894 owing to the fall in exchange, fresh taxation became necessary, and in December an import duty of 5 per cent. was imposed on cotton goods and yarn. In 1896 under Lancashire pressure the import duty was lowered from 5 per cent. to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent; an excise duty at the same rate was placed on all Indian mill woven cloth, and cotton yarn was admitted free of duty. The proceedings drove home to Indians the fact that British industrialists, in the name of free trade, sought their own interests and impeded India's industrial progress.

As the century proceeded towards its close, the economic aspect of British rule became a subject of strong criticism in Indian

1 J.F. Stephen's Article on "Foundations of the Government of India," The Nineteenth Century, Oct. 1883, 554.

political circles. The Congress drew the attention of the Government to the poverty of the masses and criticised it for draining away a large proportion of India's wealth to England.

The British attached the greatest importance to the benefits of peace and security which India enjoyed under them. They maintained that their rule was much better than what she had before the British connection. In 1894 Fowler, then Secretary of State for India, told Parliament that the question was whether India was better or worse off by being a part of the British Empire.¹ His successor, Lord Hamilton remarked in 1896 that the merit of British rule should be judged in comparison with the "Government which it superseded or the Government which might supersede it."² Such an attitude towards India's political development ruled out the question of preparing Indians for self-government.

1 Indian Parl. Debates, 14 Aug. 1894, 275.

2 Ibid., 13 Aug. 1896, 371.

CHAPTER I.

The Problem of Indian Employment in the Civil Service.

The question of the Indianisation of the Civil Services is highly significant in revealing the working of British policy. It had a twofold aspect: the extent of Indian employment consistent with the stability and efficiency of British rule, and the mode of recruitment suited to Indian conditions. The settlement of the first presented a problem because of the extremely small number of higher posts that were made available for Indians, and that of the second because of the difficulty in applying a uniform system of recruitment due to the unequal diffusion of education in India. The question assumed considerable importance when educated Indians began to make persistent demands for a larger share in the administration than the Government was willing to concede.

The broad principles of British policy towards Indian employment had been embodied in the Charter Act of 1833 and in the Queen's Proclamation of 1858. The Statute declared: "no native of the said territories, nor any natural born subject of His Majesty resident therein, shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office, or employment under the said company".¹ This provision

1 3 & 4 Will.IV, c.85, s.87.

legally removed a great racial disability, as Lansdowne said, every Indian was "by law equally admissible" to every office in India.¹ Explaining the meaning of the Act, the Directors said: "Fitness is henceforth to be the criterion of eligibility." They went on to say that the object of the clause was not to ascertain qualification but to remove disqualification.² Though Indians from then onwards no longer remained under legal disabilities, they had still to overcome insurmountable difficulties in gaining official employment. The condition of compulsory training at Hailebury was a major obstacle. The result was that not a single Indian was appointed to the Covenanted Service during the Company's regime. But in facilitating the policy of Indian employment, the Directors had laid emphasis on the promotion of education, which, in the course of time, revolutionised the whole situation.

In 1853 the Covenanted Civil Service was thrown open to competition. The principle of competition had been suggested by Lord Grenville as early as 1813. It was later provided in the Charter Act of 1833, according to which, for every vacancy in the Civil Service four candidates were to be nominated and the best candidate was to be selected by examination.³ The scheme was not put into practice, and with the connivance of the Board, the Directors "cléverly and quietly cheated Parliament, and they retained their patronage until 1853."⁴

1 Hansard, Third Series, XIX, 171.

2 Directors' Des. No.44, 10 Dec. 1834, paras. 105-6.

3 Act (1833), s.103.

4 C.H. Philips, East India Company, 297.

In implementing the competitive system, the Macaulay Committee of 1854 made certain recommendations according to which admission to the Service was to be gained on the results of competitive examinations. By 1854 both racial disability and patronage had been abolished by law. Thenceforth appointment to the Covenanted Service legally depended on merit and ability. In 1858, when India came under the Crown, the competitive system was embodied in the Act.¹

The scheme of examination, drawn up by the Macaulay Committee, was designed to suit the conditions of the British educational system and the needs of British competitors. The subjects for examination were "confined to those branches of knowledge to which it is desirable that English gentlemen who mean to remain at home should pay some attention." Indian Vernacular languages were rejected as valueless, but Sanskrit and Arabic were included because, first, they were not "without intrinsic value" and, secondly, they could also be learnt in England. The Committee was against the inclusion of branches of knowledge "specially oriental", the study of which would be of no use to the unsuccessful competitors.²

The Macaulay Committee did not provide additional facilities to Indians for employment. In fact, its scheme of examination was bound to place them at a great disadvantage. On 24 June 1853 Macaulay had told Parliament that under the proposed system the admission of Indians to the Covenanted Service would entirely depend upon themselves. "As

1 21 & 22 Vict., c. 106, s. 32.

2 Parl. Papers, XL (1854-55).

soon as any young native of distinguished parts ... should have enabled himself to be victorious in competition over European candidates, he would, in the most honourable manner, by conquest, as a matter of right,¹ and not as a mere eleemosynary donation, obtain access to the Service." Macaulay emphasised that an Indian should not be put into the service just because he was an Indian. The new system of selection, though, in principle, free from the defects of race distinctions and of patronage, produced most unequal results, because the conditions under which it worked created inequality.

The principle of equality between Indians and Europeans in matters of appointment was re-affirmed in the Queen's Proclamation of 1 November 1858. The words "so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified, by their education, ability, and integrity, duly to discharge" were understood to contain the most important principle of British policy. Indian leaders almost invariably referred to the Proclamation whenever they put forward demands for a larger share in the administration, and British politicians not uncommonly made reference to it when the grant of some concessions was contemplated. Queen Victoria had, indeed, wished that the Proclamation² should contain some pledges which her future reign was to redeem. It was, therefore, quite natural that educated Indians should have looked upon the Proclamation as the "Magna Charta"³ of their rights.

1 Hansard, Third Series, CXXVIII, 757-58.

2 Queen Victoria to the Earl of Derby, 15 Aug 1858; Letters, iii, (1854-6), 379.

3 "We take our stand upon the Proclamation - The Magna Charta of our rights - and who will dislodge us from it?" Surendranath Banerjea's speech, 12 July, The Bengalee, 15 July 1893, 331.

A contemporary writer, one Ludlow said that the Statute of 1833 was only "negative, a mere removal of disqualification" while the Proclamation was "positive, pledging admission to office". But the snag lay in the phrase "so far as may be", which according to¹ Ludlow, might be so interpreted as to nullify the whole promise. In a memorandum of 1893 the Government of India interpreted these words as limiting the admission of Indians to such offices as could be thrown open consistently with the paramount interests of the Empire.²

The Charter Act of 1833 and the Proclamation constituted together the only documents which indicated the lines along which British policy was to develop in using Indian agency in the administration. Since the documents were susceptible of elastic interpretation, the Government found it difficult to rebut the charges of breach of promise, and yet it could not repeal them. The Aitchison Commission, for example, refused to support any proposal, however sound or likely to be a final solution of the problems, which involved a departure from the principles laid down in them.³

In a report of 20 January 1860, a Committee of the India Office,⁴ which had been appointed by the Secretary of State to examine certain

1 J.M. Ludlow, Thoughts on the Policy of the Crown, 204-5.

2 Memorandum, para.16, Pub.Progs., No.70, Nov.1893.

3 Report (1886-87), para. 58.

4 The Committee was appointed on 27 Oct. 1859 to consider the letter from the Government of India and the Report of Ricketts on the question of the salaries of the Civil servants in India. It consisted of William Arbuthnot, Mangles, Macnaghten, Erskine, Perry, and J.P. Willoughby. Minutes of the Council of India, iii, 559-60.

matters connected with the Civil Service, observed that the difficulties associated with a competition held in a distant land "practically excluded" Indians from the service. "Were this inequality removed, we shall no longer be exposed to the charge of keeping promise to the ear and breaking it to the hope". As a remedy, the Committee suggested that selection should be made on the results of competitive examinations which should be held simultaneously both in India and England. It further recommended that in justice to Indian candidates three colloquial oriental languages should be added to the three modern European languages. These recommendations are the more striking because they emerged from a body - the India Council - which was later to gain such a conservative reputation,¹ and because they were made soon after the mutiny when there was no Indian demand for such a change. The Committee's proposals, however, suffered an ignominious fate. The Home Government treated this document as a dead letter.²

In 1861 the Indian Civil Service Act was passed, according to which, all vacancies happening in any of the offices specified in the schedule annexed to the Act were to be filled by Covenanted Civil servants. Secondly, the "authority in India" was invested with power

1 In 1889 the majority of the members of the India Council were against the Secretary of State's decision to raise the age-limit to 21-23 and in 1893 they were opposed to the wording of Kimberley's despatch with which Paul's resolution regarding simultaneous examinations was transmitted to the Government of India. See below, 69.

2 On 2 June 1893 George Russell, Under Secretary of State, remarked that the Committee's report was not an official or authoritative document. "It was merely an expression of opinion on the part of three eminent men of that time, and was never adopted by the responsible Government." Indian Parl. Debates, 1893, 360.

to make appointments under special circumstances to any office or place specified in the Schedule irrespective of the "recited qualifications" and restrictions, provided that the person so appointed must have resided at least seven years in India, and previously to his being appointed to any of the offices in the revenue¹ and judicial departments specified in the Schedule, should pass an examination in the vernacular language of the district in which he was to be employed. A minimum seven-year term of residence was provided as a check on any abuse of patronage by the Governor-General.² Lord Canning suggested that in making appointments to the Covenanted posts from among the members of the Uncovenanted Service, of not less than seven years' standing, no distinction should be made between Europeans and Indians, though, as a measure of economy, the latter might be given a lower salary. He also proposed that on being appointed to a Covenanted post, an Uncovenanted officer should become a regular member of the higher service, qualified to hold any office open to a member of that service.³ The Secretary of State ruled that admission under special circumstances to offices ordinarily held by members of the Covenanted Service was "not to the service itself".⁴ Some members of the India Council were against this provision for special appointments on the ground that it would open the door to favouritism and jobbery.⁵

1 24 & 25 Vict., c.54, ss. 2-5.
 2 Wood's speech, 6 June 1861, Hansard, clxiii, 659.
 3 Minute, 8 June 1861, Pub.Progs., No.58, Oct. 1861.
 4 Leg. Des. to India, No.21, 14 Sept. 1861.
 5 Minutes of dissent by Mangles and Charles Mills, Parl.Papers, xliii (1861).

According to Sir Erskine Perry,¹ the Schedule of offices was annexed to the Act of 1861 at the instance of Covenanted civilians who feared that the restrictions contained in the Bill did not go far enough to prevent the authorities in India from making improper appointments.² It may be noted that very little use was made of this provision. Only two substantive appointments were made in all, one in 1862 and the other in 1880.³ If the opportunity of appointing Indians under this provision had been utilised, a larger number of posts could have been made available for them, but Sir Charles Wood in particular and the Home Government in general, from the very inception of the scheme, were not serious about it.

In 1867 Sir Stafford Northcote, the Secretary of State, asked the Government of India to take into "careful review" the question of Indian employment. He was, in his turn, impressed by a passage in the Administration Report of Oudh which pointed to an evil in the British system under which Indian officers of ability were shorn of all incentive to exertion by the bar to their promotion.⁴ The Government of India recognised the "urgent political necessity" of Indian employment in the higher services.⁵ In a resolution of August 1867 it observed that many Europeans had been appointed to the posts of Deputy Collectors and of extra-Assistant Commissioners in the non-

-
- 1 He was Chief Justice of Bombay in 1847, became a member of Parliament in 1854, and was appointed a member of the India Council in 1859. Dict. National Biography, XLV, 39-40.
 - 2 Memorandum, 9 Dec. 1876, Collections to Pub. Despatches, (1878).
 - 3 Report of the Public Service Commission, (1886-87), para. 37.
 - 4 Des. to India, 31 May 1867, c.2376 (1879).
 - 5 Des. from India, No.38 (Foreign), 13 Sept. 1867.

Regulation Provinces for their services during the Mutiny, and had obtained promotion to the grades of Assistant Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner, but no Indian had yet advanced beyond the grade of extra-assistant. As all higher appointments in the Regulation Provinces had been reserved for the Covenanted Service, the Government of India looked "rather to the Non-Regulation Provinces as the field in which to satisfy the legitimate ambition of deserving Natives". It decided to recognise at once the eligibility of Indians of approved character for promotion to the rank and emoluments of Assistant Commissioners and Small Cause Court Judges in the Non-Regulation Provinces.¹ The Secretary of State approved of the suggestions contained in the Resolution, but remarked that there was considerable room for carrying out the principle in the Regulation Provinces also. He recognised the "inherent rights" of Indians to many posts, not reserved for the Covenanted Service but exclusively held by Europeans, to which able Indians could be appointed both in the Regulation and Non-Regulation Provinces.²

In 1867, when Northcote had been in correspondence with the Government of India on this question, the East India Association adopted Dadabhai Nooroji's memorial in favour of holding competitive examinations in India for a portion of the appointments to the Covenanted Service. A deputation of the Association waited on Northcote on 21 August and submitted the memorial.³ From 1867 onwards Indian public bodies also

1 Resolution, No.1415 (Foreign Dept), 19 Aug, 1867.

2 Rev. (Foreign) Des. to India, No.10, 8 Feb. 1868.

3 Indian Expenditure Commission (Minutes and Appendices), iii, 479.

began to press unceasingly for simultaneous examinations in India. In 1868 the British Indian Association submitted a memorial to the same effect. The Secretary of State turned down the proposal with the remark that "we ought to judge of the merits of any particular system of selection, not with reference to its affording greater or less facilities to this or the other class of candidates, but with reference to its providing or failing to provide suitable public servants." He, however, pointed out that the Government had created scholarships for Indians to study in England, and had decided to appoint them more generally to the Uncovenanted service. He also referred to a Bill submitted to Parliament, the object of which was to enable the Government to appoint Indians of ascertained fitness to posts in the Covenanted service. In May 1868 Henry Fawcett, a friend of India, moved the Civil Service resolution which provided for simultaneous examinations at important centres in India, but withdrew the resolution when Northcote told the House that he intended to insert in his India Bill a clause empowering the Government of India to appoint persons of proved fitness to appointments held by Covenanted Civilians.

The Government of India was also of opinion that no opportunity should be lost of admitting Indians of tried ability and character to a large share in the administration of the country, though it regarded the demand for simultaneous examinations as "highly inexpedient".

1 Pub. Des. to Bombay Govt., No.36, 14 Oct. 1868.

2 Hansard, CXCI, 1858.

3 Pub. Des. from India, No.79, 13 June 1868.

1868 nine scholarships were created of the value of £200 per annum each, tenable for three years.¹ The object was to encourage Indians to resort more freely to England for the purpose of "perfecting their education, and of studying for the various learned professions, for the Civil Service, and for other public employment in this country."²

In 1869 the Duke of Argyll suspended the scheme of scholarships. The suspension in itself was a decision of minor importance, but the reasons adduced for suspension were significant. They had already been pointed out by his predecessor, Northcote, who doubted whether competition could be safely relied upon as being the most suitable mode of Indian recruitment. On 23 April 1868 in Parliament he said that competitive examinations did not suit India where various other qualifications, not likely to be assessed by means of an intellectual test, were required of the candidates.³ In May, replying to the debate on Fawcett's resolution, he remarked that persons possessed of ruling and governing qualities would not be found among those most likely to be successful at competitive examinations in India. He emphasised that the employment of a small intellectual class would not be of benefit to the masses, in whose interests the Government should provide the best possible machinery for administration. He told the House that he intended to include a clause in his Government of India Act Amendment

1 Resolution, No.360 (H.D. Ed.), 30 June 1868.

2 Ed. Des. from India, No.9, 7 July 1868.

3 Hansard, cxcl, 1214.

Bill, giving the Government power to make appointments in India, and that method, he thought, would be better than competition and, at all events, safe and for the benefit of British rule.¹

The Duke of Argyll expressed similar opinions in a more unambiguous manner. He said that the results of the competitive system as applied to Europeans, who generally possessed ruling qualities, were not the same as in the case of Indians. In a competitive examination, Argyll said, Pathans and Sikhs would have little chance before a Bengali and it would be a dangerous experiment to place the latter over the martial races of Upper India. In his opinion, in making appointments in India, the circumstances of rank and caste should not be disregarded. He preferred rather the system of "careful and cautious selection" to competition by promoting fit persons from the Uncovenanted to the Covenanted Service. He emphasised that "the wide diversities of character which prevail between different parts of India make it essential that each Province and Race should be treated by itself". He went on to say: "It should never be forgotten, and there should never be any hesitation in laying down the principle, that it is one of our first duties towards the people of India to guard the safety of our dominion. For this purpose we must proceed gradually, employing only such natives as we can trust, and these only in such offices and in such places as, in the actual condition of things, the Government of India may determine to be really suited to them".²

1 Ibid, 1853-57.

2 Ed. Des. to India, No.3, 8 April 1869. My italics.

Although Northcote and Argyll belonged to different parties, their views on this question were essentially the same. Liberals and Conservatives both agreed that for the maintenance and efficiency of British rule a preponderant British agency was indispensable, but in view of the changing circumstances, they also recognised the need of a larger use of Indian agency. The question, therefore, centred on the extent and mode of Indian recruitment in the Covenanted Service. Argyll stressed the principle of treating "each province and race by itself", which meant, in other words, that the adoption of a system of unfettered competition was inexpedient, as it might result in the unequal representation of Provinces and, within the Provinces, in the unequal representation of communities. It appears that British politicians preferred to regard the Government, rather than the educated classes, as the custodian of the interests of the masses. Indeed, in the battle of arguments there can hardly be a more powerful weapon in the armoury of a foreign government than to arrogate to itself the claim to represent the interests of the masses of the subject country.

The Government of India felt that the suspension of scholarships would give occasion for the misrepresentation of its intentions and therefore urged that some action was necessary to demonstrate that its views on the more liberal employment of Indians had undergone no change. In March 1870 Parliament passed an important act which sought to provide "additional facilities ... for the employment of natives of India of

1 Ed. Des. from India, No.1, 25 Jan. 1870.

proved merit and ability in the Civil Service of Her Majesty in India." ¹
 The Secretary of State, Argyll, emphasised that the provisions of the Statute were calculated to "effectually carry out" the policy of ²
 employing Indians and were more complete than the system of scholarships. The despatch also sought to establish that since 1867 the Home Government had taken a more liberal view about the question of Indian employment than the Government of India; that in 1867 it was the Home Government which took the initiative, and in 1868, it was again the Home Government which pointed out that there was enough room in the Regulation Provinces also for the appointment of Indians, and that thereafter the Statute of 1870 provided a more complete system than that of scholarships. It may be remarked here that whereas the scheme of scholarships emphasised the competitive system, the Statute provided for an altogether different method of recruitment. But what educated Indians wanted was not nomination but competition on equal terms with English candidates. In 1870 Sir Charles Wingfield said in the Commons that from ³conversations with Indians pursuing their studies in England, and from articles in the Indian Press, he gathered that Indian educated opinion was by no means in favour of a nomination system.

The Statute of 1870 authorised the Government of India to make appointments to posts in the Civil Services according to such rules as might be from time to time prescribed by the Governor-General in Council,

1 33 Vict., c.3, s.6.
 2 Hansard, cxcix, 565.

2 Ed. Des. to India, No. 4, 31 March 1870.

and sanctioned by the Secretary of State in Council. Under the Statute the words "natives of India" included any person "born and domiciled within the dominions of Her Majesty in India of parents habitually resident in India, and not established there for temporary purposes only ..." In 1872 the Secretary of State asked the Government of India "to give immediate consideration" to the question of making rules for recruitment. He laid down three principles which had a very important bearing on this question: (1) the employment of a very large proportion of British officers in the more important posts; (2) the appointment of Indians generally to judicial posts and in "exceptional cases" to the executive offices of collector and magistrate;¹ (3) a lower rate of salary to be fixed for Indian civilians. All the three principles, though laid down by a Liberal Government, were later, in 1878, "unreservedly" accepted by Lytton.²

The first set of rules were submitted in 1874. They prescribed a fixed term of Government service as a necessary condition for appointment.³ The Government of India was not in favour of fixing a definite proportion of Indians in the service, on the ground that it might be inconvenient and difficult to maintain a settled ratio. In its opinion also it would not be desirable "to impose upon the selection of natives of India for the public service any preliminary restrictions in the sense either of limiting or of enlarging their admission to any particular class of appointment."⁴

1 Pub. Des. to India, No.113, 22 Oct. 1872.
 2 Pub. Des. from India, No.35, 2 May 1878, para. 9.
 3 For Rules see App. H. to Report (1886-87).
 4 Pub. Des. from India, No.6, 23 Jan. 1874.

The Secretary of State negatived the draft rules. The Law Officers of the Crown, who had been consulted, were of opinion that the Government of India had placed too narrow a construction on Section 6 of the Statute. They maintained that the restriction of previous service for any definite period or upon any definite terms in some employment under the British Government was opposed to the spirit and intention of the Statute.¹ Accordingly, in 1875 revised rules were submitted, which, with certain modifications, were sanctioned by the Secretary of State "as a tentative measure". The rules were drawn up in "the widest possible terms". Forwarding the new set of rules, the Government of India observed that while the draft rules of 1874 had been drawn up with a view to ensuring the method advised in the Secretary of State's despatch of 8 April 1869, especially relating to the promotion of Indians from the Uncovenanted to the Covenanted Service, the revised rules made no attempt to prescribe merit and ability and left such points to the judgment of the executive.²

The rules, however, remained practically inoperative, only one, or at most three, appointments being made thereunder to the executive and judicial branches of the service.³

1 See footnote to para.40 of Report (1886-87).

2 Pub. Des. from India, No.6, 22 Jan. 1875.

3 Report (1886-87), para 41. The Report says that at most two judicial appointments were made. Perhaps it takes no note of the appointment, under the Rules of 1875, of Kunwar Rameshwar Singh of Darbhanga, as Assistant Magistrate and Collector. The Govt. of India justified the appointment on the ground that the Act of 1870 was not intended to preclude the admission into the reserved appointments of men who had not proved their ability in the public service, but who might have afforded evidence in other ways of having essential qualifications. The Government laid stress on the expediency of encouraging "young men of good family and in easy circumstances". The Secretary of State approved the appointment. Pub.Des. from India, No.20, 22 Feb. 1878; Pub. Des. to India. No.51. 2 May 1878.

In 1874, soon after coming to the India Office, Lord Salisbury, turned his attention to matters relating to the age-limit for the Civil Service and the mode of training for selected candidates. He sought advice on this question,¹ finally making up his own mind to reduce the maximum age-limit from 21 to 19.² It was said in favour of the alteration that selected candidates would be able to resort to University education and that English parents would be exposed to less risk in making a choice of profession for their sons at the lower than at the higher age-limit.³ Salisbury emphasised that "every candidate who enters at 22 is staking far more on his success than one who enters at 19." In arriving at this decision he acted in disregard of the views of the majority of those who were consulted.⁴ The Governor-General, Lord Northbrook, was in favour of fixing the age-limit at 19-22.

From the London-Calcutta correspondence of the period 1874-76, it appears that Salisbury's aim in introducing the change was to improve the quality of British candidates in the Civil Service, and he considered the question with sole reference to them. But in considering the subject

1 The Civil Service Commissioners, Prof. Jowett of Balliol College, the Dean of Christchurch College, the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University, and the Govt. of India.

2 Pub. Des. to India, No.19, 24 Feb. 1876.

3 Salisbury's Minutes, Parl. Papers, LV (1876).

4 Lord Ripon remarked that the alteration was carried out in opposition to the advice of the majority of the members of the Indian Government, including the then Viceroy, Lord Northbrook, and of a majority of the officials consulted in India, and of the Civil Service Commissioners in England, and of such an expert as Professor Jowett, who expressed his opinion in favour of raising the age-limit. Ripon's Minute, 26 Sept. 1883, para. 2.

According to Lord Northbrook's Minute, out of 101 officers 5 did not refer to the subject of age, 27 recommended reduction, 36 were in favour of retaining the existing limit and 33 were in favour of raising it. Minute of 22 Sept. 1875, para. 12.

it was impossible to overlook its bearing upon the question of the admission of Indians to the Covenanted Service. Ripon argued thus: "The effect of the change in this respect has undoubtedly been altogether to shut the door of the competitive examinations in England to natives of India ... There is a widespread belief in India that the object of the change made in 1876 was to exclude educated natives from the Civil Service ..."¹ Ilbert, a member of Ripon's Government, remarked that the change gave ground for complaint that Indians had been excluded by indirect means from a competition to which they were admissible by law.²

The difficulties associated with a competition, designed to suit the British educational system and held in London, were sufficiently discouraging, and were further increased by the reduction of the age-limit. It may also be remarked that Salisbury did not make out a convincing case in favour of the change, inasmuch as he could not show that the English candidates selected under the old age-limit were not up to the mark. It could not be proved even later by the protagonists of the change that the products of the new experiment, which lasted from 1878 to 1891, were in any way better than those selected under the old rules. In 1889 the Under-Secretary of State for India indicated that the men appointed since 1878 showed, as a rule, no superiority to their predecessors. The efficiency of the Civil Service, he said, would not be diminished and might be increased by raising the age-limit.³ In its

1 Ripon's Minute, 26 Sept. 1883, para. 7.

2 C.P. Ilbert's Minute, 27 Sept. 1883, Parl. Papers, LVIII (1884-85).

3 Letter to Secretary, Civil Service Commission, 24 July 1889.

political effects, the change must be regarded as a great blunder. It produced a serious discontent among the Indian educated class and provided it with a rallying cause. In 1877-78 Surendranath Banerjea¹ practically began his political career with the Civil Service movement, which in a sense became a precursor of the more comprehensive political movement, namely, the Indian National Congress.

In taking his decision, Salisbury seems to have been influenced by the fact that there had been an unusual increase in the number of Indian competitors in 1873-74, though, in fact, only three out of the twenty-three who had competed were successful.² Any fear on the score that Indians would flood the service was purely imaginary. In 1883 Ripon said that they could not succeed in large numbers in a competition against the pick of the intelligent youths of the United Kingdom carried on at their own doors³ and based upon the educational system of their own schools. As to the argument that English parents would be unwilling to wait for their sons' professional choice till the age of 21, Ripon remarked that, on the contrary, they would be unwilling to send them at an early age.⁴ The Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, C.U. Aitchison, criticised the change from a different point of view. He said that "the interests of Indian administration should not in any degree be

1 Benerjea, A Nation in Making, Chapter V.

2 In 1873 the number was 11, in 1874 it was 12, whereas in other years between 1862 and 1877, it never went above 6. For table showing the number of Indian competitors during 1855-86, see Pub. Progs., Jan. 1887.

3 Ripon's Minute, 26 Sept. 1883, para. 8.

4 Minute, 10 Sept. 1884, para. 13.

sacrificed to the interests of unsuccessful youths and their parents."¹
 In his minute of 10 September 1884 Ripon pertinently asked whether it was wise or politic to keep up political discontent, especially among men who supplied the writer's in the Press, public speakers, pleaders and not infrequently the officials of Indian States.

In explaining the reasons for Salisbury's decision one must remember that he also shared with his predecessors a deep distrust of the competitive system. He told Lytton: "I can imagine no more terrible future for India than that of being governed by Competition Baboos."² Thus it is clear that the change was introduced to secure two objects: the improvement of the quality of British candidates and the restriction on the recruitment of Indians by competition. The achievement of the former was at best uncertain, while that of the latter was certain, though it was attained at an enormously disproportionate cost. The reduction of the age-limit was one of the few measures adopted in the latter half of the nineteenth century which shook the faith of Indians in the justice of the British Government. Politicians like Salisbury allow imaginary fears and prejudices to get the better of reason and do incalculable harm to the cause which they want to serve. The change was unnecessary, impolitic and unjust, and untimely.

1 . Minute of C.U. Aitchison, 7 July 1884, para. 13.

2 Letter of 13 April 1877, quoted in Cecil's Life of Salisbury, ii, 68.

In 1876, the year in which the age-limit was reduced, Lytton took up the question of Indian employment under the Statute of 1870. Confidential communications were made to the Governments of Madras, Bombay and Bengal. Madras declined to make any appointment, and Bombay nominated to only one reserved judicial post.¹ Ashley Eden, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, brought to bear on the question a new approach. His views appealed to Lytton, largely influencing the ideas contained in the latter's minute of 30 May 1877.² Eden advocated a closer Covenanted Service to be reserved exclusively for Europeans who, under "the exceptional circumstances" of the occupation and administration of India, must carry on the "supreme supervision" of the administration. He supported the appointment of Indians to posts not reserved for Europeans on political and financial grounds.³

In his minute of May 1877 Lytton pointed out that, on the one hand, the Government had to discharge its imperial responsibilities by restricting the most important executive posts to Europeans and, on the other, it had to fulfil certain obligations under which an Indian admitted to the Covenanted Service was entitled to expect and claim appointment in the fair course of promotion to the highest post in that service.⁴ Lytton's solution lay in the reduction of the number

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- 1 The Bombay Government appointed one Gopal Hari Rao. His first appointment in 1863 was cancelled because he had not passed in the Vernacular.
 - 2 Lytton's Minute, 7 Jan. 1878, Pub.Progs., No.319, May 1879.
 - 3 Bengal to Govt. of India, 8 March 1877, Pub.Progs., No.309, May 1879.
 - 4 Balfour, Lytton's Administration, 528-29.

of admissions to the Covenanted Service and the establishment of a close 'native civil service' which was to include a proportion of the posts reserved to the Covenanted Service, and a portion of the posts then held by Uncovenanted officers. On political grounds he preferred the system of nomination to the principle of "proved merit and ability" which, if adopted, would exclude all those whom the Government would attract to its service. The qualifications of this class of influential persons, whose employment was calculated to add to the strength and popularity of the Government, were "partly inherited, partly developed by early habits of command, partly proved by the readiness with which their right to command is recognised by large numbers of their native fellow-subjects."¹ Lytton's Government proposed, as a measure of economy, a lower rate of salary for the members of the proposed service. The despatch referred to the difficulty - rather the "utter impossibility" of getting European officers of position to serve cheerfully under Indian officers. It was emphasised that since within any foreseeable time the most important executive posts could not be given to Indians, it was objectionable to encourage them to enter a service which "ostensibly offers them as legitimate objects of ambition posts to which it is notoriously impossible to appoint or promote them."² Such a practice as kept the higher offices "nominally open" but "virtually closed" would, in the Government's view, perpetuate dissatisfaction among Indians.

1 Pub. Des. from India, No.35, 2 May 1878, para. 22.

2 Ibid., para. 32.

The new scheme was thus designed to keep the aspirations of Indian incumbents within the defined limits of the proposed service and to give strength to the British administration by associating with it the influential classes. It was also intended to render the administration economical.

Cranbrook, Salisbury's successor at the India Office, while agreeing with the Government of India's policy of opening high employment to Indians, refused to accept those proposals which provided for a close 'native' service and their exclusion from the Covenanted Service. He remarked that any scheme which involved a departure from the principle of 1833 would not be acceptable to Parliament and asked the Government of India to give immediate effect to the Act of 1870. Cranbrook was not against the selection of Indians of high executive capacity for administrative posts in exceptional cases. Referring to the argument that English civilians were unwilling to serve under Indian officers, he remarked that in Egypt, Turkey and even in the Indian States they were not unwilling to accept subordinate posts.¹

In 1879, in forwarding the new set of rules, Lytton's Government remarked that whereas the Act of 1870 spoke of "employment in the Civil Service", the Secretary of State's despatch inferred "appointments to the Civil Service."² The Secretary of State sanctioned all the rules

1 Pub. Des. to India, No.125, 7 Nov. 1878.

2 Pub. Des. from India, No.31, 1 May 1879, para. 6. Cranbrook in his despatch of 7 Nov 1878 had used the term "to the Civil Service of India."

with the exception of Rule III, which was omitted.¹ He thought it undesirable to lay down a special rule for appointment to a certain category of posts, as selection for high offices depended upon fitness and efficiency.²

Under the Statutory rules of 1879 the Local Governments were authorised to nominate persons, not above 25 for "employment in Her Majesty's Covenanted Civil Service." The age-limit was waived for those who were to be nominated on the grounds of merit and ability proved in Government service, or in the practice of a profession. The total number of persons to be so appointed was not to exceed one-fifth of the total number of civilians appointed by the Secretary of State in one year. Each selection was subject to the approval of the Governor-General in Council and the selected candidates, save under exceptional circumstances, were to be on probation for at least two years.³ In a resolution of December 1879 the Government of India expressed the view that the majority of appointments should be made from young men below 25. It was pointed out that the object of the rules was to attract to Government service young men of good family and social position to whom the employment in the Uncovenanted service had not proved sufficiently attractive. The appointment of persons

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- 1 Rule III provided that Statutory Civilians could not, without the previous sanction of the Governor-General in Council, be appointed to posts of Members of a Board of Revenue, Chief Magistrate of a District, and Commissioner of Division or of Revenue.
 - 2 Pub. Des. to India, No.68, 17 July 1879.
 - 3 Notification (Public) No.1534, 22 Aug. 1879.

of proved ability was to be the exception, being confined to those who had obtained great distinction in the offices they had held or the professions they had followed, that is, persons whom the Government would "spontaneously" desire to appoint to superior offices. The Resolution remarked that though these principles might not be in accordance with the anticipation in some quarters arising from Section 6, they had been adopted by the Government of India and were in clear coincidence with the views of Her Majesty's Government.¹

The creation of the Statutory Civil Service marks a significant stage in the Indianisation of the Civil Service. Rules had been framed twice before, but they proved practically nugatory. The scheme of 1879, under which Indians were assured of one-sixth of the total number of Covenanted posts in addition to any number of offices to which they were entitled on the results of competitive examinations, placed at their disposal a larger number of posts than a scheme of competition in London, even under favourable conditions, would have thrown open;² and yet the Statutory Service never became popular with educated Indians. A scheme designed to provide them with adequate facilities for the London competition would have been more popular, though, in its practical results, it would not have, for a long time to come, disturbed the

1 Resolution, 24 Dec. 1879, Pub. Progs., No.371, Dec. 1879.

2 During 1862-78 the total number of successful Indian candidates was 11, being less than one a year; whereas during 1879-86, under the Statutory Scheme, the rate of recruitment, on an average, was 6 a year. Report (1886-87), para. 45. For table showing the number of candidates who appear and were successful see Pub. Progs., Jan. 1887.

proportion, as provided in the resolution. Thus, the question arises: why did the Government not adopt such a popular course? The main reason is that ever since the authorities took up the question of Indian employment seriously they had entertained strong misgivings about the merits of the competitive system. The Home Government laid emphasis on nomination, and Lytton threw his entire weight on the same side. In consequence, the area of selection was mainly restricted to young men of social status. Remarking on this change, Lyall, Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces (N.W.P.), said that the rules of 1879, as explained by the resolution of December 1879, initiated a policy somewhat different from the earlier proceedings and relaxed the statutory condition of proved merit and ability as the antecedant qualifications for these appointments.¹

An important point in favour of the Statutory System was that it enabled the Government to distribute appointments among the educationally backward Provinces and also to recruit men from some important communities which had little chance in a purely competitive examination. The Aitchison Commission remarked that the rules of 1879 "were designed to reserve local recruitment to natives of India."² The Government regarded the employment of certain classes, who were believed to possess governing qualities, though they were educationally backward, as of the utmost importance. Lytton supported the recruitment of the influential

1 Minute, 10 July 1884, Pub. Letters from India, (1884), 871-75.

2 Report, (1886-87), para. 84.

classes on grounds of political expediency. In 1888 the Government of India remarked that the object of the arrangement of 1879 was to bring "territorial or political influence" to its support and, accordingly, the selections were made more on grounds of "political expediency than of administrative advantage."¹ The Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces expressed the same view when he said that the object of the rules of 1879 was not to strengthen the service or to obtain the best public servants, but to induce influential young men of good family to take employment under the Government.²

In so far as the scheme of 1879 threw open a fixed percentage of appointments, and provided for the representation of Provinces in the higher services, it marked a definite improvement on the existing system. Its greatest weakness, however, lay in the mode of recruitment. Within five years of its existence the method revealed its shortcomings, and during the later half there developed a tendency to appoint men of proved fitness in the subordinate branches of service.³ The change in the method of recruitment meant the acceptance of the system as contemplated in the Act of 1870. Thus the mode of selection, as embodied in Section 6 of the Statute, and the proportion of recruitment, as provided under the rules of 1879, together formed to the end of the century, or rather to the appointment of the Islington Commission in 1912, the main principles of Indian employment in the higher services.

1 Pub. Des. from India, No.58, 9 Oct. 1888.

2 Letter to Govt. of India, 11 June 1884, Pub. Letters from India, 1884, 887-88.

3 Govt. of India's Memorandum, 1893, para. 25, Pub. Progs., No.70, Nov. 1893.

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 Cranbrook's despatch of 1878¹, together with the rules of 1879 produced, though vaguely, the impression that the Statutory system was just a different mode of appointment to the Covenanted service. Cranbrook consulted the Government of India about the training of Statutory Civilians in England,² but the latter expressed its opinion³ against compulsory training on grounds of religious difficulties. The fact that they were desired to receive education in England and that their allowance was to be the same as that received by candidates selected there, indicates that originally the idea was to treat them on an equal footing with their Covenanted colleagues. Under the resolution of 1880 they were graded in the list of Covenanted Civilians.⁴ Their pension was also fixed on the "analogy" of the Covenanted Civil Service rules in contradistinction to those of the Uncovenanted Service.⁵

As regards the Indianisation of the Uncovenanted Services, British policy had been clearly defined by successive Secretaries of State. Northcote had recognised the "inherent rights" of Indians to these services both in the Regulation and non-Regulation Provinces. Argyll desired their "more free employment" in that branch and emphasised that the Uncovenanted Services should be "principally reserved" for them.⁶ Salisbury concurred in the views expressed by his predecessors. A

1 Pub. Des. to India, 7 Nov. 1878, para. 10.

2 Ibid., para. 16.

3 Pub. Des. from India, No.31, 1 May 1879.

4 Resolution, Nos. 36 (Pub.), 25 Aug. 1880.
 1322 - 1327

5 Pub. Des. to India, No.22, 11 March, 1880.

6 Rev. (Foreign) Des. to India, No.10, 8 Feb. 1868; Ed. Des. to India, No.3, 8 April 1869; Fin. Des. to India, No.84, 10 March, 1870; Fin. Des. to India, No.48, 10 Feb. 1876.

circular of 18 April 1879 provided that all offices other than those reserved for the Covenanted Service, or those for which technical or professional qualifications were desirable, should be held by Indians. It deprecated the tendency of appointing Europeans to posts for which Indians were eligible. To prohibit the appointments of Europeans, it was provided that no person other than an Indian should be appointed to an office carrying a salary of Rs.200 a month or above without the previous sanction of the Governor-General.¹ Although the orders did not apply to the appointments in the Opium, Salt or Customs, Survey, Mint, Public Works and Police departments, it was made clear that the higher offices in those departments were not intended to be reserved for Europeans and should be conferred more freely upon Indians.² To the Bombay Government's inquiry as to whether the principles laid down in the Circular applied to temporary appointments also, the Secretary of State replied in the affirmative.³ He withheld his sanction from two appointments made by the Bombay Government in contravention of the instructions of the Circular; and also turned down its suggestion, which provided that in future the instructions should not be applicable to appointments in the Political Department. He emphasised that the

1 In the case of Madras and Bombay, the sanction of the Secretary of State was required for the appointments of Europeans to posts carrying a salary of Rs.200 or above. Despatches to Madras and Bombay, 10 July 1879.

2 Circular No. 21, 18 April 1879.
746 - 53

3 The Bombay Govt. wanted to include special famine officers in the list of exceptions, but the Secretary of State held that Indians could be as fitly appointed as Europeans to these offices. Pub. Des. to India, No.107, 6 Nov. 1879.

object of the rule originally laid down by the Duke of Argyll and repeated by Lord Cranbrook was to open, as far as possible, appointments to qualified Indians, and not to set them aside, as had frequently been the case, in favour of English candidates.¹ In October 1880 the Secretary of State explained that the object of the rule was to prohibit the appointments of Europeans who, by exercising pressure and influence on the dispensers of local patronage, had obstructed the strict observance of the declared policy. He went on to say that despite the fact that in some instances and in the earlier stages Indian agency might not be so efficient as European agency, the policy of Indian employment was expedient for political and financial reasons.²

During Ripon's Viceroyalty, T.C. Hope, the Finance Secretary, drew up, at the instance of the Government, a note which dealt with the entire question relating to the strength, organisation, pay and recruitment of the services. According to the note, the principles already accepted by the Government were: (1) to make the Covenanted Service a corps d'elite; (2) to fill all other appointments, not reserved to it, by the cheaper Indian agency; (3) to appoint Indians to the Covenanted posts, not exceeding one-fifth of the number appointed in England, in addition to those who might succeed at the competition; (4) to retain in the frontier commissions of the Punjab, Sind, Assam and British Burma, military officers in the proportion of one to three civilians.³

1 Pub. Des. to Bombay, No.5, 3 June 1880.

2 Ibid., No.10, 14 Oct. 1880.

3 Hope's Note, 16 Nov 1881, para. 6.

The note also referred to the difficulty of fixing the minimum strength of the Covenanted Service consistent with the requirements of safety and efficiency. In December 1881, the Government of India pointed out that the existing strength of the Service could not be considerably reduced while the business of civil administration had a tendency to increase with the social, industrial and commercial needs of the people. It, however, admitted that an increasing use of Indian agency, apart from its economic aspect, would add to the popularity of the Government.

The merits of Ripon's Government lay not in the initiation of a new policy but in the liberal interpretation of the existing rules. Its important recommendations were: (1) to extend the principle of one-sixth to the composition of the Calcutta High Court; (2) to calculate the number of Statutory appointments on the total number of nominations, including military recruits for the Commissions; (3) to look upon competition as the primary method of recruitment; (4) to fix the age-limit at 18 - 21; and (5) to put Sanskrit and Arabic on a par with Greek and Latin in the schedule of marks. "We would then look", observed the Government of India, "to the open competition to supply as far as possible, the required number of natives for the Superior Civil Service.

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- 1 Resolution (H.D.), No.2024 - 35, 15 Dec. 1881.
 - 2 Ind. Des. from India, No. 29, 27 July 1880, No.37, 14 Sept. 1880.
 - 3 Pub. Des. from India, No.71, 19 Dec. 1881; No.36, 3 June 1882.
The Govt. of India pointed out that the deduction of military appointments from the total number of nominations and then division of the residue between recruitment in India and England would bring the Statutory quota below one-fifth and as such would be a contravention of the Government's policy towards Indian employment.

To make up the difference between the number thus appointed and the full 18 per cent, we must fall back upon the Statute of 1870¹.

Lord Ripon regarded the reduction of the age-limit as a mistake and pressed strongly for an early return to the old arrangement. He was of opinion that the reduction indirectly effected a change which would not have been acceptable to Parliament had it been proposed in the form of an alteration of the law.²

Thus, it is clear that Ripon's Government was fully convinced of the necessity of maintaining a strong British element in the Covenanted Services inasmuch as it was not in favour of simultaneous examinations and of the admission of Indians beyond 18 per cent.³ Its suggestions were intended to make the London competition the primary method of selection by giving Indian candidates more facilities.

The Secretary of State had rejected the first suggestion on the ground that the constitution of the High Courts had been based on a different principle.⁴ As regards the calculation of Statutory appointments, he ruled that the military element of services should not be included in fixing the number of Statutory appointments.⁵ Other

1 Pub. Des. from India, No.51, 12 Sept. 1884.

2 Minutes of 26 Sept. 1883 and 12 Sept. 1884.

3 This figure was determined on the basis of the actual rate of recruitment by both methods, nomination and competition. Out of a total of 18 per cent. 16.2/3 per cent. of the appointments were made by nomination.

4 Jud. Des. to India, No.4, 27 Jan. 1881.

5 Pub. Des. to India, No.23, 8 March 1883.

important suggestions relating to facilities for Indian candidates, which had been so strongly emphasised by Ripon and his Government in 1884, were also not accepted. In a despatch of 8 January 1885 Lord Kimberley, then Secretary of State, observed that a free and open competitive system was hardly compatible with any restriction on the percentage of Indian recruitment. He maintained that the proposal for putting Sanskrit and Arabic on an equal footing with Greek and Latin would make the examination "substantially oriental". Such a change, he stressed, would not only be opposed to the principles of the competitive system as contemplated by its authors, but would also be unfair to a majority of Indians who would be prevented by religious scruples from appearing at the London competition. Kimberley went on to say that competition was not intended to be the primary method of selection, nor was the Statute of 1870 meant to fall into a secondary place. In his opinion, the Act was "a measure of remarkable breadth and liberality" and supplied the "parliamentary remedy" for any defects which might appear in the competitive system. The main point at which he drove was that the very defects of the competitive examinations held in England provided a safeguard against the inconveniences of an unfettered competition. However, he asked the Government of India to reconsider the arrangements made under the Act of 1870.

1 Pub. Des. to India, No.1, 8 Jan. 1885.

The Government of India drew up a draft of revised Statutory rules. However, it was strongly of opinion that without a radical change of the system, no scheme possessing the necessary elements of finality could be devised.¹ Its letter, together with the revised set of rules, sent to the Local Governments for their consideration, clarified the position of Statutory Civilians. Strong emphasis was laid on the selection of persons of proved merit and ability.² According to this interpretation, the Statutory Civilians held appointments to specific offices and were not members of the Covenanted Service; their promotion involved a fresh appointment to a new office and such promotion could not be claimed as of right but depended entirely on individual merit and capacity and was altogether at the discretion of the local Government.³

The Local Governments looked upon the question from different points of view. The Bombay Government doubted whether the Secretary of State had put the right construction on the Statute of 1870. "It seems likely that the intention of the Act was to assimilate completely natives appointed under it with members of the Covenanted Service." In its opinion the admission of Indians to a service which would neither be Covenanted nor Uncovenanted would not be liked by them.⁴ The Lieutenant

1 Pub. Des. from India, No.11, 9 Feb. 1886.

2 Letters to Local Govts. Nos. 25 (Pub.), 18 June 1885.
1074-83

3 Letter to N.W.P., No.1457 (Pub.), 24 Aug. 1885.

4 Letter to Govt. of India, No.4656 (Pol. Dept), 28 July 1885.

Governor of Bengal was of the view that the whole principle of admission
to the Service was wrong.¹ A year earlier he had recommended the
abolition of the system and its replacement by competition in England.²
The Lieutenant-Governor of the N.W.P. said that the exclusions of
Statutory Civilians from the general list would cause great disappoint-
ment to them.³ Aitchison, Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, had already
expressed strong views against the system. In his view the rules of
1879, by failing to afford any guarantee for proved merit and ability,
had offended against the spirit of the law. He emphasised that the
System had opened "the side-door of charity", and that no rules were
likely to make it successful.⁴

The object of the revised Statutory rules was, first, to improve
the efficiency of the Service and, secondly, to clarify its status.
Since 1880 the Statutory Civilians had been treated practically on a
footing of equality with their Covenanted colleagues, although such
factors as their mode of selection, Indian training, and lower salary
were not calculated to give them the same amount of respect in the eyes
of the educated classes as the latter enjoyed. The Lieutenant Governor
of Bengal said that the Statutory Civilians had been ranked and graded
with the regular service and had outwardly the same position and to some

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- 1 Letter to Govt. of India, No.2610.A, 21 July 1885.
 - 2 Letter to Govt. of India, No.1166 A-D, 12 June 1884.
 - 3 Letter to Govt. of India, No.15, 10 July 1885.
 - 4 Minute, 7 July 1884.

extent its privileges, but they had been regarded as inferior in status.¹
 The Lieutenant Governor of the N.W.P. observed that Statutory Civilians
 had been treated in a manner as if they had all been appointed to the
 regular Covenanted Service.² According to Aitchison, the rules of
 1879 practically admitted them to the Civil Service itself with all the
 ordinary claims to advancement in ordinary routine.³ From these
 observations it is quite clear that the Government of India's inter-
 pretation, intended to give effect to the Secretary of State's ruling of
 1883, did not accord with the actual state of things.

Taking notice of the Government of India's remark that the
 existing system called for a radical change, the Secretary of State
 authorised it to appoint a commission to inquire into the whole subject
 of Indian employment. Remarking on the question of Indian employment,
 the Secretary of State said that "many perplexing questions would become
 more easy of solution . . . if a conclusion could be arrived at as to
 the approximate number of European public servants who must necessarily,
 for the efficiency of the administration and the political security of
 the empire, be maintained in each branch of the public service in India."⁴
 But the question of the minimum strength was most difficult of solution

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- 1 Letter to Govt. of India, No.1166 A-D, 12 June 1884.
 - 2 Letter to Govt. of India, No.15, 10 July 1885, para.7.
 - 3 Minute, 7 July 1884, para. 8.
 - 4 Pub. Des. to India, No.65, 15 July 1886.

because the views of the Government and Indian politicians were sharply divided on it.

The Commission, with Sir Charles Aitchison as President, also included six Indian members.¹ Broadly speaking, it was required to "devise a scheme which may reasonably be hoped to possess the necessary elements of finality, and to do full justice to the claims of Natives of India to higher and more extensive employment in the public service." Its inquiry included all branches of the public service except the questions connected with the conditions on which English candidates were admitted to the Civil Service examination.² In the first instance it inquired into the question of Indian employment in the posts, ordinarily reserved for the Covenanted Service, and in the executive and judicial branches of the Uncovenanted Service. At a later stage it held inquiry into questions relating to the special departments, such as, Accounts, Archaeological Survey, Jail, Meteorological Survey, Mint, Opium, Pilot Service, Post Office and Telegraph, Police, Public Works, Registration, Salt and Survey. The second division of its inquiry, held under a resolution of 8 March 1887, also embraced the question of the admission of Indians and Europeans to these services.³

1 It consisted of a trained English lawyer, six members (including the President) of the Covenanted Service, a representative of the non-official European and of the Eurasian community respectively, a member of the Uncovenanted Civil Service, and six Indians selected from various Provinces as "sufficiently representative of the different classes and modes of thought." Report, para. 2.

2 Resolution No. 34 (H.D.), 4 Oct. 1886.
1573 - 98

3 The inquiry was conducted by a Sub-Committee of members of the Commission, aided by professional colleagues. Report, para. 12.

The Aitchison Commission was of opinion that any rule or practice based on race disqualification would not only mean departure from the policy laid down in 1833 & 1858, but would also be invidious and inexpedient, and that the only "just criterion is that of fitness ascertained, where it is possible, by adequate tests, and where this is impossible, by impartial selection."¹ To meet the claims of Indians to higher and more extensive employment, it recommended the reduction of the strength of the Covenanted Civil Service and the transfer of a corresponding number of appointments to the proposed Provincial Civil Service. Accordingly, the Covenanted Service was to be reduced to a corps d'elite, and the English competitive system was to continue as the method of selection. The Provincial Service, recruited under different methods adapted to local circumstances, was intended to secure a fair representation of the various 'races' of India in the administration.² Appointments to the Provincial and subordinate Services were to be made by the Local Governments from men who must have recently resided in the Province for at least three years. The Commission was not in favour of making provincial recruitment wholly exclusive, though no doubt it was alive to a danger likely to result from the indiscriminate employment of men from other Provinces.³ The grades of pay in the Provincial Service and the pay of higher appointments to be held by its members were to be fixed independently of the conditions of the Imperial Service.⁴

1 Report, para. 58.

2 Ibid., para. 73.

3 Ibid., para. 84.

4 Ibid., para. 85.

The Commission recommended the abolition of the Statutory Service and the absorption of its members into the Provincial Service.¹ The main objections to the former, as pointed out by the witnesses, were: the appointment of men to specific posts in the Covenanted Service and not to the Service itself; the introduction of patronage; a lower salary; the emphasis on birth and status in selection; the recruitment of less qualified men in disregard of the claims of more competent men, and the lower status of the Statutory Civilians.² The Commission expressed the view that the experiment had proved a failure but added that the Muslim witnesses, for the most part, favoured, for reasons of the educational backwardness of their community,³ a system of nomination. The Report pointed out that whereas out of 48 Statutory appointments the Muslims had secured as many as 15, they had failed to secure a single appointment through the door of competition.⁴ The Commission's proposals for the transfer of a number of Covenanted posts to the Provincial Service retained the existing arrangement of provincial representation with the difference that the principle of tried merit and ability was substituted for simple nomination.

The Commission strongly supported the continuance of the London competition for appointment to the Covenanted Service, remarking that it "may be said to represent the only permanent English official element

1 Ibid., paras. 72, 87.

2 Ibid., para. 67.

3 Ibid., para. 71

4 Ibid., paras. 61, 45. In 1885 M.B. Tyabji, son of Badruddin Tyabji, third President of the Congress, became successful at the London competition and joined the service in Jan. 1888.

in India, the importance of recruiting that service with reference to the maintenance of English principles and method of government cannot, in the opinion of the Commission, be overrated. Any uncertain note of policy in this respect might produce undesirable results.¹ Its stand against the proposal for simultaneous examinations was unequivocal. The main arguments were: The question was simply one as to the qualifications required and the arrangements under which officers possessing the necessary qualifications could best be secured; the education and training supplied by Indian schools and colleges could not be relied upon for this purpose; a competition in India would result in great inequality of provincial representation; and the viva voce test, a very important part of the system, could not be properly arranged in India.² Most of these objections had been emphasised before. In 1868 Northcote had said that the merits of any particular system should be judged with reference to its "providing or failing to provide suitable public servants." Both he and Argyll had pointed out that competition would result in the disproportionate distribution of appointments. As regards the viva voce test, it may be observed that in view of the presence of a large number of European professors and experienced civilians in India, it would not have been difficult to arrange it on a satisfactory basis. So far as the deficiencies of the Indian educational system were concerned, compulsory foreign training of candidates selected in India - a proposal

1 Report, para. 59.

2 Report, para. 60.

which had a very large number of supporters among the advocates of simultaneous examinations - would have, to a very great extent, redressed the balance.¹ The fact is that the Commission's approach to the question of Indianisation was conditioned by the paramount consideration of maintaining a strong "permanent English official element" in India, for which the competition in London provided the surest guarantee.

However, the Commission recommended that the age-limit should be fixed at 19-23. It was also inclined to raise the marks assigned to Sanskrit and Arabic provided that the standard of examination was materially enhanced. But it was against the inclusion of vernacular languages among the subjects for the competitive examination, being of opinion that their introduction would affect the distinctive English character of the examination. The Commission expressed its opinion against the proposal that it was necessary to fix a limit on Indian recruitment. In its opinion the disadvantage of competing in a foreign country, in a foreign language, in subjects of study peculiarly English and against the flower of English schools and colleges, left no room for fear that the Indians would flood the Services.² It did not accept the Bengal Government's suggestion that a fixed proportion of Indian candidates should be selected in London by an examination separate from that for European candidates.³ The grounds for rejection were: first,

1 A resolution of the Congress in 1885 provided that selected candidates in India should receive training in England, but in 1886, on account of the opposition of some members, especially of Rajendralal Mitra, the point was not pressed, though many members were in favour of compulsory foreign training.

2 Report, paras 62-64.

3 Letter to the Govt. of India, No. 1166 A-D, 12 June 1884.

a differential mode of appointment would be distasteful to the Indian community, secondly, persons appointed on the results of separate standards of examination would be liable to be regarded as not possessing the same qualifications; thirdly, the allotment of appointments would involve "an artificial exclusion of candidates on grounds of race from appointments for which they may be in other respects the best qualified persons,"¹ and thus mean a departure from the principles laid down in 1883 and 1858.

As a substitute for the Statutory Service, the Commission recommended the transfer to the Provincial Service of 108 posts,² which were to be excluded from the Schedule to the Act of 1861. This number was arrived at on the basis of the one-sixth of the appointments made under the Statutory rules. The Commission expressed the view that the scheme would meet the Indian demand on a reasonable basis. With a view to meeting the requirements of the changing condition, it recommended the amendment of the Statute of 1861 in such a way as to give power to the Secretary of State, subject to the control of Parliament, to make from time to time such alterations in the Schedule as might be necessary.

1 Report, para. 64.

2 The more important of these were; Under-Secretaries to the several Govts, one-third of District and Civil and Sessions Judges; one-tenth of Magistrates or Chief Magisterial Officers of Districts; one-sixth of Joint Magistrates in all Provinces; one Member of the Board of Revenue in Madras, Bengal and N.W.P., and one of the Financial Commissioners in the Punjab; one of the Chief Revenue Officers of Divisions in all Provinces except Bombay and Assam; one-tenth of Collectors of Revenue or Chief Revenue Officers of Districts; one-sixth of Assistant Collectors or Assistant Commissioners. Reprt., para. 77.
Six members of the Commission, including two Indians, were not in favour of removing any appointments to the Board of Revenue from the schedule.

The Commission, in the course of its inquiry, was faced with conflicting opinions regarding the proportion in which Indians were to be appointed to judicial and executive posts. The Provincial Governments had been in favour of their extensive employment in the judicial service but not of their exclusive employment in the higher grades of the Judiciary. Many witnesses suggested their complete exclusion from district charges. The Commission was of opinion that Indians should be given opportunity to prove their fitness for holding the executive charges of districts, and accordingly, it recommended the exclusion of a small proportion of district charges from the Schedule. As regards Indian employment in the High Courts, the Commission, impressed by the success of the experiment, recommended that the number of Judges selected from the judicial branch of the Provincial Service or from advocates or pleaders of the High Courts should be increased.¹

Though no attempt was made by the Commission to fix the representation of various communities in the public services, its proposal to have no uniform system of recruitment for all Provinces and the provision of filling the listed posts by members of the Provincial Service gave the Local Governments sufficient discretionary power to distribute appointments among the important communities. At the time of the Commission's inquiry the proportion of appointments held by Hindus and Muslims, though not uniform in all the Provinces, corresponded more or

¹ Report., paras. 77, 83.

less closely with the percentage of their total population.¹ In Bengal, Assam and Bombay, the percentage of Hindus was largely in excess of their population, and in the N.W.P. and Oudh, the Hyderabad Assigned Districts and the Central Provinces the proportion of Muslims largely exceeded their population.² The main cause of the disparity was the unequal diffusion of education among various communities. It may be noted that even among the Hindus one or two communities had secured employment far in excess of their population.³

Some of the witnesses suggested certain methods for the representation of minorities, especially of the Muslims. Theodore Beck⁴ expressed the view that at the open competition "the classes who would fare worst are Mahomedans and the upper classes in general, such as the Rajput aristocracy." He advocated the appointment of persons belonging to old families - the "natural leaders" of the people. Beck's fear was that if the "system of numerical representation were adopted, there would be five Hindus to every one Mahomedan in the North-Western Provinces, the result would be the enormous political preponderance of the Hindus, and the practical extinction of Mahomedan influence in civil

1 Of 2,588 persons employed, 1,866 or 72.1 per cent. were Hindus and 514 or 19.8 per cent. were Muslims. Their proportion to the total population was approximately 75 per cent and 20 per cent respectively. Report, para. 53.

2 According to the Report the percentage of Muslims employed in the Executive and judicial branches was as follows: Madras 4 (6.2); Bombay and Sind 5.4 (18.3); Bengal 8.5 (31.2); N.W.P. and Oudh 45.1 (13.4); Punjab 39.3 (51.3); Central Provinces 18.1 (2.4); Hyderabad Assigned Districts 16.6 (7); and Assam 9 (26.9). Report, para. 53. The figures in brackets represent the percentage of Muslim population.

3 Report, para. 54.

4 He was the Principal of Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, and was strongly pro-Muslim.

affairs." ¹ Another witness, Syed Mahmud, a District Judge (N.W.P.), was of opinion that competition would be detrimental to the interests of such important communities as Rajputs, Muslims and Sikhs and would alienate their sympathies from British rule. ² Ghulam Mahomed, the founder of the Anjumani Islam Society, Bombay, favoured the retention of the Statutory system and the reservation of appointments for principal religious sections in each Province. ³ In the opinion of Wordsworth, Principal of Elphinstone College, Bombay, who was an advocate of simultaneous examinations, the Statutory system was necessary "for correcting any such irregularities as may exist in regard to caste or race differences." ⁴ ⁵ M.G. Ranade suggested that the claims of the backward classes should be satisfied by resorting to nomination for such reserved posts as were not filled by competition. ⁶ Nawab Munir Jang, Political and Foreign Secretary to the Nizam's Government, was strongly against the proposal for extending facilities for the London competition and remarked that each deterrent had worked for good. ⁷ H.W. Bliss, Additional Member, Board of Revenue (Madras), suggested that the only remedy against the influx of "an undue number of a single class of natives" was to limit the number of vacancies for candidates of particular religions

1 Progs. of the Public Service Commission (P.S.C.), ii, Sec.ii, 33-39.

2 Ibid., 132.

3 Ibid, IV, Sec. II, 34-35.

4 Progs. of P.S.C., IV, 105.

5 An eminent social reformer, afterwards a judge of the High Court.

6 Progs. of P.S.C., IV, 143.

7 Ibid., V, Sec. II., 236-37.

and castes.¹ Syed Amir Ali, a representative of the Mahomedan Central Association and a former member of the Central Legislature, said that due to the lack of uniform advance in education the system of simultaneous examinations would be inexpedient, and its introduction would preclude² the Muslims absolutely from having a chance of entering the Civil Service. The Muhammadan Literary Society of Calcutta asked for a proportionate share of appointments in both Covenanted and Uncovenanted Services and advocated the retention of the Statutory system.³ The Punjab Government was of opinion that one competitive examination would bring the administration⁴ of that Province largely under 'foreigners'.

The above views were no doubt peculiar to some individuals and a few associations, but none the less they indicate the lines along which the question of the representation of minorities was being approached in certain quarters. The Commission made no proposal for the distribution of appointments on a communal basis, nor could its recommendations regarding more facilities for competition in London be expected to improve the prospects of the educationally backward classes. In fact the Government of Madras had expressed its opinion against the proposal to fix the proportion of Hindus and Muslims in the Covenanted ranks on a population⁵ basis. Thus in the absence of any definite recommendations on this question, the proportion of Muslims and other communities depended on the system of recruitment a Local Government decided to adopt. In 1888,

1 Ibid, VI, Sec. II, 284.

2 Ibid, 196.

3 Progs. of P.S.C., VI, Sec. III, sub-sec. A.

4 Ibid, i, Q.158.

5 Ibid., V, Sec.A, Q.234.

in reply to a memorial from the Central Muhammedan Association, the Secretary of State observed that the fact that in certain Provinces the Muslims had acquired a considerable share of public offices showed that the Government was willing to avail itself of their services to whatever extent they were qualified. Their less employment in certain Provinces, he remarked, was due to the appointment of those who had equipped themselves with special knowledge which could be acquired only by making use of the educational advantages provided for all.¹

The declarations of Dufferin, Lansdowne, and Elgin were also not very encouraging. On 10 April 1888 replying to a farewell address from the Muslim associations, Dufferin said at Lucknow that however much the Government might sympathise with the Muslims it "was precluded by those strict principles of impartiality which, I trust, no Indian administration will even be tempted for a moment to violate or neglect, from extending to you advantages which could only be enjoyed at the expense of the interests of Her Majesty's other Indian subjects."²

On 22 December 1888, in reply to an address from the Central National Mahomedan Association, Lansdowne said that the Government would not select a Muslim candidate for a public post solely on account of his religious denomination.³ On 26 November 1897 Elgin said at Mohamedan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, that the Muslims must qualify themselves properly if they wanted to have a larger share of appointments.⁴ Even after making full allowance for the formal character of such speeches,

1 Pub. (Ed.) Des. to India, No.120, 22 Nov. 1888.

2 Dufferin, Speeches, 213.

3 Lansdowne, Speeches, 24.

4 Elgin, Speeches, 369.

we may remark the Government had not yet adopted a policy of conciliating the Muslims by giving them privileges at the expense of the Hindus.

One gathers from the evidence of the witnesses that many of those who advocated the extensive employment of Indians by extending to them all facilities including simultaneous examinations felt the necessity of having a large proportion of European element in the Covenanted Service. Wordsworth was in favour of a scheme of allotting a fixed proportion of appointments to the extent of one-third or one half, to be competed for in India with two years' compulsory training in England for successful candidates.¹ Ranade suggested that places between one-third and one-fourth of annual appointments should be reserved for Indians.² Muthuswami Aiyer, a Judge of the Madras High Court, was in favour of raising the proportion of Indian appointments to Covenanted posts from one-sixth to one-third.³ R.C. Dutt said that "we still require a majority of Englishmen in the Service." He was content with a proportion of "somewhat less than a third".⁴ Narendra Nath Sen, Editor of the Indian Mirror, while in favour of an identical competition, proposed that the proportion of recruitment in India should be fixed at one-third.⁵

1 Progs. of P.S.C., IV, Sec.II, 108.

2 Ibid., 143.

3 Ibid., V, Sec.II, 364.

4 Ibid., VI, Sec.II. 271.

5 Ibid., 34.

The views of certain Provincial Governments, officials and papers like the Pioneer on the question of the Indianisation of the higher services, deserve some attention. Mackenzie, Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, was of opinion that in view of the fact that the entire fabric of British administration rested on Divisional and District Executive officers, they must necessarily be Englishmen.¹ Fraser, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, said that the competitive examination was a means of obtaining Englishmen and not Indians.² A.W. Croft, Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, suggested that the executive head of a district should, without exception, be an Englishman.³ In the opinion of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, a scheme of substituting Indians for Europeans, to any considerable extent, in the charges of districts and other important executive posts was "absolutely subversive not only of efficiency, but of the political stability of the British Empire in India."⁴ C.J. Lyall, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, objected to competition in India on the ground that the proposal ignored the raison d'etre of the Covenanted Service. He emphasised that at most, under the existing condition of British administration, consist of Englishmen, or of Indians who had adopted English manners of thought and received a training in England.⁵ W.E. Ward, Chief Commissioner of Assam, observed that an open competition would give a decided advantage to Bengalis as compared with candidates from the N.W.P. of Assam.⁶

1 Frogs. of P.S.C., iii, Sec.I, Sub-sec. B.

2 Ibid., Sec.III, Sub-sec. B.

3 Ibid., VI, Sec.II, 372.

4 Ibid., Sec.III, Sub-sec. A.

5 Ibid., Sec.III, Sub-sec. B.

6 Frogs. of P.S.C., VI, Sec.I, 56.

In view of the presence of European tea-planters in the Province, he emphasised the necessity of having a portion of European officers among the Extra-Assistant Commissioner class.¹ The Government of the N.W.P. and Oudh was against a uniform competitive system and suggested a local examination in the interests of the residents of the Province.²

Commenting on the evidence of some witnesses of the N.W.P., the Pioneer remarked: "If open competition is to be the sole gate of entrance to high office in India, it is perfectly clear that the natives of Northern India must make up their minds to give place to the Bengali and Madrasi for an indefinitely long term of years. If, however, the natives of Northern India want to have a share in the sweets of high office, they must . . . content themselves with the less perfect way of provincial appointments."³

The views of some of those European witnesses who were in favour of an identical Indian competition may be briefly pointed out. Wordsworth suggested that competition in India should be held for a fixed proportion of appointments. H.E. Stokes, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, expressed his personal opinion in favour of an Indian competition without reservation of posts.⁴ H.J. Reynolds, Member of the Board of Revenue, Bengal, was in favour of an identical examination in India. He also suggested that the age-limit should be fixed at 20, and that Sanskrit should be placed on the same footing as Greek and Latin. He did not attach much importance to the viva voce test.⁵ Reynolds, however,

1 Ibid., 63.

2 Ibid., ii, Sec.I, Sub-sec. B.

3 The Pioneer, 10 Jan. 1887.

4 Progs. of P.S.C., V, Sec.II, 135.

5 Ibid., vi, Sec.II, Qs.75, 84 & 85.

recognised the difficulty of appointing Indians in charge of districts which contained a large number of European settlers.

Broadly speaking, among Indians the advanced section was in favour of an identical competition, while the educationally backward classes were either indifferent or opposed to it; among Europeans, the opinion was largely against it.

The Report of the Aitchison Commission was sent to the Local Governments for their observations. The Madras Government expressed its opinion against the selection of Provincial servants by competition.¹ The Bombay Government preferred the plan of "responsible nomination" to a "mechanical" competition, being of opinion that the adoption of some principle of representation alone, and not open competition, could secure the appointment of different communities.² The Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces observed that competition would result in flooding³ the service with Maratha Brahmans to the exclusion of every other class. Stewart Bayley, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, said: "For my part I should be content to recruit two-thirds of the vacancies by competition, and leave one-third to be filled by promotion from the subordinate service or nomination."⁴ Auckland Colvin, Lieutenant -Governor of the N.W.P. was in favour of "pure and simple" nomination for the recruitment of the Provincial Service. On the controversy over the age-limit, he said that the question should be considered wholly with reference to English

1 Letter to Govt. of India, 5 June 1888.

2 Letter to Govt. of India, 7 June 1888.

3 Minute, 31 March 1888.

4 Minute, 4 May 1888.

candidates, and how it affected Indian candidates should be entirely subordinate to that consideration. In his opinion, the effect of appointment to the Covenanted Service through two doors, nomination and competition, would be prejudicial to the existence of that strong English element which was the sine qua non of its efficiency.¹ James Lyall, Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, was against any system of competition, limited or unlimited. "Unless you exclude certain classes, such as khatris, Kashmiri pandits, and Banias, which you cannot practically do, they almost invariably win." Competition, he emphasised, would result in the recruitment of the great bulk of the service "not from amongst the classes who would naturally take the lead, but from amongst the men who obtain degrees in the Universities." Lyall favoured, for political reasons, the recruitment of men of European descent who had made homes² in the Punjab.

It is clear from the above that none of the Local Governments except Bengal was in favour of the recruitment of Provincial Service by competition. The system of nomination was supported on grounds of efficiency, fairness to the less advanced sections, and political advantage. The Punjab Government was of opinion that it would have the additional merit of making the service more efficient. The Bombay Government emphasised the political advantage of patronage. It may be remarked that the uneven spread of education in the Provinces called for a scheme of competition combined with nomination, or of selection, partly

1 Minute, 4 May 1888.

2 Punjab to Govt. of India, 25 June, 1888.

by competition and partly by nomination. The Government of India desired that rules should be framed in such a manner as to ensure indispensable educational attainments and the due representation of the different classes in the public service.

The Government of India accepted the recommendations of the Commission with a few amendments of a minor character. It observed that the Commission's proposal would ultimately result in the transfer of about one-sixth of the appointments, held by Covenanted and Statutory Civilians, to members of the Provincial Service though their promotion to a Covenanted post was to depend entirely on special proved fitness. The Government of India did not accept the recommendation regarding the exclusion from the Schedule of one member of the Board of Revenue in Madras, Bengal, and the N.W.P. and Oudh, and one Financial Commissioner in the Punjab. While it was favourable to the exclusion from the Schedule of one of the chief Revenue officers of divisions, it thought it undesirable to amalgamate the excluded appointments with the Provincial Service. As regards recruitment from the Indian States, the Government of India was of opinion that their inhabitants should have the opportunity of entering the public service.¹

The Secretary of State gave his "entire assent" to the main principles of the scheme. However, he did not accept certain recommendations. The Commission had recommended the amendment of the Schedule with a view to facilitating the transfer of a number of appointments to the Provincial Service. Lord Cross rejected it on the ground

1 Pub. Des. from India, No.58, 9 Oct. 1888.

that it would create vested rights of the Provincial Service in the higher appointments and this would be against the existing practice of promoting a person to a Covenanted post on grounds of fitness. He objected to the proposal also on the ground that for political reasons special reservations of a particular class of executive offices, such as the chief executive officer of a district, the commissioner of a division and the administrative offices of higher rank might be justified, while there were many other classes of offices, such as Commissioner of Salt, Opium and Customs for which no restrictions were required. The principle on which Cross justified the reservation of certain categories of offices was in accordance with Argyll's dictum that Indians should be appointed only to such posts as, "in the actual condition of things, the Government of India may determine to be really suited to them." To Cross the Commission's proposal for exclusion appeared, in the words of the Government of India, "both too wide and too narrow."

Cross also rejected the proposal for repealing Section 6 of the Act of 1870. The Commission had been of opinion that the above Section did not admit Indians to membership of an organised service and that its retention was inconsistent with the principle of the equality of all classes of Her Majesty's natural-born subjects in matters of recruitment. Cross rejected it, first, because the repeal would be

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- 1 Pub. Des. to India, No.104, 12 Sept. 1889.
 - 2 Ed. Des. to India, No.3, 8 April 1869, para. 11.
 - 3 Draft Resolution, Encl. to Pub. Des. No.9, 10 Feb. 1892.
 - 4 Report, para. 72.

represented as the withdrawal of an important statutory right from Indians; secondly, because Parliament was not likely to accept a proposal which might appear to it to reduce rather than increase the facilities for their admission to the higher offices. He maintained that the proposals could be substantially carried out without parliamentary legislation.

Lord Cross approved of the proposal which empowered the Government of India to make, in very special cases and under prescribed conditions, direct appointments, whether of Indians or Europeans, to offices in the higher grades of the Provincial Service. He preferred the expression 'The Civil Service of India' to the Commission's term 'The Imperial Service'.¹ The age-limit was raised to 21-23 in disregard of the wishes of the majority of the members of the India Council. The dissentients advanced the stock arguments against higher age-limit, such as, the disadvantages of sending civilians to India at an advanced age, the unwillingness of English parents to wait for a long time for the choice of their son's profession, the danger of encouraging resort to crammers, and the increase in the number of Indian candidates. The last was indeed by far the most important ground for objection. Lieutenant-General Lumsden, a member of the Council, said that he doubted "whether the time has yet come when the Government can safely enter on a speculative political measure of so far-reaching a character as substitution in the highest posts of administration of natives for British elements."²

1 Pub. Des. to India, No.104, 12 Sept. 1889.

2 For Minutes of dissent, see Parl. Papers, LIV (1890)).

The Commission's recommendations, as accepted by the Secretary of State, were intended to devise a reasonable scheme of Indian employment. As regards the Indian Civil Service, the revision of the age-limit removed a great grievance and improved the chances of Indian candidates at the London competition. But the transfer of 108 posts to be filled gradually over a long period marked no improvement on the existing system of appointing on an average six Statutory Civilians a year. With one half of the Covenanted posts still occupied by Statutory Civilians,² promotion from the Provincial Service to the transferred posts could not but be a very slow process. Moreover, the Secretary of State's refusal to remove 108 posts from the Schedule by Parliamentary legislation did not confer on the members of the Provincial Service any statutory right to promotion to a covenanted post.

Under the new scheme the Provincial and Subordinate Services were to be recruited, as far as possible, on a local basis. The principle was not new, but from the Commission's proposals it emerged far more effective. The new scheme also enhanced the dignity and status of the Provincial Service by holding out to its members the prospects of high employment.³ The change was to be effected by discontinuing appointments under the Statutory rules, which had restricted the privileges of higher appointments to a few selected individuals. But it must be remembered that the members of the Provincial Service, even after promotion, were not accepted as full members of the higher service, that

1 Actually the number of listed posts was 93.

2 The Statutory Civilians had occupied 52 posts.

3 Letter to Bengal, No. 1838 (Pub.), 22 Aug. 1892, para. 14.

is, they remained, as before, members of a lower service. On the working of this arrangement the Royal Commission remarked that officers promoted from the provincial branches were appointed to fill only certain specific posts in the Civil Service, which did not include any of the higher appointments, and remained confined to those charges throughout their careers.¹ Suffice it to say that the scheme never became popular with the educated classes, because what they wanted was not only that Indians should occupy Covenanted posts, but should occupy them as full members of the Service. Sir Stewart Bayley rightly observed that "they wish to hold not merely appointments usually reserved to Covenanted Civilians, but to hold them as Covenanted Civilians."²

Under the new arrangement, the status of the senior members of the Provincial Service appointed to Covenanted posts was not higher than that of Statutory Civilians. It is mainly due to this that the latter, with a very few exceptions, declined to join the Provincial Service. In this respect, the Commission's recommendation for the absorption of the 'Statutories' into the Provincial Service did not succeed. As has been said above,³ the Statutory Civilians were originally intended to occupy an almost equal status with the Covenanted officers. They were entitled, at least in principle, to any post in the Covenanted Service. Although their status was adversely affected by the Secretary of State's ruling of

1 Report of the Royal Commission on the Public Services in India, (1917), i, para. 27.

2 Progs. P.S.C., vi, Sec.I, 30-31.

3 See above, 28.

1883 and subsequent developments, it was still superior to that of the members of the Provincial Service. Despite the ruling that they were not members of an organised service, their promotion, unless they were unfit, had depended on seniority. The Government of India recognised that in practice it had not been unusual to promote a Statutory Civilian side by side with his Covenanted contemporaries.¹ The Madras Government said that "rightly or wrongly Statutory Civilians stand appointed for employment in the Service, and that their status as members of that service, entitled to promotion according to seniority and fitness like other members of it, has hitherto always been acknowledged in this Presidency."² It is obvious that Statutory Civilians, who were appointed at 25 or below and were eligible for promotion in the ordinary course like Covenanted Civilians, could well be expected to occupy some of the highest posts open to the members of the Covenanted Service, whereas a senior member of the Provincial Service, on being promoted to a listed post, after a long term of apprenticeship in an inferior service, whose membership he still retained, could not be expected to step up beyond a few lowest rungs in the ladder of the Civil Service.

It is thus clear that the object of the change was neither to throw open to Indians a larger number of appointments to Covenanted posts nor to improve the status of the holders of those offices but mainly to adopt more systematically the method of recruitment as originally provided in the Act of 1870. The Government of India pointed

1 Pub. Des. from India, No.58, 9 Oct. 1888, para. 15.

2 Madras to Govt. of India, No.401 (Pub.), 4 June 1890.

out that Section 6 was retained as the basis of the Provincial Service Rules which took the place of the Statutory Rules of 1879, and that only such members of the Provincial Service as were 'natives' of India and were men of tried ability were eligible for the posts listed as open to that service.¹ The unpopular practice of appointing them to specific posts continued and, therefore, remained exposed to criticism much for the same reasons as had made the Statutory Service unpopular. Thus the Commission failed to suggest any method by which Indians could be appointed to superior posts on equal terms with the Covenanted Civilians. According to the Royal Commission, the scheme failed because it had been supposed that the only way into the Indian Civil Service must be through a single and identical examination, whether held in one centre or two, and failing that the best that could be offered was "a side entrance into specific posts and appointments as distinguished from the Service itself."²

The Secretary of State approved the Government of India's draft resolution embodying a statement of its decision and orders on the recommendations of the Commission. Altogether 93 posts were assigned to the Provincial Service.³ Broadly speaking, they included a certain

1 Letter to Bengal, No.1838. (Pub.), 22 Aug. 1892.

2 Annexure X to Report (1917), para. 17.

3 The number of appointments allotted to various Provinces was: Madras - 15; Bombay - 18; Bengal - 20; N.W.P. - 21; Punjab - 12. The designations of officers occupying identical places were not uniform. The Central Provinces' quota was fixed at 7, though it was not included in the resolution. Thus the total number of posts allotted to all Provinces was 93. Resolution No. 9 (Pub), 21 April. 1892. 1342 - 52

number of posts of heads of Districts, District Judges, Joint and Assistant Magistrates, Secretary to the Board of Revenue. Assam, for reasons of educational backwardness, was excluded from the list. The Resolution contained a number of important provisions. First, it was provided that appointments to Scheduled posts would depend upon absolute fitness to be ascertained by the Local Governments. Secondly, the maximum extent of appointments amounted to one-sixth of those in the cadre of the Indian Civil Service, and in the case of the Commissions, to one-sixth of the total obtained after deducting the portion reserved for military officers. Thirdly, such appointments were subject to the preferential right of officers who had entered the service before the reduction of recruitment in 1880, that is, of Indian Civil Servants who had passed the competition in or before 1879, and of officers of the Commissions appointed in or before 1881. Fourthly, they were further subject to the right of the remaining officers of the Indian Civil Service or the Commission recruited after 1879-81, who were entitled to have their claims considered to the extent of five-sixths of the posts for which recruitment was or might have been made in any one year. Fifthly, in the absence of fit men from the Provincial Service, members of the Indian Civil Service were to be appointed. Lastly, the posts occupied by Statutory Civilians, who decided to remain in their service, were to be deducted from the number of posts open to the Provincial

1 Draft Resolution, Encl. to Pub. Des. from India, No.9, 10 Feb. 1892.

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 Service. In case a Statutory Civilian elected to join the Provincial Service he was to be given preference in matters of promotion to the listed post.

Under the rules of November 1892, which superseded those of 22 August 1879, the Local Governments were authorised to appoint any member of the Provincial Service subordinate to them to any of the listed offices; but for appointments, for a period of more than three months, to the office of District and Sessions Judge, or Chief Administrative Officer of a district, or any administrative officer of high rank, the sanction of the Government of India was made necessary.² It is to be noted that the rules of 1879 had prescribed this condition for all categories of posts. With regard to the appointment of Europeans to the Provincial Service, the sanctioning authority of the Government of India was extended to the Presidencies also.³ In the same despatch the Secretary of State observed that their appointment involved the question of their eligibility for promotion to the listed posts. The Government of India was of opinion that since Section 6 of the Statute of 1870 and the rules framed thereunder authorised the appointment of Indians only, the promotion of Europeans could only be made according to Sections 3 and 4 of the Act of 1861.⁴

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- 1 Letters to Local Govts, Nos. 1479-83 (Pub), 31 July 1890.
- 2 Notification, H.D. (Pub), No.2159, 2 Nov. 1892.
- 3 Pub. Des. to India, No.85, 31 Aug. 1892.
- 4 Govt. of India to Madras, No.2194 (Pub), 10 Nov. 1892.

In a representation of 1892 the Indian Association pointed out that the rules of 1879 were more liberal than the new arrangements, because at the rate of six appointments a year a larger number of posts would have been made available in the course of some years. It was also emphasised that the number of listed posts, as provided under the scheme of 1892 was less than what the Aitchison Commission had recommended and that the Resolution had reduced the number of Judgships from one-third to one-fifth and excluded the posts of Members of Board of Revenue¹ and Divisional Commissioner.

In reply to the above representation, the Government of India observed that the strength of the Indian Civil Service - which also included a margin for men under training and a reserve to fill leave² vacancies - was necessarily larger than the number of actual posts, and therefore the proportion of one-sixth represented a figure higher than the number of posts to be filled, whereas in the case of listed posts no reserve was required. In other words, the new arrangements threw open a certain proportion of the actual appointments and not, as in the case of the Statutory Civil Service, a certain proportion of the annual recruitment. Secondly, in its opinion, the rules of 1879 fixed one-sixth as the maximum, that is, the Government was under no Statutory obligation to appoint any minimum number of Indians in one year. Thirdly, it maintained that the maximum proportion of one-sixth was fixed at a time when, owing to the low age-limit, the conditions of competition

1 For its representation and accompanying note, see Pub. Progs., Aug. 1892.
 2 According to the Govt. of India, the number of men in excess bore a proportion of 37.97 per cent. to that of the actual posts to be filled up.

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 were unfavourable to Indians. As to the percentage of judicial appointments, it remarked that the provision of 22 per cent. of the total was sufficient for the present. The Government of India emphasised that an essential feature of its scheme consisted in its being open to alteration and expansion whereas the Commission's proposals were intended to possess finality. In 1893 it reiterated that the list was drawn up with reference only to "proximate reasonable requirements."²

The Government of India was unable to disprove that the Commission had recommended a larger number of posts than the Resolution provided. In seeking to justify a settled arrangement, which it had no intention of disturbing, it put forward an argument which, by no means original, was certainly mischievous. The point that the proportion of one-sixth had been fixed with reference to Salisbury's decision of 1876 logically implied that the number of listed posts should be reduced if a larger number of Indians, owing to increased facilities, succeeded at the London competition. It is to be remembered that the Commission had recommended the transfer of 108 posts independently of its proposal for raising the age-limit, and even Lord Cross, who had fixed it at 21-23 and had been opposed to the transfer of certain categories of posts - though on grounds different from the Government of India's - was not³ unwillingly to throw open some appointments in other departments.

1 Govt. of India to Bengal, No.1838 (Pub), 22 Aug. 1892.

2 Letters to Local Govts, Nos. ~~2732~~ (Pub), 5 Aug.1893, para 10.
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3 See above, 54.

A serious defect of the above scheme was that the number of listed posts was fixed without any reference to the increase in the number of appointments in England.¹ Since 1887 the rate of recruitment there had been on the increase. Sometimes the Secretaries of State expressed a little concern over it, but did nothing to arrest it. In 1891, for instance, while sanctioning the increase of high offices, Lord Cross remarked that it was not expedient to increase the strength of the Civil Service beyond what was ~~not~~² absolutely necessary. In 1898 Lord Hamilton said that the increase in the number of persons recruited in England might not leave sufficient room for employment of the members of the Provincial Service.³ Nevertheless, the increase went on. If the original proportion of one-sixth had been maintained, there would have been a corresponding proportionate increase in recruitment in India.

It is interesting to note that some confusion still prevailed regarding the exact position of Statutory Civilians who, with a few exceptions, did not opt for the Provincial Service. In 1893, for instance, the Government of the N.W.P. maintained that Statutory Civilians had no claim as of right to receive substantive appointments

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- 1 The average annual rate of recruitment for some years before 1887, when a considerable increase took place, was 37.81. In 1893 the proposal was to fix it at 54, inclusive of an extra-recruitment of 12 to meet deficiencies. During 1894-97 the rate registered a further increase. In 1898 the Govt. of India proposed a normal rate of 49 and an extra-recruitment of 16, or 65 in all. In 1893 the sanctioned strength of Civilians and Military officers was 1,112, and in 1898 the Govt. proposed an increase of 115. Pub. Despatches from India, No.10 of 10 Feb. 1898 and No.86 of 10 Nov. 1898.
 - 2 Pub. Des. to India, No.19, 29 Jan. 1891.
 - 3 Pub. Des. to India, No.104, 14 July 1898.

to such superior offices as Commissioner of Excise and Legal Remembrancer in case they were added to the listed posts, while a member of the Provincial Service would have his claims to them.¹

The Government of India ruled that they were entitled to any listed posts,² but in the same year it itself narrowly interpreted the rules relating to the eligibility of Statutory Civilians for superior posts. In a despatch, purporting to be a reply to Sir Wedderburn's letter on this question, it expressed the view that their promotion was confined to the limits of listed posts.³ But the Secretary of State maintained that they were eligible for promotion to all posts, whether listed or not.⁴

Another important question arose from the orders of 14 February 1890 which provided that the claims of Statutory Civilians to promotion were to be considered with reference to the date of their confirmation⁵ and not of first appointment. This change was introduced as a favour to Covenanted Civilians whose actual service commenced from the date of their first covenants whereas Statutory Civilians started their service immediately after their appointment. The views of the Local Governments were divided on this decision. Bengal and the N.W.P. were in favour of it, and Bombay and the Punjab were against it. The Punjab Government's view was that the change was unjust.⁶ The Bombay Government remarked

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- 1 Govt. of N.W.P. to Sri Lal, 8 July 1893, Pub.Progs., No.82, Sept.1893.
 - 2 Letter to N.W.P., No.1136, 14 Aug. 1893, Pub.Progs., No.85, Sept. 1893.
 - 3 Pub. Des. from India, No.64, 1 Nov. 1893.
 - 4 Pub. Des. to India, No.31, 5 April 1894.
 - 5 Letters to Provincial Govts, 14 Feb. 1890.
 - 6 Letter to Govt. of India, 22 March, 1893, Pub.Progs., No.159, June 1893.

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that it would amount to a breach of faith. Because of this difference of opinion it was finally decided to enforce the orders in all Provinces except Bombay and the Punjab.

It is interesting to note that the Statutory Civilians, with the exception of a few, remained in their own service. The reasons were mainly two. First, in matters of promotion they were to be given priority. Secondly, they felt, and to some extent rightly, that they enjoyed a higher social status than the members of the Provincial Service.

The history of the Statutory Service is an instance of how a foreign Government is apt to bungle when it attempts to seek the participation of the ruled within the framework of an autocratic system. The Statutory Service was an experiment in recruitment by nomination. In all 69 appointments were made. At the beginning they were mainly confined to young men of good family and later to members of the Provincial Service. Both systems of recruitment were subjected to criticism; the first because it failed to guarantee a modicum of fitness; and the second because it denied the promoted officers a status equal to that of the members of the Indian Civil Service. As has been said above, the arrangements of 1892 were, neither in quantity nor in quality, in conformity with the political and educational progress of India. Till the end of the century, or to be more accurate, till the appointment of the Islington Commission in 1912,² the Government was satisfied with the principle of the one-sixth

1 Letter to Govt. of India, 31 July 1893, Pub.Progs., No.103, Nov. 1893.
 2 The Report was published in 1917.

proportion laid down as early as 1879. What is more regrettable is that the Government was not disposed to carry out even that modest scheme as quickly as possible. Up to 1909 only 51 posts had been listed and even until the appointment of the Lee Commission the process of transfer was not complete inasmuch as only 88 posts had been filled by members of the Provincial Service. In the opinion of Sir Reginald Craddock, a member of the Commission, the reasons for the slowness were, first, that the Local Governments hesitated to entrust important charges to the members of the Provincial Service; and, secondly, that the recruitment to the Indian Civil Service was based not upon five-sixths of the superior posts, but upon the total superior posts at any moment in existence less only those that had actually been transferred; and in consequence, for the posts still awaiting transfer, fresh vested interests came into existence, and thus the process of transfer was retarded.¹ Meanwhile, the rate of Indian recruitment in the Civil Service by competition was far from satisfactory. During 1892-1912, under the revised age-limit, it rose to 5.6 per cent. of the vacancies² as compared with the 2.5 per cent. of 1878-91. In general, the percentage of Indian appointments to posts in the higher salary groups³ was very small.

1 Minute, Report of the Royal Commission (1924).

2 Annexure X to Report of the Royal Commission (1917), para. 7.

3 In 1887 the percentage of Indians and Burmans in posts carrying a salary of Rs.200 a month and above was 34; in posts of Rs.500 and above 12; and in those of Rs.800 and above 4; in 1913 their percentage in the respective groups was 42, 19, and 10. Report of the Royal Commission (1917), i, para. 34.

In 1893 the question of the Indianisation of the Civil Service came into sudden prominence when on 2 June H.W. Paul's resolution on simultaneous examinations was carried by 84 votes to 78. In opposing it George Russell, Under-Secretary of State for India, used all those arguments which the opponents of this proposal had advanced earlier. He stressed that India was composed of many races, of which the intellectually superior were deficient in ruling qualities and that the turbulent and fierce tribes would strongly resent the administrative control of the former. The Government of India, he emphasised, was a sacred and, in some respects, a "perilous charge", and in "administering it we must be equally on our guard against allowing ourselves to be carried away by theories, however specious, by appeals to sentiment, however just; and by the mistaken application of principles in themselves sound."¹ In the Lords, Cross expressed the opinion that the Government should have at once taken steps to rescind the resolution.² Salisbury remarked that he could not imagine any project more fatal to the Indian Empire than that of identical examinations.³

Kimberley, then Secretary of State for India, was decided on this question. He regretted that the Liberal Party had "blindly supported so dangerous a resolution." He expressed the view that its acceptance would be a "fatal mistake", and declared; "I need hardly say that I am

1 Indian Parl. Debates, 2 June 1893, 362-65.
 2 Ibid., 13 June 1893, 385.
 3 Ibid., 389.

not prepared to give effect to it." ¹ With a view to "weakening the promise to act upon the resolution", Kimberley omitted the word "best" ² from the reply which Gladstone made in Parliament. Though even the amended reply conveyed the impression that the Government of India was desired to consider how and with what limitations the resolution could be carried into effect, ³ nothing of the kind was intended. Kimberley was dead against simultaneous examinations and so was the Government of India. The fate of the resolution was, therefore, a foregone conclusion.

Kimberley sent the resolution for the Government of India's consideration with the remark that it was indispensable that the Civil Service should always contain an adequate number of Europeans. He, ⁴ however, allowed it unfettered discretion to make any observations. The majority of the members of his Council were opposed to the resolution in general and to the terms of the instructions to the Government of India in particular. ⁵ Strachey remarked: "A measure has been suddenly

1 Kimberley to Gladstone, 2,3,4 June 1893, Add.MSS. (Brit.Mus.), 44229, 85, 87-89.

2 Kimberley to Gladstone, 5 June 1893.

3 W.E.Gladstone "...There should be a prompt and careful examination of the subject by that Government (India), who are instructed to say in what mode in their opinion, and under what conditions and limitations, the Resolution could be carried into effect."

A.J. Balfour: "...whether the Government in the course of this despatch, mean to imply that, in some shape or other, the Government of India are obliged to carry out this Resolution?" Indian Parl. Debates, 8 June 1893, 380.

4 Pub.Des. to India, No.61, 22 June 1893.

5 Strachey, Stewart, Arbuthnot, Lumsden, Peile, and Lyall recorded minutes of dissent. Their main objection was to the words "in what mode and under what conditions and limitations the Resolution could be carried into effect." C.7075 (1893).

taken which promises to revolutionise in its most essential condition the policy under which India has hitherto been governed." In his opinion, the number of Englishmen had been reduced so greatly that there were hardly enough of them to fill the posts which they must necessarily hold. He felt that the Government of India could construe the despatch as an instruction to give practical effect to the Commons' resolution. Peile, another member of the Council, was of opinion that it would be a sheer waste of Indian revenues to recruit Indians of inferior quality on the terms on which Englishmen were recruited.

If Kimberley had meant business, he should have asked the Government of India to make arrangements for holding simultaneous examinations. On the contrary, he gave it full discretion to sabotage the plan. In view of the excessive interference by the Secretaries of State in Indian affairs, it looks hypocritical that Kimberley should have left such an important question to the discretion of the Government of India. The fact is that to avoid a rift in his party, which had a small majority in Parliament, he did not think it advisable to reject the proposal himself, but asked the Government of India to do the job for him.

The Government of India consulted the Local Governments on the expediency and practicability of the adoption of the resolution.¹ Dennis Fitzpatrick, Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, was of opinion that the differences between Hindus and Muslims made the appointment of

1 Letters to Local Govts, Nos. 27 (Pub), 5 Aug. 1893.
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strong and impartial men absolutely necessary. He significantly remarked that the provision of one-sixth of the listed posts had been made to compensate for the disadvantages of the competition in London and if they were removed, Indians would not be entitled to retain that compensation. ¹ Crosthwaite, Lieutenant Governor of the N.W.P., suggested that the total number of Indians in the Civil Service should be fixed at 18 per cent., and that, in case it was decided to fill all the places by competition in India, the posts thrown open to the Provincial Service should be withdrawn. Though a scheme of holding a distinct examination in India, he said, was quite practicable, it would be unjust, administratively bad, and politically dangerous, inasmuch as it would result in the exclusion of the Muslims. ² Woodburn, chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, expressed the view that a scheme of examination even on a provincial basis would be defective as the Marathas would monopolise all the posts. ³ The Bombay Government observed that simultaneous examinations would badly affect the quality of English candidates and that the best would speedily cease to compete. ⁴ The Bengal Government remarked that it would be unfair to the tax-payer of India to extend the conditions of the Indian Civil Service, which had been defined with reference to recruitment from England, to those succeeding at competition in India. ⁵

1 Note of 23 Sept. 1893.

2 Letter to Govt. of India, 5 Sept. 1893; Pub.Progs., No.60, Nov.93.

3 Minute, 7 Sept. 1893, Pub.Progs., No.65.

4 Bombay to Govt. of India, 7 Sept. 1893, Pub.Progs., No.61.

5 Bengal to Govt. of India, 24 Aug. 1893, Pub.Progs., No.56.

Strangely enough, the Government of Madras did not concur in these views. In its opinion, the proposal was expedient and no danger to the Empire was likely to arise from an increase in the number of Indians whose "very existence would be bound up in the maintenance of British supremacy". It also remarked that the new scheme, by relegating them to a "distinct and limited service" had caused disappointment to them, adding that the Presidency could be effectively administered with two-thirds of the Civil Servants as Europeans.¹

The Governments of India's despatch of November 1893 with an accompanying memorandum dealt with the question in all its important aspects. It was pointed out that the Civil Service of India contained in its cadre 898 posts, of which 731 were reserved for Covenanted and Military officers, on whose administrative capacity and impartiality the orderly government of the country depended, and who represented the British Government in India and were, in the eyes of the people, the British Government.² The Government of India remarked that the necessity of maintaining an adequate number of Europeans, on which the Secretary of State had laid so strong an emphasis, was in itself destructive of the Commons' resolution, which required that all competitors would be classified in one list according to merit. In its opinion, the strength of Europeans was at its minimum and would not admit of further reduction for some years. It also suggested that in order

1 Madras to Govt. of India, 7 Sept. 1893, Pub.Progs., No.62.

2 Out of 898 posts 74 were in special and technical departments and 93 were assigned to the Provincial Service.

3 Pub. Des. from India, No.62, 1 Nov. 1893, para. 6.

to maintain their number at that level, it would be necessary to watch the proportion of Indians at the London competition and that it might become necessary to restrict the total to 18 per cent. or to some similar figure.¹

To the commonplace objections to the system of simultaneous examinations, the Indian Government added one or two more saying, first, that it would affect the quality of European candidates who, with their Indian education, would lack the training essential for the service, and, secondly, it would discourage the better class of Europeans from competing in England for a service likely to be largely composed of Indians. Another serious objection was based on the ground that the withdrawal of the listed posts, which the decision to retain the determined minimum of Europeans would necessitate, was bound to lower the efficiency of the Provincial Services. The Government of India characterised the proposal as "ill-advised and dangerous."²

The Secretary of State, H.H. Fowler, concurred in the views of the Government of India. He asserted that the proposal was incompatible with the principle of maintaining an adequate number of Europeans, and also remarked that it was indispensable that a reasonable proportion of the high offices should be filled by Muslims, Sikhs and others if they were not to be alienated from British rule. He expressed the view that serious difficulties might be caused by the influx into the service of a large number of Indians recruited by competition, who could not be

1 Ibid., para. 8, 11.

2 ~~Emb.~~ Ibid., paras. 14, 16, 19.

absorbed into their own province beyond a certain point and whose appointments would not be favoured by other Provinces.¹

During 1894-98, the arrangements of 1892 continued. In a few instances, when the Local Governments desired to have more discretion in the interpretation of the rules, the Central Government intervened. For instance, it took exception to a temporary appointment of a non-Indian in Bengal. The Bengal Government justified it on the ground that it was made as an emergency measure for a few months only. The Government of India emphasised that any temporary appointment made on the ground of emergency should be reported for its confirmation immediately after it was made.² In 1898 the Madras Government desired to have discretion to fill the six listed posts either as Collectors or Judges independently of the number of appointments so held in each class. It sought the withdrawal of restriction on the ground that it was convenient to find suitable judicial officers and difficult to get fit men for the executive charges.³ Needless to say that the Madras Government's case was most unconvincing. It is inconceivable that in a Presidency like Madras the Provincial Service was so inefficient that it could not provide fit men even for two executive posts. The Indian Government turned down the proposal because it was inconsistent with the Commission's recommendation which had laid emphasis on affording due opportunity to Indian officers to prove their fitness.⁴

1 Pub. Des. to India, No.37, 19 April 1894.

2 Letters to Local Govts, 28 Jan. 1895, Pub.Progs., No.311, Jan. 1895.

3 Madras to Govt. of India, 14 Sept. 1898, Pub.Progs., No.156, Dec.1898.

4 Govt. of India to Madras, 27 Dec. 1898, Pub.Progs., No.157.

In influencing the Government's policy to throw open a larger number of posts, important associations like the Congress and the Indian Association, and the Press played an important role. A large share in the administration was a demand which they never ceased to press. Resolutions, memorials, articles, deputations to England, and questions and discussions in Parliament by men like Wedderburn, Naoroji and others, were the means by which the attention of the Government was drawn to this question. It is indisputable that the British Government could not afford to ignore the growing influence of the educated classes. Sometimes it availed itself of the opportunity of explaining its policy when the memorials were presented to it. In 1868, for instance, Northcote informed the British Indian Association that he was contemplating to insert a clause in his Bill, empowering the Government of India to appoint Indians without competition.¹ In April 1884, Kimberley told the deputationists that if it had been the intention of the Government to exclude Indians from the Civil Service,² the provision of one-sixth appointments would not have been made. In 1898, when the Indian Association pointed out the defects of the scheme of 1892, the Government of India took the opportunity of clarifying certain points.³

The story of the Indian demand for a larger share in the high offices may be briefly told here. In 1867 Naoroji's resolution for

1 See above, 10.

2 Parl. Papers, LVIII (1884-85).

3 See above, 62.

holding simultaneous examinations was accepted by the East India Association, and a memorial was presented to Northcote. In 1868 and again in 1874 the British Indian Association sent memorials on the same subject. In 1877-78 Banerjea started his Civil Service movement. A deputation was also sent to England and a meeting was held at Willis's Rooms with John Bright as president. The effect of this meeting, says Banerjea, was so great that the rules which had been "delayed for seven years, were published within twenty-four hours of that meeting."¹

In 1884 he undertook another tour of the N.W.P. and the Punjab. The fruits of that agitation, according to him, were the Government of India's despatch recommending a higher age-limit, and the appointment of the Public Service Commission. Ever since its establishment in 1885, the Congress pressed unceasingly for a larger Indian employment and for simultaneous examinations. Banerjea, as one of its most prominent leaders, played an important part. However, one finds it difficult to accept his opinion, in its entirety, that the publication of Statutory rules, Ripon's despatch of 12 September 1884, and the appointment of the Commission were the immediate outcome of his efforts. In fact, the main object of his agitation - the raising of the age-limit - was not accepted in 1878, and again in 1883 the Indian Association's memorial on simultaneous examinations failed to have any effect on Kimberley, who again in January 1885 did not accept Ripon's recommendations. The above remark is not,

1 Banerjea, op.cit., Chap. V.

2 Ibid., 87-88.

however, intended to detract from the importance of the great work which Banerjea has to his credit. In the minute of September 1883, in which Ripon criticised Salisbury's decision of 1876, he made reference to the memorial from the Indian Association. While making an estimate of the work of Indian public bodies on this question, one must also bear in mind that the sympathetic approach of Viceroys like Ripon and Dufferin went a long way to facilitating the work of reform. Much of what the despatch of September 1884 contained would not have been possible without Ripon's favourable attitude to the whole question. Similarly Dufferin's remark that without a radical change no satisfactory scheme was possible, led to the appointment of the Commission of 1886. Indeed, in 1900 Curzon criticised Dufferin for not effecting restrictions¹ on the admission of Indians into the higher ranks of the service. Remarking on this and some other popular measures of his viceroyalty, Hamilton observed that he did not believe "he (Dufferin) has been in any single place of responsibility and authority in which he did not more or less purchase popularity by leaving to his successors unpleasant legacies."² Though Ripon and Dufferin were not prepared to go very far in the direction of Indianisation, their sympathetic policy made the introduction of the reforms easier. As regards the work of various associations, it consisted in this that they brought before the Government an organised body of public opinion which it thought expedient

1 Curzon to Hamilton, 23 April 1900, Pr. Cor. Ind., xvii, 7.

2 Hamilton to Curzon, 17 May 1900, Pr. Cor. Ind., v, 169.

to take into consideration and the absence of which was certain to result either in the abridgement or in the postponement of reforms.

British political parties were remarkably unanimous on the question of Indianisation. In 1867 it was Northcote, a member of a Conservative Government, who seriously took up the question and it was a Liberal Government which passed the Act of 1870 though it failed to make rules to carry it into effect. It was again Argyll, a Liberal Secretary of State, who laid down the limitations under which Indianisation was to be effected and, indeed, they continued to guide his successors. In 1876 it was under a Conservative Government that the age-limit was reduced, but it was also under the same Government that the Statutory rules of 1879, which gave effect to the Act of 1870 and threw open one-sixth of the appointments, came into force. In 1885 it was Kimberley, a member of the Liberal Government, who rejected the Government of India's proposal for raising the age-limit, but again it was he who authorised it to appoint the Commission of 1886. In 1889, it was Cross, a member of the Conservative Government, who fixed the age-limit at 21-23, and gave effect to the Commission's recommendations. In 1893 it was a Liberal Parliament which passed Paul's resolution of June 1893, which Fowler, a Liberal Secretary of State, rejected in 1894.

British policy towards Indian employment was inspired by certain important considerations. As early as 1832 the Select Committee had observed that "it is contended that their admission, under European control, into the higher offices, would have a beneficial effect in correcting the moral obliquities of their general character, would strengthen their

attachment to British dominion; would conduce to the better administration of justice, and would be productive of a great saving in the expenses of the Indian Government." ¹ Among these considerations economy and political advantage were emphasised most. That the use of Indian agency was less expensive was indisputable; but as regards the second, opinions were divided. Ripon believed that the employment of Indians would make the Government popular, whereas Sir John Strachey, an eminent administrator in the second half of the nineteenth century, maintained that a government of foreigners would never be really popular. ² On the question of efficiency, the British official class was of opinion that the substitution of Indians for Europeans would not be conducive to the good government and, indeed, in opposing the policy of Indianisation it laid the greatest emphasis on this aspect.

According to the Government of India's memorandum of 1893, the necessities of British rule, which required that the supervising and controlling offices must be held by Europeans, limited the scope of the Indian employment in the higher offices. ³ But the point at issue was the number and category of posts which were still to remain a monopoly of Europeans. The conditions of British rule, it was maintained, ruled out the appointment of Indians to a large number of high posts but this

1 Report from the Select Committee on the Affairs of the E.I.C. (1832), 21.
 2 John Strachey, India: Its Administration and Progress, (3rd ed), 495.
 3 Memorandum, Pub.Frogs., No.70, Nov. 1893.

view came into conflict with the principle of equality embodied in the Proclamation of 1858. Indians wanted nothing more than the fulfilment of that pledge,. Speaking at the Convocation of the Calcutta University, Lytton had said; "Now, whatever else it may rest upon, the claim of native subjects to official employment rests, primarily and principally, on the pledge spontaneously given and repeatedly affirmed, to them by the Crown and Parliament of England."¹ Referring to the inconveniences of the Proclamation, Hamilton observed; "One of the greatest mistakes that ever was made was the issue in the Proclamation annexing India of the principle that perfect equality was to exist, so far as all appointments were concerned, between European and Native."² And yet with all its inconveniences its repeal was out of the question. Educated Indians interpreted it as making accessible to them, subject, of course, to fitness, higher offices without any restrictions as to number and quality. This interpretation, logical though it was, did not fit in with the logic of the facts of nineteenth-century British rule. Since the Government was unable to repudiate the principle of legal equality and yet it had no mind to give full effect to it, it saw in the London competition the most effective safeguard against the influx of Indians; and for exactly the same reason it was opposed to simultaneous examinations. A scheme of unfettered competition was, indeed, incompatible with the reservation

1 Speech, 10 March 1877, Selected Speeches of Lord Lytton (1877).

2 Hamilton to Curzon, 17 May 1900, Pr. Cor. Ind., V, 169.

of posts for Europeans; and that of a limited, though identical, competition was inconsistent with the principle of racial equality. Lytton's scheme of an exclusive Indian service was intended to remove some of the inconveniences of the Proclamation, but it was turned down because it violated its very spirit. Thus in theory the Proclamation remained unscathed, but in practice it was greatly modified by the overriding considerations of the stability and efficiency of British rule.

Ultimately, the rate of Indianisation depended on the extent to which the European element was to be maintained. The Government of India was of opinion that the provision of 93 listed posts, besides those which were secured on the results of the London competition, should constitute the maximum scope of Indian employment. In 1893 it suggested that to maintain a certain proportion of Europeans, which, in its opinion, had reached its irreducible minimum, the Home Government should watch the results of the competition and fix the total percentage of Indians at 18. In 1896 Elgin emphasised that it was not "safe to proceed too fast in entrusting the higher work of administration to other than European officers."¹ In 1900 Curzon remarked that the British administration was confronted with the greatest peril by the "system under which every year an increasing number of the 900 and odd higher posts that were meant, and ought to have been exclusively and specifically reserved, for Europeans are being filched away by the superior wits of the Native in the English examinations."² In 1909

1 Elgin to Hamilton, 23 Dec. 1896, Pr.Cor.Ind., iii, 441.

2 Curzon to Hamilton, 23 April 1900, Pr.Cor.Ind., xvii, 7.

he said: "The question at issue is rather not what is the maximum number of offices that can safely be given to Indians, but what is the minimum that must of necessity be reserved for Europeans."¹ It is to be noted that at the beginning of 1909 out of a total number of 1,244 members of the Indian Civil Service, there were only 65 Indians, and out of 93 posts² only 51 had been filled by the members of the Provincial Service. It is evident that the progress of Indianisation was very slow, but the British Govern^ment, tied to the principles of stability and efficiency, was content with it.

A comparison between the views of Thomas Munro and John Strachey, two of the ablest of the British administrators of India, will not be out of place. Munro, expressing his views early in the nineteenth century, said that the British Government would never be popular unless it entrusted Indians with posts of responsibility, and emphasised that the Government's aim should be so to improve their character as to enable them "to govern and protect themselves"; and that the best way of doing that was to appoint them to "almost every office under the Government." His scheme envisaged, no doubt, at a distant date, the withdrawal of British power from India.³ Strachey, on the other hand, was of opinion that the number of British officers was "extraordinarily small". He emphasised that since a foreign government - like the

1 Quoted in O'Malley, The Indian Civil Service, 225.

2 East India (Fifty Years Administration), Cd.4956, (1909).

3 Gleig, Munro, i, 519-20; ii, 58, 423-24; iii, 386-88.

British - would never be popular, it was indispensable that all the higher offices must be held by Englishmen. "But let there be no hypocrisy", writes Strachey,¹ "about our intention to keep in the hands of our people those executive posts - and there are not very many of them - on which, and on our political and military power, our actual hold of the country depends." Strachey differs from Munro in this that while the latter expressed his personal opinions, shared only by a few individuals, he represented the views of the most dominant school of thought, which believed in the permanence and not in the withdrawal of British power, and sought its stability not in popularity but in the restriction of Indian employment. And it was this school which played the important role in the determination of British Indian policy.

L Strachey, op.cit., 494-97.

CHAPTER II

The Development of Legislatures

The growth of the Indian legislature between 1833 and 1909 reveals a significant feature. The nucleus of the legislature was the executive council to which more members were added for legislative purposes. The use of the term 'additional' for them was retained even in the Minto - Morley reforms of 1909 although under the new provisions they far outnumbered those who formed the nucleus. The term no doubt was indicative of the relationship between the legislature and the executive inasmuch as legislative power residing in a body distinct and separate from the executive was not recognised.¹ However, the presence of additional members, not belonging to the executive, and entrusted only with legislative work tended to differentiate the enlarged body more and more, both in its composition and functions, from the nucleus.

The Charter Act of 1833 made the first attempt to differentiate the legislative from executive functions by providing for a fourth ordinary member whose duties were solely legislative. It was also laid down that the transaction of the former required the presence of at least three ordinary members as distinguished from the latter which could be performed by the Governor-General and one ordinary member of the Council.²

1 Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, I, para. 130.

2 3 & 4 Will. 4, c.85, s.48.

William Grey, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, went so far as to say that the Act constituted what was "virtually" a separate legislative body.¹ It would be more correct to say that the emphasis of the Act was more on the differentiation of functions than on the composition of the law-making body, because the Governor-General was fully entitled to make laws with or without the fourth member.

Another important change was the abolition of the legislative authority of Madras and Bombay and its concentration in the hands of the Supreme Government. The Governor of a Presidency could, however, act as an extraordinary member of the Council when it assembled there. He was also invested with power to make proposals of any laws to the Governor-General in Council.²

The next step in the direction of "differentiating the legislative machine much more decisively from the executive" was taken in 1853 under the impulse of Dalhousie.³ The Council was expanded by the addition of six new members to be called legislative councillors, of whom two, including the Chief Justice, were judges of the Supreme Court, and four were officials of at least ten year's standing appointed by the Governments of Bengal, Madras, Bombay, and the N.W.P. The legislative Councillors were entitled to sit or vote only at its meetings held for legislative purposes. The Governor-General's assent was essential for any law passed by the Council.⁴ The fourth ordinary member became a full-fledged member of the

1 Minute, 13 March 1868, Pub. Progs., No.150, March 1868.

2 3 & 4 Will. 4, c.85, s.66.

3 M/C Report (1918), para. 58.

4 16 & 17 Vict., c.95, ss.22-24. The Act made provision for the appointment of two more civilians to the Legislative Council, but they were not added.

executive.

The Council of 1853 assumed in practice more or less a district character though the position of legislative councillors was "exactly" similar to that of the fourth ordinary member of 1833.¹ In its assuming the role of what was termed a "quasi-independent" body or a "petty parliament", Dalhousie's attitude was an important factor. He was concerned to enlarge the sphere of its activity. The Council transacted its business with a large number of standing orders.² The discussions were oral and full publicity was accorded to its proceedings. The examination of bills was performed by select committees and all the formalities of the three readings were observed. The Council also formed itself into a body for the redress of grievances. In his diary of 12 October 1854 Dalhousie wrote: "The Legislative Council transacts the business before it on much the same system as is observed in our Parliament...."³ Sir Charles Wood, then President of the Board of Control, was not happy at this development. He remarked that he had never wished to raise up a great independent body in India.⁴

In its composition the legislative council, as constituted under the Act of 1853, had two important features. First, the legislative councillors in a full council formed a majority if any member of the Government happened to be absent. Secondly, the Act, by providing for the appointment of provincial representatives, recognised "the principle

1 Leg. Des. from India, No.6, 14 March 1861.

2 There were as many as 136 standing orders.

3 Quoted in Lee-Warner, Life, ii, 234.

4 Wood to Dalhousie, 23 Dec. 1854, quoted in A.C.Banerjee, Indian Constitutional Development, i, 292.

of local representation in the Indian legislature", which from then onwards became an important part of reform schemes.¹

The Act made no provision for the appointment of an Indian to the Council though Dalhousie remarked that he would have been "personally glad to see such a gentleman appointed at once under the Act".² He expressed the view that Indians of experience and intellectual quality were available and that the presence of any one of them would be valuable to the Council.

The records of the Council as a purely law-making body was of high standard. In the words of the authors of the Report of 1918, legislation for the first time was treated "as a special function of government requiring special machinery and special processes".³ The Council was never accused of making bad laws. Even Lord Canning, who was by no means friendly to it, found no fault with it on this score. He did not seek to justify the proposed scheme of 1859 as one calculated to improve legislation.⁴ The main reason for its falling into disfavour with his Government was its assertion of independence. Dalhousie had encouraged this tendency; Canning resented it.

Among the many causes which led to the passing of the Councils Act of 1861 the events of 1857-58 were important. Syed Ahmad Khan attributed the Mutiny to the non-admission of Indians into the legislative council, other causes being of a secondary character. He observed that the Government had no means of knowing the reactions of the people to its

1 M/C Report, para. 58.

2 Lee-Warner, op. cit., 232.

3 M/C Report, para. 58.

4 Des. from India (H.D.), No.5, 9 Dec. 1859.

measures.¹ Bartle Frere, an outstanding member of the Governor-General's Council, also said that the Government, in legislating for millions of people, had "few means of knowing, except by a rebellion, whether the laws suit them or not".² He emphasised that unless the Government had "some barometer and safety-valve combined in the shape of a deliberative council, I believe you will be always liable to very unlocked-for and dangerous explosions".³ But while the Mutiny opened the way for the admission of Indians into the Councils, it produced, on the other hand, Councils with extremely limited functions. The reason was that the conditions created by it were favourable to the cause of autocracy rather than to the grant of political concessions. Moreover, what the Government wanted was to establish a weak, and not a strong, Council.

The Indian Councils Act of 1861 was in a measure the extension, abridgment, and modification of the existing arrangement. The provisions for the establishment of local councils and the appointment of non-official members marked an improvement on the previous system, while the restrictions on their functions deprived them of some essential attributes of a legislature and in this respect the Act was a retrograde step. Under the arrangements by which the Central legislature dispensed with the preponderance of the Bengal element in it and the Governor-General was invested with power to issue ordinances the previous system was modified in the light of

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- 1 Syed Ahmad Khan, The Causes of the Indian Revolt, 11-13. This book was written in Urdu in 1858, but was published much later. Its English translation appeared in 1873.
 - 2 Minute, 16 March 1860.
 - 3 Frere to Wood, 10 April 1861, Martineau, Bartle Frere, 1, 340.

actual experience. The Act, however, maintained the continuity of a system of law-making by a body functioning in a legislative capacity.

In shaping the scheme of 1861 Bartle Frere played an important part. He was of opinion that the spread of education and a "feverish curiosity" among Indians made the change necessary. "Your legislative bodies", he emphasised, "will make fatal mistakes unless they have some native members to aid them". His scheme provided for the representation of influential classes and interests on the councils. He suggested that non-officials should be at least one-third of official members.¹

The Government of India submitted two schemes of reform, one in December 1859 and the other in January 1861. The first provided for the inclusion of a few non-official members, the establishment of councils in Madras and Bombay, and the amendment of the modes of procedure followed by the existing council. The object of reforms was to "stimulate and expedite" the amendment of the law rather than to improve the laws.² A year later, the Government of India modified its proposals. The events which led to this development were: first, differences arose between the Supreme Government and the Government of Madras about the Income Tax Bill; secondly, serious doubts were raised as to the validity of laws introduced into the non-Regulation Provinces without enactment by the Legislature Council; thirdly, the Legislative Council presented an address for the communication to it of certain correspondence between the Secretary of State and the Government of India.³ The new proposals were: (1) the

1 For details, see minute of 16 March 1860 with memo.; minute of 29 Dec. 1860; Martineau, op. cit., I, 335-44.

2 Des. from India (H.D.), No.5, 9 Dec. 1859.

3 M/C Report, para. 62.

establishment of councils for Bengal, the North-Western Provinces, and the Punjab; (2) the exclusion of judges from councils; (3) raising the number of non-official members from three to five in the Presidencies; (4) the addition of members, not exceeding twelve, to the Supreme legislature, of whom half were to be non-officials; (5) the holding of its meeting in other places besides Calcutta and of so conducting the business as to take the opinion of persons not skilled in English; (6) the appointment of members for a short term, and certainly not longer than two years; (7) legislative business to be transacted as done in a committee or commission, and not in the form of set parliamentary debate.¹

Sir Charles Wood regarded the Indian Councils Bill of 1861 as "by far the most important of the measures" he had introduced. He admitted that the Act was framed on the basis of the proposals contained in Canning's despatches.² He supported even such defective proposals as the peripatetic character of the Supreme Council, the appointment of additional members for not more than two years, and the small size of the Councils. Canning, for his part, was anxious that the measure should be passed, and; indeed, he consented to defer his departure from India so that he might introduce the reforms.³

In Parliament John Bright had suggested that members should be appointed for a term of three years. But even this very reasonable proposal was not accepted. Commenting on the peripatetic character of the

1 Des. from India, No.2A, 15 Jan. 1861.

2 Wood to Frere, 17 Aug. 1861, Martineau, op. cit., i, 343-44.

3 Hansard, Third Series, CLXIII, 640.

Council, Bright observed: "It would be most unfortunate if they destroyed the work of the Council at Calcutta for some doubtful or visionary advantage of catching a wiseman at some distance from Calcutta"¹. It may be noted that almost all the meetings of the Council during 1862-88 were held either at Calcutta or at Simla excepting one at Allahabad in 1871 and three at Agra in 1873.²

Earl de Grey and Ripon, who was in charge of the Bill in the Lords, stated that the Bill steered a midway course between the opposing opinions, the concentration of legislative power in the executive and the establishment of a representative assembly. The adoption of the first, he said, was inadvisable and that of the second would be injurious to India because it would be exposed to the selfishness of its European inhabitants who demanded a representative assembly.³

The Government's plan for the association of Indians in legislation was intended to be an intermediate course. It was not the aim of the framers of the Act to make the Legislative Council strong. In fact the existing council had been strong enough and it was its strength, not weakness, which had discredited it with the authorities. In 1861 they took the opportunity to clip its wings and as a result the Council emerged from the Act shorn of much of its powers. Even the term 'Legislative Councillors' previously used for additional members was dropped. The Governor-General was invested with power to prevent the introduction of

1 Ibid., 1361.

2 Parl. Papers, LIV (1890), 105.

3 Hansard, CLXIV, 590-91.

any bill, to veto any bill passed by the legislature, and to issue ordinances for a period of six months. The previous sanction of the Governor-General was necessary for legislation by the local councils in certain cases;¹ and no law or regulation passed by them could be valid without his assent. The Governor-General in Council was also authorised to create councils for Bengal, the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab.² In accordance with the instructions of the Secretary of State³ the Bengal Council was established in January 1862, but the establishment of other councils was much delayed.⁴

For legislative purposes the Governor-General's Council was increased by additional members, not less than six and not more than twelve in number, nominated for two years, of whom not less than half were to be non-officials. The Act, however, provided that no law made by the Governor-General in Council was to be deemed invalid by reason only that the proportion of non-official additional members was not complete at the date of its introduction or enactment.⁵

The Madras and Bombay executive councils were reinforced by addition of not less than four and not more than eight members, nominated for two years, of whom not less than half were to be non-officials. The functions of the new councils were strictly limited to the consideration and enactment of legislative business. The Provincial Councils were not given any

1 24 & 25 Vict., c.67, s.43.

2 Ibid., s.44.

3 Leg. Des. to India, No.14, 9 Aug. 1861, para. 36.

4 See below, 146.

5 24 & 25 Vict., c.67, s.14.

exclusive area for the exercise of their functions. The Act made no attempt "to demarcate the jurisdictions of the central and local legislatures as in federal constitutions. The Governor-General's Council could legislate for the whole of India; and the Provincial Council for the whole of the province, with the reservation that before doing so in respect of certain matters the Governor-General's sanction had to be obtained"¹.

Sir Charles Wood, in a covering despatch which accompanied the Act of 1861, made it clear that the rules of legislative procedure should be few and simple and that the business should be conducted in the same way as in a committee or commission.² The new councils were not to sit permanently for the purpose of making laws, but were to be called when projects of law were ready for discussion. Wood was against the making of any rule or the use of any expression which might tend to create an impression that the meetings for legislative purposes were fixed or limited as to time, place, or duration. The use of the term 'session' was avoided lest it might imply a degree of certainty as to time and duration.³

The Indian Councils Act of 1861 was an extremely cautious measure. All possible steps were taken to prevent the Governor-General's Council

1 M/C Report, para. 63: Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, I. para. 132.

2 Leg. Des. to India, No.14, 9 Aug. 1861.

3 Leg. Des. to India, No.25, 31 July 1862. Wood went on to say: "No rule ought to be framed, and no expression ought to be used, tending to create an impression that there is a Legislative Council separate and distinct from the Executive Council. There is only the one Council, that of the Governor-General, or of the Governors as the case may be, which sits with certain members for executive purposes, but who are aided by additional members when the Council meets for the purpose of making laws and regulations".

from developing into a miniature parliament. But in providing against such a development the principle of caution was carried to such an extent that the councils were denied the opportunity of making themselves really useful bodies. Consistent with the widening of their functions on a reasonable scale, it would not have been difficult to lay down the rules to be followed by the official members of councils.

An important question connected with the growth of legislative authority in India was the manner in which the Secretary of State exercised his power in regard to legislation. Under the Act of 1861 he was empowered to disallow any rule made by the Governor-General in Council for the conduct of legislative business,¹ and also any law or regulation passed by the council and assented to by the Governor-General.² The control of the Secretary of State was, however, not only limited to the final rejection of a bill. He was to be informed of all that passed respecting legislative measures of any importance, and mere formal acknowledgment by him of the receipt of bills, or mere silence, involved no judgment of their contents. On first receiving a bill, the Secretary of State could intimate to the Governor-General his objections to it or suggestions for additional provisions.³ In 1864 Sir Charles Wood asked the Government of India to postpone the enactment of the Code of Civil Procedure, pending before the Governor-General's Council, till further instructions. In reply to the Government of India's observation that the Act did not contemplate

1 24 & 25 Vict., c.67, s.18.

2 Ibid., s.21.

3 Leg. Des. to India, No.58, 31 Dec. 1863.

the suspension by the Home Government of any bill regularly introduced into the Council, and not falling within the proviso contained in Section 22, the Secretary of State said that the suspension or withdrawal of a bill on the suggestion of the Secretary of State was more courteous and more calculated to maintain the dignity of the council than disallowance without any intimation of his opinion.¹

In 1870 the Duke of Argyll, then Secretary of State, expressed the view that the Home Government must hold in its hands the ultimate power of requiring the Governor-General to introduce a measure and require all the members of his government to vote for it.² The occasion, which called for this ruling, was the omission by the Select Committee on the Indian Contract Law of Section 75 from the draft. The Secretary of State was in favour of its adoption. The Government of India took the view that such a course would invest the Secretary of State with the "character of the legislator" for British India and convert the legislature into a mere instrument to be used by him for that purpose.³

In March 1874 Argyll's successor, Salisbury took exception to the Government of India's practice of submitting measures, without previous sanction, for Her Majesty's approval or disallowance.⁴

1 Leg. Des. to India, No.12, 31 March 1865.

2 Leg. Des. to India, No.47, 24 Nov. 1870.

In 1868 the Government of India sought the ruling of the Secretary of State on the position of the members of Government in relation to any measure introduced into the Council. Sir Henry Durand, a member of the Council, denied the applicability of the cabinet rule to the Council. Sir Stafford Northcote did not express any authoritative opinion on the question. Argyll's ruling was clear and unambiguous. In 1895 Sir Henry Fowler strongly emphasised the principle of the unity of action, and said that united action was necessary for all measures introduced by the Governor-General in Council. (Fowler's Leg. Des., No.21, 26 June 1895.)

3 Leg. Des. from India, No.8, 18 March 1869.

4 Leg. Des. to India, No.9, 31 March, 1874.

It was asked to submit to the Secretary of State a copy of the draft bill, together with an explanatory despatch, before it was introduced into the Council. Measures of slight importance and those requiring speedy enactment were excepted; but in the case of the latter the Government of India was required to communicate subsequently the grounds on which it acted. If the draft of a bill, approved by the Secretary of State, was materially changed during its passage through the Council, the progress of the bill was to be delayed until he had a fresh opportunity of expressing his opinion. In 1875 Lord Salisbury directed that when the Indian Government contemplated to introduce a measure on grounds of urgency, he should be informed, without delay, of its intention by telegraph.¹

In 1875 controversy arose over the Tariff Act, which had been passed without previous reference to the Secretary of State. Lord Northbrook's government justified the procedure on the grounds, first, that the changes in the duties were urgent;² secondly, that the Act was far from being a proposal for large financial change; thirdly, that the practice pursued by the Government was in accordance with the opinion given by Lord Stanley in 1859 which provided that all questions regarding fiscal legislation should be disposed of with the least possible delay.³

Lord Salisbury took a strong stand on this question. He emphasised the necessity of effective control by the Home Government over India's financial policy;⁴ and added that in passing the Act the Government

1 Leg. Des. to India, No.51, 11 Nov. 1875.

2 Pub. Des. from India, No.48, 16 Aug. 1875.

3 Pub. Des. from India, No.9, 17 March 1876.

4 Leg. Des. to India, No.25, 31 May 1876.

of India did not avail itself of the advice of non-official members. Such a procedure, he said, was contrary to the intention of Parliament which had provided that laws should be passed at a Council consisting of both officials and non-officials.¹ In another despatch, while authorising the expenditure for erecting offices and quarters at Simla, he remarked that the growing practice of legislating at Simla was at variance with the spirit of the Act of 1861 because non-official members were precluded from participating in the business of the Council. He suggested that the the period of residence at Simla should be devoted to the preparation of legislative measures, and the period at Calcutta to their discussion and enactment.² It is difficult to say how far Salisbury was really sincere about the association of non-official members. The figures, however, do not suggest that the Home Government was anxious to reduce the Government of India's practice of legislating at Simla to a minimum.³ The explanation of Salisbury's attitude is to be sought in his disagreement with the policy of the Tariff Act passed at Simla in 1875.

The first instalment of reforms had a longer span of life than any one of the subsequent measures in the post-Mutiny period.⁴ It was not until 1886, when the Act of 1861 had already been in force for twenty-

1 Leg. Des. to India, No.51, 11 Nov. 1875.

2 Pub. Des. to India, No.64, 25 May 1876.

3 Between 1877 and 1888 the number of sittings of the Governor-General's Council at Calcutta and Simla was 143 and 159 respectively. Parl. Papers, LIV (1890), 105.

4 The Acts under which the Councils were reformed were passed in 1892, 1909, 1919 and 1935. The interval between subsequent reforms was not so long as that between 1861 and 1892.

five years, that Lord Dufferin gave attention to the question of reorganising the Councils. Even Lord Ripon, well-known for his liberal views, does not appear to have seriously thought along these lines. His hands were so full with the project of local self-government and later he had to face such a strong opposition over the Ilbert Bill that he would have been too rash a politician had he ventured to introduce any Council reform. But though there were no concrete proposals for reform the inconveniences of the system were sometimes openly expressed. For instance, on 31 March 1871 Lord Mayo said: "The Government of this country is in one respect in an unfortunate position, for there is no assembly or any means of discussion similar to that which prevails in other countries, whereby members of Government can give an immediate reply to statements made, and administer on the spot the negative to extravagant and inaccurate assertions. We are often obliged to wait for weeks and months before an answer can be given to even the most absurd accusations".¹

The most obvious defects of the councils were the want of opportunities for discussion, their small size and the inadequate representation of Indian members. On an average, the Supreme legislative council consisted of four Indians, of whom not a few were drawn from the landed aristocracy.² An important consideration in the appointment of members of

1 Progs. of the Leg. Council of the Governor-General, 1871, 431.

2 Parl. Papers, LIV (1890), 101-105.

According to Return showing the appointment of additional members of the Governor-General's Council between 1862-1888, there were in all 36 Indians, of whom 7 were ruling chiefs and 23 landholders. Of 36 members 3 were appointed thrice and 7 twice. Most of them were titleholders.

higher social status was largely political. It is rather remarkable that sometimes even in the appointment of official members other considerations played a part. For instance, the appointment of W.W.Hunter to the Governor-General's Council in 1882 and his subsequent reappointments were made just to increase his emoluments.¹ The attendance of Indian members at the meetings of the Governor-General's Council, and especially when they were held at Simla, was quite often incomplete. The proceedings were marked by want of vitality and vigour. Lady Dufferin, who visited the Council chamber in March 1885, when the Bengal Rent Bill was under discussion, records that the speakers mostly read their speeches; ² ~~the~~ proceedings were dull; and it was not easy to hear them. These impressions being those of one whose visit to the chamber was purely accidental have an extremely limited value as a piece of evidence; but a study of the proceedings of the Council does not enable us to arrive at a different conclusion. The fact is that the limitations under which the councils were constituted made them purely advisory bodies. They were intended to function like committees and they were nothing more than this.

In the 'eighties, when Lord Dufferin gave his attention to the question of Council reform, many forces had been powerfully working in that direction. The growth of English education and of the Press, and the establishment of many associations urging the reconstitution of the

1 Fin. Des. from India, No.346, 26 Oct. 1886. As an additional member he received an allowance of Rs.666²/₃ per month besides salary.

2 The Marchioness of Dufferin, Our Vice regal Life in India, i, 73.

3 India, 1885-86, p. 100.

councils, paved the way for another instalment of reform. In December 1885 the Madras Mahajan Sabha, a provincial political body, put forward the demand for the selection of members by a limited electorate, consisting of local bodies, universities and the Chambers of Commerce. At the same time the Indian National Congress laid stress on the necessity of reconstituting the Supreme and Provincial Councils by admitting into them a considerable proportion of elected members. In 1886 the Congress elaborated its resolution of 1885¹. Early in the same year Dufferin recorded his opinion in favour of carrying out the experiment of liberalising, if not the Supreme, at least the subordinate legislative Councils. He indicated that the quick introduction of reforms in the nature of a final settlement of the Indian question for ten or fifteen years would popularise the acts of the Government.² Lord Dufferin pursued this subject to the end of his Viceroyalty, and just a month before his departure, he recorded his famous minute. In 1886 he gave his full support to Sir Alfred Lyall's proposal for a council for the North-Western Provinces. The Secretary of State agreed to the proposal, and in January 1887 the new Council was inaugurated.³ On 16 February 1887, the day on which the Queen's Jubilee was celebrated, Dufferin said in a speech at Calcutta: "..... glad and happy should I be if during my sojourn amongst them circumstances permitted me to extend and place upon a wider and more logical footing the political status which

1 For details, see below, 141.

2 Lyall, Life, II, 151-52.

3 See below, 151.

was so wisely given a generation ago by that great statesman Lord Halifax....."¹ Thus Dufferin's contribution to the cause of reform lay in taking the initiative and in impressing upon the Home Government the urgency of reorganising the Councils.²

In 1886-87 the Chambers of Commerce of Madras, Bengal and Bombay emphasised the necessity of investing the legislature with power to discuss the budget. The Madras Chamber of Commerce remarked that it was a poor commentary on the progress of civilisation that 200 millions of people did not possess the smallest voice in the passing of the budget.³ In December 1887 it re-emphasised that in view of the rapid advance of education the restrictions on the power of the Supreme Council were anomalous.⁴ The Bengal Chamber of Commerce said that the free discussion of the financial arrangement as a whole, and not of the isolated items of the budget, would be of great value.⁵ The views of the Bombay Chamber were similar.⁶

1 Dufferin's Speeches, 159.

2 In a private letter to Lord Hamilton, Lord Elgin said: "I had no idea that the changes introduced by the Act of 1892 had really been initiated in India and that a Committee..... had submitted, and the Government of India had unanimously adopted even wider proposals than those in the Act itself". Letter of 25 Aug. 1896, Pr. Cor. Ind., Vol.II, 827.

It is surprising that Lord Elgin came to know after two and a half years that the Act of 1892 had its origin in the proposals of the Dufferin Committee.

3 To Secretary to Finance Committee, Simla, 3 May 1886, Pub. Progs., No.34, April 1888.

4 To Secretary to Govt. of India, 15 Dec. 1887, Pub. Progs., No.33, April 1888.

5 To Secretary to Govt. of India, 20 Oct. 1887, Pub. Progs., No.31, April 1888. The Bengal Chamber pointed out that since 1872 the budgets had been presented for discussion before the Council in 1877, 1880 and 1882. The others were published in the form of a minute or statement.

6 To Secretary to Govt. of India, 24 Nov. 1887, Pub. Progs., No.32, April 1888.

In 1887, the year of the Queen's Jubilee, resolutions were passed at numerous meetings held in many parts of India. The one point to which they invariably referred related to the enlargement of the Councils. The memorialists looked upon the Jubilee as an occasion specially suitable for the grant of such a concession. Most of the provincial memorials were identical in contents,¹ and were congress-sponsored. Referring to the memorials from the Punjab, the Punjab Government remarked that the meetings were convened in accordance with the plan arranged by the "so-called National Congress" at Calcutta.² Surendranath Banerjea, one of the top-ranking leaders of the Congress in those days, writes that he took special care that the addresses which were presented by the municipalities on the occasion of the Jubilee should contain a prayer for the reform of the Councils.³

Though the reform of the Councils had always attracted Lord Dufferin's attention, it was not until 20 September 1888 that he communicated his views in considerable detail to the Executive Council. His views on the enlargement of the Provincial Councils and the extension of their functions met with the unanimous support of the Council,⁴ and

1 Encl. to Pub. Des. from India, No.15, 19 Feb. 1889. The memorials from Madras suggested the appointment of a commission, consisting of Congressmen to a proportion of one-fourth, to prepare the scheme of reform.

It is remarkable that most of the printed memorials from Bengal make no reference to the reconstitution of the Central Council. In some of them the word 'supreme' has been inserted after the word 'provincial'.

2 To Govt. of India, 2 Sept. 1887, Pub. Progs., No.367, April 1888.

3 Banerjea, op. cit., 91.

4 Dufferin's minute, Encl. to Pub. Des. from India, No.67, 6 Nov. 1888.

accordingly, a Committee, consisting of Sir George Chesney, Sir Charles Aitchison and James Westland¹, was appointed to draw up a scheme for the reorganisation of the Councils. The Committee submitted its proposals on 10 October 1888. The Government of India accepted them in their entirety.

The main recommendations of the Dufferin committee were: (1) The expansion of the Madras, Bombay and Bengal councils with enlarged functions; (2) the establishment of an executive council in Bengal as a condition precedent to the reconstitution of its legislative council; (3) the reorganisation of the councils with reference to the representation of the more important interests; (4) the provision for direct election to the First Division of the council, consisting of the representatives of the hereditary nobility and landed classes, and for indirect election to the Second Division, consisting of the representatives of trading, professional and agricultural classes, of the interests of the planting and commercial European community, and of the interests of stable and effective administration; (5) the representation of Muslims in proportion to their population; (6) the reservation of a few seats to be filled by nomination as a safeguard against any inequality in the results of election; (7) the division of provincial administration into two branches, general and local, and the Council to be invested with larger powers over the latter. The recommendations of the Committee were limited to the reconstitution of the Councils of Madras, Bombay and Bengal. Even the reorganisation of the

1 All of them were members of the Governor-General's executive council. Westland was an officiating Finance Member.

Central Legislature was to await the results of the experiment in the provincial field.

The size of the provincial councils was to be decided upon the advice of the Local Government. The Committee expressed the view that a large Province like Bengal might require nearly 40 members to give a fair representation to all the interests involved. It suggested that, in general, the First Division should have a membership of one-third of the total strength, and that, in each Division, not less than two-fifths¹ should be elected. Both orders were to sit together for voting, but, upon demand, each division was to be permitted to vote separately, and in such a case, no motion was to be carried unless the majority in both concurred. In this way each division was to exercise a check on the other.

The most important proposals of the Committee related to the enlargement of the functions of the Councils. The Committee recommended that the Councils should have power to originate advice and suggestions on any subject connected with internal civil administration, and to ask questions and, subject to certain restrictions, to call for papers. It further proposed that provincial finance should be divided into general and local branches, the first relating to the subjects classified as belonging to general administration, and the second to such expenditure as incurred on schools, hospitals, sanitation, communication, town police, etc. Over

1 The Committee suggested that the First Division of the Bengal Council should consist of 7 officials and 6 elected members, and the Second Division should have 12 officials, 7 elected and 4 nominated members. In each Division the officials were to have a majority of one.

the local part of the budget, the Council was to exercise its control much in the same manner as the district boards, under the local self-government acts, administered similar matters within their areas. In regard to the general branch of provincial finance, the Council was to have less powers; but the committee suggested that the budget should be laid before it for discussion. This part of the Committee's recommendations dealing with the Council's control over provincial finance may be summed up in its own words: "In all these matters relating to local finance we think the object should be to give to the Provincial Councils a real control and a real responsibility, and that the Local Government should endeavour to confine its control and direction of the councils proceedings to the broader questions of policy, and to the assurance of general financial stability"¹.

Lord Dufferin characterised the above scheme "as a plan for the enlargement of our Provincial Councils, for the enhancement of their status, the multiplication of their functions, the partial introduction into them of the election principle, and the liberalisation of their general character as political institutions". These proposals, he said, would place the Government in contact with a large surface of Indian opinion. He expressed the view that the association of the loyal, patriotic and educated classes with the Councils would shift the centre of gravity of Indian political activity from the "self-constituted associations and the little knot of politicians and newspaper writers" to

1 Report on the Subject of Provincial Councils, 10 Oct. 1888, Encl. to Pub. Des. from India, No. 67, 6 Nov. 1888.

the "really responsible classes"¹. In his opinion the proposals marked a fresh advance along the path of reasonable political progress. But he emphasised that it was not the aim of the Government to introduce any radical change or parliamentary system. The provisions relating to a nominated majority in the Councils and the Governor's power to overrule them, he said, left no room for an approach to the English constitutional system. The Committee, too, had emphasised that "the only possible way of proceeding is to develop established methods, and not to introduce new and untried ones".

Dufferin's minute, in one respect, went beyond the limits set by the Committee, which had limited its scheme of reform to the Provincial Councils. It suggested that the Supreme Council should also be invested with power to have a full, free, and thorough examination of the policy of the Government. James Westland, then officiating Finance Member, concurred in this view. Dufferin's other proposal was to invest the Council with power to ask questions on matters of domestic interest. These two changes, he said, would provide the Government with an adequate medium through which it would be able to explain its policy and neutralise the effects of the misrepresentation of its measures. He limited his proposals to the functions of the Supreme Council, and made no reference to the increase of its size. It seems that the large scope of the Committee's recommendations in one important direction and its definite stand against the introduction of similar changes in the Supreme Council

1 In this minute Dufferin criticised the Congress severely.

made him cautious in his proposals.

The Committee's proposals relating to the right of interpellation, the discussion of the budget, the power to move resolutions, the provision for an adequate control over a sector of provincial finance, the introduction of the elective system, and the proportion of official and non-official members would have certainly enhanced the prestige and usefulness of the Councils. The authors of the Report of 1918 were impressed with the bold approach of the Committee to many questions. They remarked that some of its recommendations contained the germ of proposals - which bulked so largely in their inquiry - for standing committees, grand committees, upper houses, reserved and transferred subjects, and the like.¹ Another question to which the Committee addressed itself and which subsequently became a major issue of Indian constitutional development, related to the representation of the Muslims. While recommending the introduction of the elective system in India, the Committee pointed out the difficulty of providing, under Indian conditions, for an adequate representation of religious minorities by a method of pure election. In view of the uneven diffusion of education and of religious differences, the problem of securing representation even for important classes and communities was extremely difficult. An important section of the Muslims, under Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, was bitterly hostile to any system of election. A few months before the appointment of the Dufferin committee, he had delivered two speeches which were severely critical of

1 M/C Report, para.67.

the Congress and its programme.¹ The Government was quite aware of this development, and perhaps the provision for Muslim representation on the basis of population was, to some extent, in response to it; but it does not appear that the other principles of the scheme were in any way influenced by Sir Syed's opposition. The Committee's proposals relating to the introduction of election and the powers and functions of the Councils would not have been acceptable to him. As regards the reservation of seats on a religious basis, it was no doubt an objectionable feature inasmuch as it was inconsistent with the principles of parliamentary institutions. But in relation to Indian conditions a mode of selection partly by election and partly by nomination was a practical suggestion, and it was also free from the evils to which exclusive electorates give rise.

The Committee's proposals regarding the constitution and functions of the First Division were hardly a satisfactory part of the scheme, though no doubt they were ingenious. The Dufferin committee recognised

1 Syed Ahmad Khan, The Present State of Indian Politics. In his speeches at Lucknow (Dec. 1887) and at Meerut (March 1888) he was ruthless in his criticism of the Congress. He said that, under a system of universal suffrage, the Muslims would be in a minority of one to four; that, under a system based on property qualifications, being poor, they would have no chance; and that, even under a system of separate representation, with an adequate number of seats reserved for them, they would not fare well when pitted against the intellectually superior Hindus. Sir Syed challenged the very principle of representative government as applied to Indian conditions. He was against the extension of the functions of the councils, and emphasised that the interests of the Muslims demanded a strong British rule. It is significant that a man who had advocated the appointment of Indians to the Council 30 years earlier was now such a great opponent of reform.

that the constitution of separate orders in the same body was open to objection, but supported the scheme on the ground that the circumstances of Indian society and the considerations of constitutional stability made it desirable that the admission of the aristocracy should be independent of popular election. It may be remarked that the presence of a division, composed entirely of officials and members belonging to the hereditary nobility and landed class, and enjoying equal powers with the Second Division, would have acted as a great impediment in the way of constitutional progress. In its total effect the good points of the scheme would have been greatly neutralised by this provision.

The Committee's scheme marked a definite improvement on the existing system. Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister, in a memorandum of 31 December 1888, remarked that Dufferin's proposals inaugurated the most important change undertaken since the dissolution of the Company, and that they ought to have been settled in communication with the Cabinet before any official step was taken in that respect. Salisbury regarded the introduction of the elective system as dangerous. "We shall", he remarked, "in no way please the classes on whose good will the submission of India depends: we shall not reconcile our enemies; but we shall give them arms against ourselves"¹.

After Dufferin's departure, his successor, Lord Lansdowne pursued this subject, and in this he was supported by the Secretary of State, Lord Cross. On 29 March 1889 Lansdowne announced that the Secretary of

1 Lady G. Cecil, Life, iv, 194-96.

State had agreed that the Legislative Council should be given regular opportunities to discuss the budget and to ask questions.¹ In a despatch the Government of India referred to this announcement as a pledge to be implemented. The question, therefore, was how to introduce the necessary changes into the procedure of the Councils, both Local and Central. Under the Act of 1861 the Legislative Council was forbidden to transact any business other than the consideration and enactment of measures introduced for this purpose.² The practice of financial discussion existed on sufferance.³ It was only when a new tax was to be imposed that the Finance member was required to submit his financial proposals and the members got an opportunity to make observations in regard to them. The Government of India emphasised that the right of financial criticism should be conferred on the Council by law and should not depend upon an accident. Regarding the right of interpellation, it suggested that the Council should not be restricted, as Lord Dufferin had proposed, to current matters of domestic, as distinguished from those of imperial, interests. In its opinion, it was desirable in certain circumstances that questions should be addressed to the Government even upon matters ordinarily excluded from public discussion.⁴

Lord Cross, while favourable to the scheme which provided for the enlargement of the size and functions of the Councils, objected to the Dufferin's committee's proposal for election on the grounds that the

1 Progs. of the Leg. Council of the Governor-General (1889), XXVIII, 163.

2 24 & 25 Vict., c.67, s.19.

3 Progs. of the Leg. Council of the Governor-General, 2 Feb.1893, XXXII, 46.

4 Pub. Des. from India, No.35, 25 May 1889.

principle was foreign to oriental institutions, and that its recognition in local bodies had not passed beyond an experimental stage and consequently, its extension to the Provincial Councils was not desirable.¹ In a despatch of the same date, accompanying a draft Bill, he suggested that the representation of considerable sections of the community might be best effected by "a simple extension of the existing system", Lord Cross indicated that at a suitable opportunity he would submit to Parliament the proposals for the reconstitution of the Councils.² It may be remarked that the provisions contained in the draft Bill did not undergo any material alteration during its passage through Parliament.³

The Government of India, invited the opinions of the Local Governments on the draft Bill.⁴ The Governments of Madras and the North-Western Provinces approved of the Bill. Lord Reay, Governor of Bombay, supported it, but other members of his Executive Council objected to certain provisions. He remarked that the plan was in conformity with the changed conditions and would result in an increased sense of responsibility in the Administration.⁵ The members of his Council held the view that the doubling of the number of additional members would

1 Pub. Des. to India, No.80, 1 Aug. 1889.

2 Pub. Des. to India, No.81, 1 Aug. 1889.

3 Under the draft Bill, the number of additional members of the Governor-General's Council was fixed at 10 as minimum and at 16 as maximum, and of the Madras and Bombay Councils at 8 as minimum and 20 as maximum. Additional members were to be appointed for two years. The right of discussing the budget and the right of interpellation were conceded. Neither in the draft Bill, nor in the Act, the word 'election' occurs.

4 For replies of provincial governments, see encls. to Pub. Des. from India, No.75, 24 Dec. 1889.

5 Minute, 19 Oct. 1889.

render the conduct of legislative business "troublesome, tedious, costly, and uncertain". They suggested that the minimum number of additional members should be retained at its existing figure and the maximum be fixed at fourteen. In their opinion the Governor should have power to appoint two or three additional members, possessing special knowledge, when some special matter formed the subject of legislation. They justified the maximum number of additional members at a smaller figure on the ground that, as compared with the proposed strength of only sixteen additional members for the Governor-General's Council, a Provincial Council hardly required twenty. They objected to the change relating to the discussion of the budget and the right of interpellation on the ground that it would embarrass the Local Government and result in financial controversies between Central and Provincial Governments. "Licence of discussion", they said, "has repeatedly been found to be mischievous and even fatal to a Provincial Government dependent on a metropolitan one"¹.

According to Sir Steuart Bayley, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, the maximum limit of additional members was "altogether too low". He was in favour of raising it to thirty, so that "due representation of considerable sections of the community" and an adequate number of officials to answer questions might be provided. Regarding the financial power of the Council, Sir Steuart suggested that if the nature of restrictions to be imposed on discussion could not be laid down in the Act, it should

1 Letter to Govt. of India, No.4388, 22 Oct. 1889.

be clearly explained before Parliament so that no misunderstanding might arise in the future. As a safeguard against attack on imperial finance, he proposed that the annual Financial Statement should be divided into two parts, one of which, dealing with the receipts and expenditure fixed by Contract, was not to be placed before the Council, while the other dealing with the items of revenue entirely within the control of the Local Government, was to be submitted for discussion. As to the right of interpellation, he suggested that it should be confined to a single question and answer and that such matters as were under discussion with the superior authority or had been under discussion not long before, should not be the subject of discussion, except with the previous consent of the superior authority.¹

The Government of India entirely approved of the maximum and minimum limits of additional members. In its opinion a larger increase in the strength of the Supreme Council would involve more expenditure without increasing efficiency or satisfying those who demanded a much larger council. It further suggested that in order to avoid misapprehension, a proviso should be added that no member would have the right to propose any resolution, or to divide the Council, in respect of any matter arising out of financial discussion, or the answer to any question, or the rules made under the Act. Referring to certain points raised by the Local Governments, the Government of India made it clear that they were entitled to deal with the local budget only; that the questions

1 Letter to Govt. of India, No.112 J-D., 16 Oct. 1889.

might be permitted not only when the budget was under discussion, but at other times also; and that the rules for the conduct of business should be made by the Central and Provincial Governments in their executive capacity.¹

The Government of India was in complete agreement with the draft scheme except in one respect. The Secretary of State had rejected its proposal of election. Remarking on this, the Government of India said that if circumstances did not warrant the introduction of the elective principle on the scale advised by the Committee, it would have been well if the Bill did not "absolutely preclude us from resort to some form of election where the local conditions are such as to justify a belief that it might be safely and advantageously adopted". It suggested that a provision authorising it to make rules, subject to the sanction of the Secretary of State, for the appointment of additional members would have the advantage of preventing agitation likely to follow upon the passing of the bill in its present form.²

The Indian Councils Amendment Bill was ready for Parliament in 1889, but it was not introduced in that year, as Lord Cross said, owing to the "extreme pressure of business" in the House of Commons.³

1 Pub. Des. from India, No.75, 24 Dec. 1889.

2 Pub. Des. from India, No.76, 24 Dec. 1889.

In a letter to Queen Victoria, Lansdowne said that it would not be desirable to exclude altogether the possibility of admitting, sooner or later, a certain number of elected members into the local councils. He urged that a "moderate and yet liberally conceived measure" should be passed without delay. This letter was in reply to the Queen's letter of June 1889 in which she expressed doubt as to whether India was ripe for the introduction of the elective principle. Lansdowne to Queen Victoria, 19 July 1889, Buckle, Letters, Third Series, i (1886-1890), 525.

3 Hansard's Indian Debates, 21 Feb. 1890, 27.

On 21 February 1890 the Bill was introduced into the House of Lords. When Lord Herschell inquired about the papers received from India, Lord Cross remarked that as the Bill related to a "very unimportant matter" he did not know whether there was any communication which could be laid before Parliament, and added that papers of a confidential character ought not to be laid on the table for some time. The Bill passed through all the successive stages by 18 March 1890, and was sent to the House of Commons, but it did not succeed in getting beyond a first reading. On 26 January 1891 the Bill was read for the first time in the House of Commons. On 26 February 1891 when James Bryce asked when the Government proposed to take the second reading, W.H.Smith, First Lord of the Treasury declined to give any undertaking.¹

In June 1891 the Bill was withdrawn. In February 1892 the Bill, as amended in 1890, was introduced into the House of Lords, and was passed without alteration. On 28 March 1892 G.N.Curzon, then Under Secretary of State for India, introduced the Bill into the Commons. This time the Bill was passed by both the Houses. It received the Royal assent on 20 June 1892. In August 1892 the Conservative Government was replaced by the Liberals. Thus, while the Indian Councils Act was passed under a Conservative Government, the rules and regulations regarding the appointment of non-official members, the asking of questions and financial discussion were sanctioned by a Liberal Government.

Both Dufferin and Lansdowne had been anxious for the early

1 Hansard's Indian Debates (1891), 34.

reorganisation of the Councils. Early in 1886 the former had expressed the view that whatever concessions were possible should be given quickly and with a good grace.¹ Lansdowne, soon after his arrival, pursued this matter. In December 1889 the Government of India expressed its opinion in favour of introducing the Indian Councils Bill into Parliament without delay.² Lord Cross had also supported the scheme, but the enactment of the Bill was delayed due to the comparative unimportance of the subject, in the eyes of the British Government, before the problems of home and imperial politics. Besides this attitude of general indifference to Indian matters, there were certain considerations of a general and special character which weighed with the Government in not pushing the Bill through. The general reason, to which Lord Salisbury refers, related to the position of the party which had been labouring under disintegrating influences. He said that it was difficult to have a successful passage for the Indian Bill which had "some enemies, and no ardent supporters". Lord Salisbury's special reason was rather fantastical. He feared that the passage of the Bill in the Commons would lead to a series of inflammatory speeches by the votaries of popular government in India, and especially by Gladstone.³ While regretting the disappointment

1 Lyall, Life, ii, 151.

2 Pub. Des. from India, No.75, 24 Dec. 1889.

3 "To speak plainly - and asking your pardon if I wound any political sympathies - I dread this question being discussed while Mr. Gladstone is still a political force. He has, to my eyes, so entirely lost all sense of responsibility.. that it would be a capital danger to the Empire if the language he is sure to use is taken as a watchword by the innovators in India." Salisbury to Lansdowne, 27 June 1890, quoted in Newton, Lansdowne, 73-74.

caused to Lansdowne, he remarked that it would be fully repaid if a speech from Gladstone on the rights of the Indian people could be avoided.

Lord Newton, Lansdowne's biographer, comments that Salisbury was correct in so far as he referred to the weakness of his government, supported as it was by the Unionists, but his special reason was far from convincing. If Gladstone, says Newton, wanted to make trouble, he could have easily done so without reference to this particular question. The fact is that Gladstone's speech on Schwann's amendment was so moderate and conciliatory that his interpretation was accepted by the Government without any amendment.¹ In explaining Salisbury's attitude towards Indian constitutional development, one has to bear in mind that he was not a believer in the policy of political concessions for India.

The Indian Councils Bill, during its passage through Parliament in 1890 and 1892, remained unchanged except in one respect. The Draft Bill of 1889 had left the power of appointing additional members with the executive, and it is on this aspect of the Bill that important discussions took place. On 6 March 1890 Lord Northbrook pointed out the necessity of introducing "some system of selection or election" into the Provincial Councils.² He suggested that the Bill should include a clause enabling the Governor-General in Council to make rules, with the approval of the

1 See below, (2).

2 Hansard's Indian Debates, 1890, 60.

Lord Northbrook preferred the term representation to election. In 1892 he remarked that under Indian conditions any system of popular election by large constituencies would not be workable. Indian Parl. Debates, 15 Feb. 1892, 31.

Secretary of State, for the appointment of members. Northbrook's other suggestion related to the desirability of selecting four or five members of the Supreme Legislature by the¹ Local Legislatures. These proposals were strongly supported by Lord Ripon who remarked that a system of pure nomination impaired the influence of Indian members among their fellow countrymen. Ripon was in favour of making the Bill an empowering bill, being of opinion that the absence of such a provision would require a fresh Act of Parliament which, it was not so easy, to carry through.² Both Northbrook and Ripon remarked that in the absence of the papers from the Government of India, the House felt greatly handicapped in discussing the Bill.³ Lord Kimberley concurred in the proposals for the introduction of some element of election into the Local Councils and for the extension of some representation to the Supreme Council. Referring to the delay in introducing reforms, Kimberley observed that if the matter had been dealt with three or four years earlier, much of the agitation could have been avoided.⁴

1 Hansard's Indian Debates (1890), 61.

2 Ibid., 62-63.

3 Only an extract from Dufferin's minute was laid upon the table, though it had appeared in some Indian papers. Banerjea writes that The Bengalee, of which he was the editor, was the first paper to publish this minute in March 1889. A Nation in Making, 93.

4 Hansard's Indian Debates (1890), 79.

In 1885 Lord Randolph Churchill advocated the appointment of a committee to consider the different acts which regulated the machinery of the Government of India, including the Legislative Councils. In 1886, when Lord Kimberley was Secretary of State for India, the House of Lords agreed to his proposal for the appointment of a Joint Committee of the two Houses of Parliament for the purpose of considering those acts. But the proposal fell through. Kimberley told the Lords that the Common's Committee was not appointed on account of the opposition of Churchill.
Hansard's Indian Debates (1886), 283-4.

Although Liberal members like Northbrook and Kimberley were in favour of some form of elective system, they were decidedly opposed to any scheme of parliamentary government for India. Kimberley emphasised that the notion of a parliamentary system for a vast country like India was "one of the wildest imaginations that ever entered the minds of men". Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister, said: "the principle of election or government by representation is not an eastern idea, it does not fit eastern tradition or eastern minds"¹. He urged the House not to slip into that "great innovation" which, once accepted, would not admit of being confined to a restricted area.² The application of occidental machinery in India, said Salisbury, would bring into power not the strong and natural elements of Indian society, but its "artificial and weakly" parts.³

Replying to the debate, Lord Cross remarked that the only fault found with the Bill was not with regard to what it contained, but as to what it left out.⁴ In Committee he accepted Lord Northbrook's amendment.⁵ He remarked that it would make clear the intention of Parliament and would also satisfy the people of India.⁶ Lord Kimberley regarded the acceptance of this amendment by the Government as "to a certain extent

1 Ibid., 84.

2 Ibid., 86.

3 Indian Parl. Debates, 15 Feb. 1892, 33.

4 Debates, 6 March 1890, 73.

5 "Provided that the Governor-General in Council may from time to time, with the approval of the Secretary of State in Council, make regulations as to the conditions under which such nominations, or any of them, shall be made by the Governor-General, Governors, and Lieutenant Governors respectively, and prescribe the manner in which such regulations shall be carried into effect." This amendment was incorporated in the Act.

6 Hansard's Indian Debates, 13 March 1890, 101.

admitting the elective principle"¹, In February 1892 he said that the opposition would have preferred the more explicit recognition of the principle.²

Drawing the attention of the House to the omission from the Bill of a provision contained in the third clause of the original Bill, Lord Herschell said that its removal would seriously fetter the power and functions of the Provincial Councils.³ The insertion of the above clause had removed the disability imposed upon the Provincial Councils under Section 42 of the Act of 1861, which debarred them from legislating upon any matter dealt with by the Governor-General in Council between 1861 and the time of its constitution. Lord Cross said that the clause was omitted in order to "lighten" the Bill. He agreed to its re-insertion in Committee,⁴ and accordingly, it was restored.⁵

In February 1892 the House of Lords passed the Indian Councils Bill, on its re-introduction, without any modification. In March 1892 Curzon, Under Secretary of State for India, introduced the Bill into the House of Commons. A number of amendments were moved by certain members who were "endeavouring to fight the cause of the Indian people", but none was accepted.⁶ The most important amendment, which was later with-

1 Ibid., 101. Kimberley's construction was neither modified nor controverted by the Government.

2 Indian Parl. Debates, 15 Feb. 1892, 30.

3 Hansard's Indian Debates, 13 March 1890, 95-96.

4 Ibid., 97.

5 See Sec.5 of 1892 Act.

6 Indian Parl. Debates, 25 April 1892, 285. C.E.Schwann, Seymour Keay, Samuel Smith and Swift Mac Neill were strong supporters of the Congress movement. They strongly urged that the Bill should provide for election.

drawn, related to the introduction of the elective principle. The mover of the resolution, C.E.Schwann spoke like an ardent Congress man.¹ Gladstone, speaking for the Opposition, deprecated any division on this question. He expressed the view that "the acceptance of the elective principle by the Under Secretary, though guarded, and necessarily guarded, was, on the whole, not otherwise than a frank acceptance".² Curzon concurred in this interpretation, and thus, the elective principle for India was recognised without being embodied in the Act. J. Maclean, who was opposed to Schwann's amendment, characterised this procedure as introducing election by a "side wind".³ Sir Richard Temple, an experienced Indian administrator,⁴ suggested that the right of selection should be conferred on certain cities, to be so selected as to represent as nearly as possible the various sections of the population.⁵

Schwann's other amendment related to the increase of the number of additional members to forty.⁶ He remarked that the proposal to add only four members to the Governor-General's Council was "a very paltry and miserable" addition. Curzon defended the strength proposed in the Bill on many grounds. First, any larger addition, he said, would involve an increase of expenditure without any corresponding increase in efficiency.

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- 1 Ibid., 28 March 1892, 137-38. Schwann had attended the Congress Session of 1890. He said in Parliament that India had a national voice, and that voice, to a large extent, was the National Congress.
 - 2 Ibid., 149-50.
 - 3 Ibid., 157.
 - 4 He was a member of the Governor-General's Executive Council (1868-74), Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal (1874-1877), and Governor of Bombay (1877-80).
 - 5 Indian Parl. Debates, 28 March 1892, 164.
 - 6 Ibid., 25 April 1892, 239.

Secondly, there would be considerable difficulty in securing good men willing to devote sufficient time to the purposes of these Councils. Thirdly, the larger the Council, the longer would be the time spent on the debates. Fourthly, any increase in the number of non-official members would necessitate a corresponding increase in the number of official members; which, Curzon said, would not only result in taking away the officials from their important duties, but also in dividing the Council into Government and Opposition parties.¹ Replying to Sir William Plowden's amendment that village Councils should be utilised for purposes of nomination, Curzon remarked that they had no legal status and were extremely small as an electoral unit.² A third amendment moved by Schwann to invest the Council with power to propose resolutions, when financial matters were under discussion, and to divide it in respect of any such financial discussion,³ was also ruled out. Curzon observed that such a provision would be incompatible with the object of the Bill which only sought to provide the councils with more facilities for useful criticism.⁴

The Indian Councils Bill emerged from the Commons exactly in the form in which it had been accepted by the Lords. On all important provisions, such as, the size of the Councils and their functions, both parties in Parliament were practically unanimous. Important Opposition members like Gladstone, Kimberley, and Northbrook were quite satisfied with the measure of advance the Bill made on the existing system. Lord Northbrook expressed the view that the Bill "provided fully for all present

1 Ibid., 245-46.
 2 Ibid., 275.
 3 Ibid., 281.
 4 Ibid., 282.

needs in respect of the increase of numbers"¹. Even Gladstone did not think it necessary to make any observations on the strength and functions of the Councils as provided in the Bill. His entire speech was devoted to the discussions connected with Schwann's amendment relating to election. The only change with which the Opposition was really concerned was the introduction of some sort of elective system, but, even in that respect, only a very mild amendment was moved. The Act sedulously avoided the term "election". Sir Alfred Lyall, who as a member of the India Council had much to do with the Bill as framed by the India Office, wrote to his brother, James Lyall, Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, that the Cabinet had resolved to resist any measure which involved electoral representation in the Legislative Councils of India.² Explaining the conduct of the Opposition for not having pressed for the direct mention of the term "election", Lord Kimberley said: "We had reason to think that Cross was not unfavourable to some elective element, but that Salisbury would not consent to any direct mention of it, we thought it politic to be content with getting in the thin end of the wedge". He went on to say that the introduction of the elective element must in the first instance be "most cautiously applied", and that the mode of doing it should be left in the hands of the Government in India.³

The Act of 1892 increased the minimum number of additional members of the Governor-General's Council from six to ten and the maximum number

1 Hansard's Indian Debates (1890), 55.

2 Durand, Life, 335-36.

3 Kimberley to Arnold Morley, 27 March 1892, Add. Mss (Brit. Mus.) 44229, 19-20.

from twelve to sixteen, of whom, as under the Act of 1861, not less than one half were to be non-officials. The minimum number of additional members of the Madras and Bombay Councils was increased from four to eight and the maximum number from eight to twenty, of whom not less than one half were to be non-officials. The maximum number of nominated members of the Councils of Bengal and the North-Western Provinces was increased from twelve and nine to twenty and fifteen respectively, of whom not less than one-third were to be non-officials. The period of appointment was fixed at two years. As regards powers, both the Central and Provincial Councils were entitled to discuss the budget and ask questions.

It is quite evident that the Supreme Council was not enlarged to the same extent as the Provincial Councils. It was anomalous that the former should have received an addition of only four members to its existing strength whereas the maximum limits of the Councils of Bombay and Madras were increased by twelve. Curzon defended the scheme by pointing out that even Lord Dufferin, a strong advocate of Council reform, did not recommend the expansion of the Supreme Council, and added that since the nature of business to be transacted by the Supreme Council was different from that of Parliament, a large increase was not necessary.¹ Suffice it to say that the reasons for not having a larger Central Council were far from convincing. A vast country like India with its multitudinous problems needed a larger council than the Act provided.

1 Indian Parl. Debates, 28 March 1892, 188-89.

The Act did not lay down any cut and dried scheme as to the manner and proportion according to which nominations were to be made. Gladstone was in favour of giving the Indian authorities sufficient power to devise the means for carrying out the principles laid down by the Home Government.¹ Curzon endorsed this view, and said that the Government of India would have a large amount of initiative, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State, to give effect to the provisions of the Bill.² Kimberley also emphasised that any attempt to frame regulations by Act of Parliament would be most unwise.³

The Secretary of State asked the Central and Provincial Governments to frame rules, and to devise means to give representation to the views of "different races, classes, and localities". He indicated that Corporations with a recognised administrative basis and associations formed upon a substantial community of legitimate interests, professional, commercial, or territorial might be consulted for that purpose.⁴ Accordingly, the Government of India, in consultation with the Local Governments, drew up the draft regulations. The principles adopted in the preparation of draft rules were: (1) The determination of the number of interests to be represented; (2) the selection of members on the recommendation of bodies representing those interests; (3) the appointment of members to the remaining seats by nomination with a view to "redressing any inequality or defect" found in the system of recommendation. This scheme of representation, according to the Government of India, became necessary

1 Hansard's India Debates, 28 March 1892, 147.

2 Ibid., 190.

3 Kimberley to Morley, 27 March 1892.

4 Leg. Des. to India, No.15, 30 June 1892.

because the numerical limits fixed by the Act precluded "the idea of any detailed and individual representation of the multifarious interests and local divisions" of India. In fixing the proportion of official and non-official members, the Government of India acted on the principle of restricting the preponderance of officials as much as possible consistently with the need of retaining an official majority.¹

The draft regulations relating to the Local Councils were marked by slight differences due to local peculiarities. For instance, the landholders in Madras and Bengal were represented by a nominated member whereas Bombay and the North-Western Provinces preferred their seats to be filled by nomination. The Government of India did not accept the suggestion of the Bombay Government that officials should be eligible for recommendation. Referring to the inquiry made by Bombay and the North-Western Provinces as to whether the Councils could be summoned for discussing the Financial Statement or for giving replies to questions when no legislative work was before them, the Government of India pointed out that if it were held that the Councils could not meet except for legislative purposes, it would not be difficult in most cases to arrange, for some formal legislative business, meetings at which they could be undertaken. Lord Kimberley, the Secretary of State, did not accept these interpretations. He observed that it was not necessary to place any restrictions upon the power of recommendation vested in certain bodies. Consequently, rule 7, under which officials were declared ineligible for

1 Pub. Des. from India, No.68, 26 Oct. 1892.

recommendation, was not sanctioned. Regarding the second point, Kimberley said that a meeting could not be legally summoned for the purpose of merely discussing the Financial Statement or of giving replies when there was strictly no legislative business before it.¹

The Government of India was confronted with the question of fixing the number of seats for the various interests to be represented and of devising the ways to fill them. In view of the fact that the seats were few and the interests and classes were many, the solution, so far as the Provinces were concerned, was quite complicated. The problem at the Centre was, however, not so difficult, because out of sixteen additional members, ten were to be non-officials, of whom only four were to be appointed on the recommendation of the non-official members of the Local Councils and one on the recommendation of the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce. The remaining five seats were to be filled by nomination. In making selection for these seats, the Governor-General had to take into consideration the character of the business before the Council, which might call for the appointment of persons possessing skilled knowledge, or representing certain interests or local divisions. Regarding the appointment of a member from the legal profession, the Government of India preferred nomination to recommendation.²

1 Pub. Des. to India, No.24, 16 Feb. 1893.

It was left to the discretion of the Governor or the Lieutenant-Governor to accept the recommendation, with due regard to the maintenance of right proportion, in favour of an official. If this appointment disturbed the proportion he was authorised to reject the recommendation unless some other official member consented to resign. Govt. of India to Madras, Pub. Progs. No.140, March 1893.

2 Pub. Des. from India, No.9, 22 March 1893.

The Government of India consulted the Governments of the Punjab, the Central Provinces, Burma and Assam as to whether those provinces contained organised classes and interests whose aid and advice could be sought in selecting members for the Governor-General's Council.¹ Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick, Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, replied in the negative, emphasising that even if the materials for such arrangement existed, the adoption of the system, in view of religious antagonisms, would not be expedient.² A. Macdonnell, Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, preferred some system of recommendation to one of pure nomination, but added that organised classes did not exist there.³ The Chief Commissioner of Assam said that the only organised class in that province was the tea-planting community.⁴ The Chief Commissioner of Burma expressed the view that there was nothing approaching to political organisation among the Burmese.⁵

The Government of India's plan for the selection of non-official members struck an even balance between recommendation and nomination. One half of the members were to be recommended and one half to be nominated. In its view the scheme of election, as provided in the regulations,

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- 1 Pub. Letters, Nos. 1834-37, 22 Aug. 1892.
 - 2 Letter to Govt. of India, 31 Oct. 1892, Pub. Progs., No.84, Feb. 1893.
 - 3 Macdonnell proposed a plan according to which the Chief Commissioner was to select one member out of four to be recommended by the district councils and important municipal committees. The Province was to be divided into two circles, one comprising the Jabbalpur and Narbada Divisions, and the other comprising the Nagpur and Chhattisgarh Divisions. Each circle had to recommend two members for appointment to the Governor-General's Council. Pub. Progs., No.82, Feb. 1893.
 - 4 Chief Secretary, Assam to Secretary, Govt. of India. (H.D.), 14 Sept. 1892, Pub. Progs., No.81, Feb. 1893.
 - 5 Chief Secretary, Burma to Secretary, Govt. of India, (H.D.), 3 Jan. 1893, Pub. Progs., No.94, Feb. 1893.

adequately carried out the intention of Parliament,¹ while under the system of nomination the Governor-General could fill seats in such manner as he thought best with reference to legislative business before the Council and the due representation of the different classes of the community.²

The scheme of Provincial representation was necessarily more elaborate. Each of the Provincial Councils consisted of official and non-official members, of the latter a major proportion of the seats was filled by recommendation.³ The seats were distributed among a certain number of bodies, such as, the district and municipal boards, the landholders, the mercantile community, and the universities. The total number of seats allotted to municipalities and district boards in each Province was between three to four. These bodies represented the urban and rural classes and were the only form of local self-government resting upon a partially elective basis. In Bombay difficulty arose in reconciling the principle of class representation with that of the representation of localities. The Bombay Government pointed out that

1 Pub. Des. from India, No.9, 22 March 1893.

2 Notification, No.19, Leg. Dept., 23 June 1893.

3 According to the regulations made under Sec. I(4) of the Indian Councils Act, besides the Advocate General or the officer acting in that capacity, not more than nine officials were to be appointed in Madras and Bombay. In Bengal and the North-Western Provinces, the number of officials was not to be more than 10 and 7 respectively. In Madras, Bombay, Bengal, and the North-Western Provinces, the number of seats to be filled by nomination was 7, 8, 7 and 6 respectively. Notification, H.D. (Pub.), 17 March 1893.

the Presidency had four territorial divisions, differentiated from each other by such languages as Sindhi, Gujarati, Marathi and Canarese. It was in favour of allotting seats in those areas to more important interests, and on this principle it suggested that the appointment of a Zaminder in Sind, the allotment of one seat to the urban population in Gujarat, the selection of one member from the Deccan on the recommendation of the Sardars,¹ and the appointment of one member on the recommendation of the district boards of the Southern Division.² The Bombay Presidency Association suggested that the Presidency should be divided into five divisions, namely, Sind, Gujarat, the Deccan, Karnatak, and the Bombay City. The Association proposed that twelve seats should be thrown open to election, of which Bombay and the Deccan should each be allotted three and other divisions two each.³

In each province the Governor or the Lieutenant Governor was left with a small number of reserved seats to be filled by nomination. The object was to provide for the nomination of Hindus, Muslims and non-official Europeans or Eurasians if no member of these communities succeeded in securing recommendation.⁴ It is to be noted that these communities were included in the list which also contained the trading and manufacturing, urban, rural, professional or literary classes, but

1 The Deccan landed aristocracy.

2 Bombay to Govt. of India, No.223, Leg. 29 Sept. 1892.

3 To Secretary to Govt. of India (Leg. Dept.), 3 Nov. 1892, Pub. Progs., No.96, Dec. 1892.

4 Letters to Local Govt., Nos. 1805-8, 15 Aug. 1892. The Govt. of India's letter to Bombay also included the Parsis.

the regulations provided fixed seats for classes and interests and not for religious communities.¹ However, the arrangement was by no means inconsistent with the representation of communities, since persons representing interests would also belong to the above religious groups. It is the other part of the scheme, namely, the introduction of election, which, it was apprehended, might produce uneven results, and to meet this eventuality, the Provincial heads were invested with discretionary power to fill a certain number of seats.

The scheme of Central and Provincial representation, on account of a very small number of seats for non-officials, left little room for territorial representation. Lord Lansdowne remarked that with the prescribed dimensions of legislative bodies it would be "altogether hopeless to attempt the introduction of a representative system in the sense in which the words are understood in western communities". He referred to the difficulties of allotting a few seats by dividing the country, either on a geographical basis, or in respect of the different communities in such a manner as to provide for an equitable representation.

Remarking on the scheme of representation, Lansdowne said that the Government of India was not expected to create a complete and symmetrical system of representation but to make a bona fide endeavour to render the Legislative Councils more representative of the different sections of the

1 In Madras, municipalities, the district boards, the corporation, the university, trading interests, and zamindars were given in all 8 seats. In the North-Western Provinces, 6 seats were distributed among municipalities, district boards, merchants and the university of Allahabad. The Bengal and Bombay arrangements were similar.

Indian community, and for that purpose, the use of both nomination and recommendation was resorted to.¹

The Government's scheme of representation of "races, classes and interests" did not escape the criticism of Indian political bodies. The Sarvajanic Sabha of Poona criticised it as erroneous in principle. The Sabha laid stress on territorial representation, and remarked that a legislature was generally concerned with laws affecting the entire community. It emphasised that encouragement to the principle of recognising races and creeds would be harmful to the country.² The Governor of Bombay replying to a deputation of the Sarvajanic Sabha and several other bodies observed that whereas the members of the deputation would have started with the idea of making territorial divisions as the basis of representation, the Government started with the idea that the distribution of seats should be based on the division of races, classes and interests, to be combined with the idea of territorial representation only wherever possible.³

While preparing the scheme of representation the Government was fully aware of the importance of Muslim representation. Lord Dufferin's Committee had been in favour of the representation of Muslims in proportion

1 Progs. of the Leg. Council of the Governor-General, 16 March 1893 XXXII, 105-8.

Lansdowne pointed out the difficulty of allotting a handful of seats in a Province like Bengal with a population of 70 millions. The regulations provided for 7 recommended members, of whom three were to be selected by the Calcutta University, the Corporation and the Chamber of Commerce. Only 4 seats could, at the most, be filled on the basis of territorial representation.

2 From Sarvajanic Sabha to Govt. of India, 3 June 1893, Pub. Progs., No.137, July 1893.

3 Pub. Progs., No.193, July 1893.

to their population. Lord Dufferin, in his famous minute dealing with the Councils, laid strong emphasis on the disunity of India and its division into two "mighty political communities" and "minor nationalities". In Parliament references were made to the distinct interests of the Muslims. Lord Kimberley emphasised that if the Government were to be guided entirely by Hindu popular opinion, it would find itself in great difficulty.¹ Lord Northbrook was in favour of investing the Governors with some discretionary power of nomination, so that adequate representation of people of "different races and different religions" might be secured.² Lord Salisbury remarked that the introduction of the elective system was inconsistent with the condition of a community divided into two hostile sections.³

In the absence of a well-organised and country-wide association it is difficult to say how the Muslims generally reacted to the reform proposals. But there is no doubt that an influential section was opposed to election. The Muhammadan Literary Society of Calcutta expressed satisfaction at the omission of any elective principle from the Councils Bill of 1890.⁴ The Society urged that since the Muslims were educationally backward and politically not well-organised, their interests would not be safe if election were introduced. In 1893 the Central Muhammadan Association told Lansdowne that the Muslims would have no chance of being returned by any one of the recommending bodies. It demanded three seats

1 Hansard's Indian Debates, 6 March 1890, 83.

2 Ibid., 13 March, 100.

3 Ibid., 6 March 1890, 85.

4 Memorial from the Society, Pub. Progs., No.152, April 1890.

for the Muslims on the Supreme Council.¹ Lord Lansdowne, while declining to undertake the appointment of a particular number of additional members of any class, said that their request for representation would not be lost sight of.² In his farewell reply on 22 January 1894 to sixty Muslims, representing the Central Association and a large number of Branch Associations, Lansdowne said that the vacancy caused by the retirement of C.R. Pantalu would, he hoped, be filled by the appointment of a Muslim, and the Council would then include eight Indian members, of whom three would be Hindus, two Sikhs, two Muslims and one Parsi.³

So far as the functions of the enlarged Councils were concerned, the rules for both the Central and Provincial Councils were almost similar. The Financial Statement was to be laid before the Council every year and each member was entitled to make any observation on it. The Finance Member, and in the Provinces the member who explained the Statement, was authorised to reply. In the case of Provinces the discussion was limited to those branches of revenue and expenditure which were under the control of the Local Government. The discussion of Imperial finance was not allowed. The right of interpellation was given to both Central and Provincial Councils subject to certain restrictions. Questions were to be so framed as to be merely requests for information, and were not to be in any argumentative or hypothetical form. As the rules did not specify the subjects to which the questions were limited, the President had power to disallow any question without giving any reason

1 Pub. Progs., No.52, Oct. 1893.

2 Ibid., No.53, Oct. 1893.

3 Lansdowne, Speeches, 377.

therefor. In the Provincial Councils questions were to be confined to matters under the control of the Local Government, and on matters which were and which had been till recently the subject of controversy between the Governor-General in Council or the Secretary of State, no questions were to be asked except as to matters of fact, and the answer was to be confined to a statement of facts.¹

It may be noted that although the Act had provided for the maximum and minimum limits of additional members, the Central and Provincial Governments preferred to keep to the maximum strength. As regards the proportion of official members, they did not appoint the full quota of officials permissible under the Act, but were content with bare official majorities. In the Councils of the North-Western Provinces and Bengal, the strength of non-official members was fixed at about half, though it could have been kept down at one-third. The Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, Sir Auckland Colvin, was inclined to dispense with an official majority. In a Council of fifteen members he was in favour of having six officials, seven recommended and two nominated members. He expressed the view that this proportion would in practice secure a majority to the Government.² In 1893 Sir Charles Elliott, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, deliberately recommended a non-official majority in the Council.³ The Government of India, while sanctioning the

1 Pub. Progs., Nos.101, 104. Feb. 1893.

2 Letter to Govt. of India, No. 2841, 3 Oct. 1892. The Govt. of India fixed the number of officials at 7.

3 Tel. to Simla, 1 June 1893. Pub. Progs., No.29, June 1893.

proposal, observed that it would be preferable, at any rate, at the outset to retain an official majority in the Council by appointing ten officials.¹ The Lieutenant Governor appointed nine officials and eleven non-officials, but the strength was equalised after some time.²

The Indian Councils Bill of 1892 was not expected, as Gladstone said, to produce "large and imposing results".³ Curzon's estimate of the Bill was similar. "This Bill", he said, "is not, perhaps, a great, or heroic measure; but, at the same time, it does mark a decisive step, and a step in advance".⁴ Lord Lansdowne observed that though the proposals would disappoint those who liked to travel faster along the path of reform, they marked "substantial steps" in advance.⁵ According to Keith, the additional powers conceded in the Act were "not very important", but the principle of representation was advantageous and in the case of the Provinces the gains of the system were more considerable.⁶ Referring to the Act of 1893, the Government of India remarked in 1908 that the facilities for debates were restricted and the nature of discussion became of a "desultory character".⁷

The Acts of 1861 and 1892, designed as they were on the same pattern, can be conveniently read together. It is true to say that the Act of 1892 was the revised and enlarged edition of the Indian Councils

1 Pub. Progs., No.31, June 1893.

2 Fowler's reply to Wedderburn, Indian Parl. Debates, 1894, 67.

3 Indian Parl. Debates, 1892, 147.

4 Ibid., 134.

5 Progs. of the Leg. Council of the Governor-General, 16 March 1892, XXXII, 111.

6 Keith, A Constitutional History of India, 177.

7 Pub. Des. from India, No.21, 1 Oct. 1908, para. 57.

Act of 1861. It marked a "cautious extension" of that experiment which had been inaugurated thirty years before. The aims of both these reforms were to provide a medium for the correction of the misrepresentation of British policy and for having an intimate knowledge of the wishes and feelings of Indians. The common features of the Acts were: the use of the term "additional" for members added to the executive councils; the proportion of non-officials to be not less than half; a two-year term for the members; and the small size of the councils. And it is remarkable that both Canning and Lansdowne were anxious to bring the reforms into operation before their departure. The points of difference between the two Acts lay in the number of additional members, the scope of the functions of the Councils and the mode of nomination. The reforms of 1892 introduced a "species of indirect election"¹ and recognised the necessity of appointing the representatives of minorities. The principle of communal representation, though neither mentioned in the Act nor in the regulations issued under it, was recognised. The Local Governments were directed to select the representatives of races, classes and interests. But the right of selection was not conferred upon any religious community. It was left to the executive to nominate persons belonging to certain religious bodies in case they failed to secure an adequate representation by election.

The provision for election, though "limited and indirect", admitted into the Councils members who were calculated to carry more

1 Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, i, para.134.

weight than nominated members. As regards the proportion of recommended members, the Provincial Councils underwent a larger increase than the Supreme Council. An addition of four members to the Governor-General's Council, after an interval of thirty years, was not in consonance with the progress made by the country during this period. The fact is that the second instalment of reforms was not only delayed, it was conceded in a spirit of over-caution. Lord Lansdowne later characterised the reforms as a "very cautious measure"¹. In fixing the strength of the Councils, the authorities followed the principle of no addition of non-official members without a corresponding addition of officials. This principle persisted even in the Act of 1909, under which an official majority was retained at the Centre though abandoned in the Provinces. But, even in the provincial sphere, the Local Governments could count on the support of nominated members who together with officials provided an adequate guarantee against any difficult situation. In view of the fact that the Supreme Council was considerably enlarged in 1909 without sacrificing the principle of an official majority, it is not difficult to see that the possibility of enlarging the Supreme Council in 1892 was much greater than the Act provided.

One looks in vain to find the introduction of any new principles into the Act of 1892. It marked, on a modest scale, the extension of the provisions of the Act of 1861. The enlarged Councils remained advisory and consultative in character. Although the principle of election was

1 Parl. Debates on Indian Affairs, 24 Feb. 1909, 88.

recognised, the term 'election' was neither mentioned in the Act nor in the regulations. Thanks to Lord Salisbury's obstinacy that legal recognition was denied to a principle which was acknowledged in practice. His biographer remarks that the regulations issued under the Liberal Government provided for an elective element and thus went beyond the limits of Northbrook's amendment.¹ It is broadly true that the spirit in which the regulations were framed imparted to the scheme a measure of liberalisation not expressly embodied in the Act of 1892.

It is difficult to say how far the changes introduced by the Act of 1892 were intended to be an instrument of political education. In a covering despatch Lord Cross explained that the objects of the Act were to bring the legislatures "into closer relation with the best representatives of public opinion in India, and of multiplying the opportunities for an interchange of views and information between the Governments and their Councils".² Thus the objects of the scheme were extremely limited. The circumscribed radius within which the Councils had to function, the restricted number of additional members and the limited and indirect mode of election left little room for political training. This aspect of the scheme was neither emphasised in Parliament nor in the correspondence between the Home and Indian authorities. The constitution of the Supreme Council was not consistent with it; and even in the provincial sphere, such training could only be achieved through such seats as were filled by the recommendation of municipalities

1 Lady Cecil, Life, iv, 201.

2 Leg. Des. to India, No.15, 30 June, 1892.

and district boards. In December 1896, while sanctioning the establishment of councils for Burma and the Punjab, Lord Hamilton, Secretary of State, referred to the educational value of local legislatures. He remarked that it had been the consistent policy of the Government to plan and develop them "as an important agency in drawing out the latent capabilities of our Indian subjects, and leading them from indifference, perhaps from estrangement, into active cooperation with the Government"¹. Here the emphasis appears largely to be on the political advantages of the scheme. This view is supported by the fact that the Councils of Burma and the Punjab were constituted according to the Act of 1861, and in consequence, the opportunities for political education were practically denied to them.

It is interesting to note how the question of Council reform was approached in non-governmental circles. In December 1885 the Madras Mahajana Sabha submitted a memorial emphasising the necessity of selecting members for the legislative councils by a limited electorate existing in the shape of local bodies, universities, and the Chambers of Commerce. The memorialists suggested that the Councils should have power to put questions on matters of administration and finance and that the members should be classified as official and non-official rather than ordinary and additional.²

Among Indian public bodies the National Congress was by far the most important. There was hardly any subject which claimed its attention so much as Council reform. In 1886 the Congress elaborated

1 Pub. Des. to India, No.116, 3 Dec. 1896.

2 Encl. to Pub. Des. from India, No.61, 23 Nov. 1886.

its resolution of 1885 demanding a material increase in the strength of the Supreme and Provincial Councils. Its proposals provided for the election of not less than one-half of the members and for the nomination of not more than one-fourth of officials and of the same number of officials or non-officials. The Congress suggested that the members of the Local Councils should be elected by local bodies. The Chamber of Commerce and Universities were also given representation in certain Provinces. The members of the Supreme Council were to be elected by the elected members of the Provincial Councils. As regards the functions of the enlarged Councils, it was suggested that they should be invested with power to deal with all legislative measures and all financial questions including the budget. Information regarding matters of foreign policy, military strategy or of such a nature as could not be supplied consistently with public security might be declined by the Government. The executive was to possess the power of overruling the decision of the majority, but a full exposition of the grounds on which such power was exercised was to be published. It was further provided that the overruled majority could represent the matter to the Standing Committee of the Commons.¹

In 1890 Charles Bradlaugh submitted two Bills for the reform of the Councils. The proposals of his first Bill had been fully discussed by the Congress of 1889, which he had attended. The First Bill provided for an enlarged Supreme Council consisting of not less than 80 members,

1 Resolution IV, Report of the Second Indian National Congress (1886).

half of whom were to be elected by the electoral bodies of the various Provinces. Members were to be elected or nominated for a period of three years. Regular sessions were to be held from December to March. All legislative measures and financial questions including the Budget were to be submitted to the Council. The Bill invested the Councils with power to move resolutions on all matters except those involving foreign policy, military strategy or such interests as could not be disclosed in public interest. The composition and functions of the Provincial Councils were also based on the same principles.¹

Bradlaugh's Bill of November 1890 was somewhat different. It provided for the election by ballot of at least one-third and not more than half of the members of Councils for a period of three years. The right of franchise was to be conferred on not less than two per cent of the people. The Councils were to be invested with power to discuss the budget, to ask questions, and to pass resolutions. Members could also divide the Council on any financial discussion. An important provision of the Bill was that the regulations for the election of members were to be made by the heads of governments.²

In 1890 and again in 1892 Sir William Plowden introduced a Bill which provided that the village panchayats should be reorganised for purposes of election. They were to elect their representatives to sub-division councils, which in their turn had the right to elect members to the District Councils. Each district council was entitled to select by

1 Parl. Papers, V, (1890).

2 Parl. Papers, V, (1890-91).

ballot one member for the Provincial Council provided that the population of the district was not less than two millions. Districts with less population were to be grouped. Each Provincial Council was to select from among its representative members, one representative for the Central Council on the basis of one member for ten millions of population. The Bill conferred on the Councils power to ask questions and discuss the annual financial statement.¹

These bills had only a very small number of supporters and did not go beyond a first reading. All the three provided for an increase in the size and functions of the Councils and the introduction of the elective principle. But none of them sought to establish legislative control over the executive. Even Bradlaugh's Bills, which had the full support of the National Congress, did not provide for a majority of elected members in the Councils. What the Congress stressed most was the recognition of the elective principle in the choice of members.

The Central and Provincial Councils were reorganised according to the regulations framed in 1893. During 1894-98, excepting some adjustment of seats and the establishment of the Punjab and Burma Councils in 1897, no important changes were introduced. In Bombay the local boards in the Central Division were substituted as a nominating body for the Karachi Chamber of Commerce. In Bengal one seat was withdrawn from those allotted to the municipalities and was transferred to the landholders.

¹ The Bill fixed the maximum number of Provincial representatives on the Central Council, Bengal, the N.W.P. Madras, Bombay, the Punjab, and the Central Provinces were entitled to send not more than 6, 4, 3, 2, 2, and 1 respectively. Parl. Papers, 111. (1892).

In 1898 the Secretary of State inquired whether the regulations called for any amendment. This inquiry was in response to the British Indian Association's allegation that the regulations had a tendency to give undue preponderance in the Councils to the professional classes, and especially to the legal profession.¹ The Government of India consulted the Local Governments on this question. The Madras Government's view was that all the important classes had been represented and therefore the regulations called for no amendment. It also pointed out that though all the five recommended members belonged to the legal profession, no better representation, under the circumstances, of the rural classes could be secured.² The Government of Bengal emphasised that one seat should be transferred to the landholders. The Lieutenant Governor of the N.W.P. pointed out that all the important classes had been represented, and added that the representation of the Muslims and the landowning classes had been provided in each case out of the two seats reserved to the Government.³ He was also not in favour of any modification in the system. The Government of Bombay pointed out that the municipalities and district boards had been invariably represented by the lawyers, and was of opinion that the regulations had worked well and no changes were necessary.⁴

The Government of India was also satisfied with the representation of the classes in the Supreme Council.⁵ Thus the Secretary of State's

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- 1 Pub. Des. to India, No.137, 15 Sept. 1898.
 - 2 From Madras to Govt. of India, No.7, 31 Jan. 1899.
 - 3 N.W.P. to Govt. of India, No.16, 7 Jan. 1899.
 - 4 Bombay to the Govt. of India, No.113, 12 April. 1899.
 - 5 Pub. Des. from India, No.42, 6 July. 1899.

inquiry resulted in no amendment except in the transfer of one seat from the municipalities to the landholders in Bengal, which was to be filled by recommendation.

Until 1885 only three Local Councils had been created. The decision with regard to the establishment of Councils in certain other Provinces, though taken much earlier, fell a victim to many postponements. The reason was that the Government of India did not follow, in this respect, a settled policy. In December 1859 Lord Canning recommended councils only for Madras and Bombay¹; but in 1861 he revised his views and proposed that each Presidency should have a legislative council, and that the Supreme Government should be invested with power to create councils for any Province or Chief Commissionership.² Sir Bartle Frere suggested that in the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab local councils, composed of principal officers, and presided over by the executive heads, would legislate better than the Supreme Council or the Provincial heads. He further proposed that the heads of Provinces in concurrence with their councils should be left to decide the time and manner of appointing non-officials. In another minute he suggested that the Governor-General's Legislative Council should have power to pass laws for the purpose of constituting councils provided that not less than one-third of their members were non-officials.³

1 Des. from India (H.D.), No.5, 9 Dec. 1859.

2 Des. from India (H.D.), No.2A, 15 Jan. 1861.

3 Frere's minutes of 16 March 1860 and 29 Dec. 1860.

Frere said that though it was difficult for some time to provide councils for the North-Western Provinces, the Punjab, Nagpur and Pegu on the model proposed for older Provinces, he would have preferred to have the assistance of a "darbar" of Indians of rank and experience.

Sir Charles Wood was in agreement with these views and the proposals of the Government of India. He said in Parliament that the Governor-General would be empowered, with the sanction of the Secretary of State, to create a Council for the North-Western Provinces or the Punjab, or any other part of India, and also remarked that even Pegu, when ripe for such a change, would be better administered with a council.¹ Accordingly, the Act of 1861 contained the necessary provisions.² In his covering despatch Sir Charles Wood asked the Government of India to establish a council for Bengal with as little delay as possible, and left it to the latter to establish councils for the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab "either with it, or at such future periods as your Lordship in Council may deem expedient".³ But it took the North-Western Provinces twenty-five years and the Punjab and Burma thirty-five years to have councils of their own. The delay was due to the attitude of general indifference, and sometimes to the opposition of the Governors-General and their Councils and the Provincial heads.

The question which had been practically settled provoked a good deal of controversy in 1868. This followed in the wake of the Orissa Famine of 1865-66. The Bengal Administration came in for much criticism for mishandling the situation. Sir Stafford Northcote invited the opinion of the Government of India on matters relating to the Bengal Administration, including the necessity of forming an executive council in

1 Hansard, CLXl11, 644.

2 24 & 25 Vict., c.67, s.44.

3 Leg. Des. to India, No.14, 9 Aug. 1861.

Bengal on the models of Madras and Bombay. Sir John Lawrence, then Governor-General, emphasised that the best form of Government for many parts of India, including Bengal, was personal administration by a single head. He was strongly of opinion that summary powers of legislation should be vested in the Executive in the North-Western Provinces, the Punjab, the Central Provinces, Burma, and Assam. Lawrence was against a separate legislature even for Bengal.¹ Sir William Muir, a member of the Council, maintained that since the Imperial Legislature was unsuited for local legislation, the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab should have their own councils.² G.N.Taylor, another member of the Council, expressed his opinion against a separate council for the North-Western Provinces, and suggested that occasional meetings of the Imperial Council should be held at Agra and Allahabad, at which local questions might be brought forward.³ Sir H.M. Durand was opposed to the creation of new councils and stressed that the Local Government should not be encouraged to assume the position of "confederate states".⁴ William Grey, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, expressed regret at the imperfect execution of the policy of 1861 and was of opinion that there would be no insuperable difficulty in any province in forming a local council.⁵ Sir Henry Maine supported the policy of "multiplying the local councils". He thought that the Supreme Council had to deal with too much of the "parish vestry"

1 Minute of 19 Feb. 1868 and Memorandum of 20 Jan. 1868; Pub. Progs., No.151, March 1868.

2 Minute of 24 Feb. 1868, Pub. Progs., No.152.

3 Minute of 27 Feb. 1868, Pub. Progs., No.156.

4 Minute of 17 March 1868, Pub. Progs., No.159.

5 Minute of 13 March 1868, Pub. Progs., No.150.

business of local Governments. Maine was in favour of a Council for the North-Western Provinces, which should, in his opinion, meet only when legislation was actually needed.¹

Commenting on the views of the members of his Council, Lawrence again opposed the extension of the principle of local legislation to any other Province, and stressed that the time had not yet arrived to take steps in that direction.² It may be remarked that the time was no worse than in 1861 when a clear decision had been reached. The views of Lawrence with which Taylor, Durand, and John Strachey agreed, prevailed with the result that the formation of Councils in the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab was postponed.³

In September 1885 Sir Alfred Lyall, Lieutenant Governor of the N.W.P., raised the question of establishing a legislative council. He felt that a province of large area with a population of some 44 millions was insufficiently represented when legislative questions were considered by the Central Legislature. He pointed out that Madras, Bombay and Bengal, besides their own Legislative Councils, were invariably represented on the Central Legislature and the Lieutenant Governors of Bengal and the Punjab took part in its proceedings during the greater part of each winter and summer, whereas that Council had not assembled in the North-Western Provinces since 1873. Lyall suggested that under Section 44 of the Act

1 H.S. Maine, Minutes (1862-69), 162-67.

2 Minute of 23 March 1868, Pub. Progs., No. 160.

3 Explaining the reason why councils were not established in those Provinces, Grant Duff, Under Secretary of State for India, told the Commons in Feb. 1870 that the "materials, in fact, for such councils did not yet exist". Hansard, CXCIX, 557-58.

a local council should be constituted and that under Section 47, according to which the Governor-General had power to fix the limits of any province, Oudh and the North-Western Provinces should constitute a single province for legislative purposes only. He proposed that ten councillors should be nominated to assist him.¹ The Government of India saw no difficulty in combining the two provinces, but pointed out that the new legislative council would have an extremely limited field of action, because under the Indian Councils Act of 1861 a local legislature could not amend any act of the Governor-General in Council passed since 1861. The Government of India, however, suggested that the difficulty could be met by scheduling certain acts specially relating to the province and by declaring that nothing in those acts should prevent the local council from legislating on subjects with which they dealt. Lyall's proposals were supported by the Government of India on several grounds. First, they had been put forward by a most experienced and cautious administrator. Secondly, the constitution of a separate legislature was in accordance with the statute of 1861. Thirdly, the Province had a population second only to Bengal. Fourthly, the peculiar interests of the Province obtained less representation than those of any of the larger Provinces. In reply to the argument that the Local Council would be inferior in character to the Supreme Legislature and might take a narrow view of things, the Government of India remarked that the drawbacks would be more than

1 Letter to the Govt. of India, No.16, 14 Sept. 1885, Progs., N.W.P. & Oudh (Gen.), May 1887. According to this letter, the population of Bengal, Madras, Bombay, and N.W.P. & Oudh was about 66.7, 30.8, 16.5 and 44.2 millions respectively.

compensated for by the local knowledge of the members of the local council. The creation of a council in the North-Western Provinces, it said, would enable the Central Legislature to devote itself more exclusively to general legislative measures of importance and would be popular with a section of Indian public opinion. The Government of India emphasised that the experience of previous twenty-five years warranted the more extended application of the policy of 1861. T. Hope, a member of the Governor-General's Council, dissented, being of opinion that the amount of business to be performed by such a legislature and the supply of competent men to hold the position of councillors were insufficient to justify its establishment.¹

Lord Kimberley, then Secretary of State, sanctioned the establishment of a Council for the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, but he rejected the Government of India's recommendation that the new Council should be enabled to repeal or amend any act of the Governor-General in Council passed between 1861 and the date of its constitution.²

The new provisions took effect from 1 December 1886.³ The Council consisted of nine members besides the President. Sir Alfred Lyall grudgingly accepted the formation of the Council with restricted powers, lest, he thought, prolonged discussion over the question might indefinitely delay its establishment. It was his strong wish to open the Council, if possible, before his term ended. Nevertheless, he urged the Government

1 Des. from India, No.3, 2 March 1886.

2 Jud. Des. to India, No.20, 27 May 1886.

3 Notification, H.D. (Jud.), No.1704, 26 Nov. 1886.

of India to remove these restrictions. He pointed out that the despatches of Wood and Canning did not contemplate any such limitation, and emphasised that the utility of the Council would be seriously impaired if it was debarred from touching, by way of adjustment to local needs, any laws passed between 1861 and 1886, a period during which many important laws affecting the North-Western Provinces had been passed. Lyall expressed the view that the disability to which the Council was subjected would also affect its dignity and reputation.¹ The Government of India accepted the argument that the powers of the Council should not be unnecessarily fettered,² but Lord Cross in London declined to alter the previous decision, and thus the disability remained.³

The establishment of the Council of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh in 1887 was, as Dufferin said, the outcome of the efforts of Sir Alfred Lyall.⁴ To Lord Dufferin's Government goes the credit for extending its constant support to Lyall's proposals, including the removal of limitations on the powers of the Council. The Pioneer's remark that "had it not been for the vigour and persistency with which he urged these claims, they might have remained in the background for another twenty years"⁵ was a fitting tribute paid to Lyall, though, in the light of the fact that the Punjab and Burma Councils were established in 1897, it may be said that the North-Western Provinces could hardly have gone without a Council for more

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- 1 Letter to Govt. of India, 14 Feb. 1887.
 - 2 Des. from India, No.19, 11 June 1887.
 - 3 Jud. Des. to India, No.25, 28 July 1887.
 - 4 Dufferin, Speeches (1884-88), 209.
 - 5 The Pioneer, 10 Jan. 1887.

than another ten years.

Although Wood's despatch of 1861 envisaged the establishment of Councils for the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab almost simultaneously with that of Bengal, it was not until 1897 that the Punjab was provided with a Council of its own. In 1885, at its very first session, the National Congress passed a resolution for the creation of councils in these two Provinces.¹ As late as 1888 the Dufferin Committee expressed the view that the time for the constitution of councils in the Punjab and Burma had not arrived. In 1891 Sir James Lyall, Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, submitted a note to the Government of India in anticipation of the reintroduction of Cross's Bill in Parliament, saying that the codification of customary law, remedial measures in connection with agricultural indebtedness, sanitary legislation, and many other matters of local interest could be dealt with by a local council. He also pointed out that it would not be difficult to find a sufficient number of qualified non-official members.² In view of the fact that the Indian Councils Bill was not likely to be reintroduced before February 1892, the Government of India preferred that the question should be reserved for Lyall's successor.³

1 See Resolution III, Report (1885).

2 India Pub. Letters (1896), 521-25.

3 Jud. Letter to Punjab, No. 1297, 30 Sept. 1891.

In 1892 Sir W. Plowden moved an amendment that the Bill should fix the number of members of the Punjab Council, to be nominated by the Lt. Governor, at not more than 12, when the provisions of the Act of 1861 were extended. Curzon said that it would not be wise to tie the hands of the Government of India, or "to impose numerical restrictions upon a Council which is not yet called into existence, and the date of whose birth is not even approximately known". (Indian Parl. Debates, 25 April 1892, 247).

In March 1896 the question was reopened. The Central Government invited the opinion of Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick, Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab,¹ who put forward many arguments against the proposal for a Council in the Punjab. He maintained that legislation for the Punjab was carried out in a very satisfactory manner by the Imperial Council at which the Lieutenant Governor also sat when meetings were held at Simla. He was against allowing his officials to speak freely, and moreover, he remarked there was a dearth of "articulately speaking or articulately thinking men" in the Punjab. In his view the establishment of a Council was not desirable on political grounds, for those who demanded it represented none but themselves. He emphasised that in view of the presence of many turbulent elements the Punjab needed a strong executive.²

The members of Governor-General's Council by a majority of five to two rejected the proposal. Lord Elgin, the Governor-General, and J. Woodburn were in favour.³ In a remarkable minute, Elgin strongly advocated the scheme of legislative decentralisation. He emphasised that the opponents of the policy of reforms must reckon with a different set of conditions, and pointed out that the object of the change was to make the people feel that matters connected with their daily life were decided with due regard to their interests. Decentralisation, he stressed, was the only remedy. He was of the opinion that non-officials, whose advice would be of great value, were not difficult to find. Replying

1 Pub. Progs., No.171, Aug. 1896.

2 Note by Sir D. Fitzpatrick, 10 April 1896.

3 Pub. Des. from India, No.64, 25 Aug. 1896.

to the argument that the presence of turbulent elements in the Punjab was not congenial to the institution of a council, Elgin said that such elements existed in other Provinces also, and that in case any disorder broke out, a strong military force was at hand to deal with it. He observed that opposition to the institution of councils on the ground that they might promote a recrudescence of sedition and disloyalty was based on a wrong appreciation of the situation. "Of one thing" he stressed, "I am confident, and that is, that it (sedition) will not be overcome by stifling criticism, but rather by inviting free discussion, whenever and wherever we can, and by throwing open to the light of day and being prepared to justify every act of our administration and of the officers who carry out our orders"¹. In a private letter to Lord Hamilton he expressed the view that, on the whole, the population in the Punjab was more loyal than elsewhere; and added: "Men who have grown old in the traditions of the Civil Service like Fitzpatrick and Trevor,² not unnaturally, cannot abide the representatives of the advanced school who are to be found on the reformed Councils"³. He went on to say that Indian representatives, as members of councils, would be obliged to behave in a responsible manner. It was not the talk, he said, that was really dangerous but the silent movement, the motive nor manner of which the Government could discover. In reply to Sir Alexander Mackenzie's

1 Minute, 24 Aug. 1896, Pub. Progs., No.182, Aug. 1896.

2 A.C.Trevor, a member of the Council, was opposed to the establishment of councils. In his opinion, the idea of a council for Burma was "altogether premature" and for the Punjab "distinctly mischievous". Minute, Pub. Progs., No.181, Aug. 1896.

3 Elgin to Hamilton, 25 Aug. 1896, Pr. Cor. Ind., ii, 827-30.

objection to a council for Burma on the ground that representatives would not be available, Elgin remarked: "Are we to wait until not only Burmans learn English but to use Mackenzie's phrase, 'the whole tone of native society has been occidentalised'?"

Elgin's opinion is the more remarkable because as late as October 1895 he had voted against establishing a Council for Burma.¹ The change may be accounted for by the fact that in the meantime the Governor-General had become fully aware of the attitude of the Secretary of State who had asked the Government of India in January 1896 to report on the question as to whether the time had not arrived when Burma could have a legislative council of its own. The Secretary of State further remarked: "It will not escape your observation that in the event of such a concession being made to Burma it cannot be withheld any longer from the Punjab."² In August 1896 Lord Hamilton strongly stressed that some means must be found of creating councils in Burma and the Punjab.³ In December 1896 he sanctioned the establishment of councils for both. The new councils, in their organisation and functions, were constituted according to the provisions of the Act of 1861;⁴ consequently, they started their career under great limitations.

1 Fin. Des. from India, No.304, 23 Oct. 1895.

2 Pub. Des. to India, No.I, 9 Jan. 1896.

3 Hamilton to Elgin, 14 Aug. 1896, Pr. Cor. Ind., i, 349.

4 Pub. Des. to India, No.116, 3 Dec. 1896. Lord Hamilton remarked that it was anomalous that a Province like Burma, one half of which had been under British administration for only ten years, should be ripe for a measure which was considered premature in the case of a Province under British administration for about half a century.

Five members of the Governor-General's Council were in favour of a council for Burma, but there were only two including Lord Elgin in favour of a council for the Punjab.

In 1861 Sir Charles Wood had expressed the opinion that Burma was not ripe for a council. In 1895 the question of constituting a council was involved in the Government of India's proposal to convert the Chief Commission into a lieutenant-governorship.¹ Under Section 46 of the Act of 1861 no new province was to be created without a local legislature, and thus the question of converting Burma into a lieutenant-governorship was inseparably connected with the constitution of a council. The Secretary of State was in favour of a council for Burma. The Government of India, by a majority of five to two, recommended the proposal. Alexander Mackenzie,² whose opinion the Government of India had invited, objected mainly on two grounds: first, the absence of enough work for a legislature in Burma, and secondly, the dearth of competent Burmans.³ The opinion of Sir Frederic Fryer, then Chief Commissioner, was also sought. In its letter the Government had expressed its opinion in favour of a council,⁴ and Fryer said that the interests of the Province would be better promoted by a local council, and that it would be possible to find councillors. He suggested that the strength should be fixed at nine, of whom four should be non-officials.⁵ Lord Hamilton, who did not find the objections convincing, was in favour.⁶ The majority of the members of the Government of India supported the proposal. Two members

1 Fin. Des. from India, No.304, 23 Oct. 1895.

2 Then Lt.-Governor of Bengal; Chief Commissioner of Burma from Dec. 1890 to April 1892.

3 Minute 13 Aug. 1896; Pub. Progs., No.178, Aug. 1896.

4 Letter to Burma, No.671, 28 March 1896, Pub. Progs., No.172.

5 Letter to Govt. of India, 14 April 1896, Pub. Progs., No.176.

6 Hamilton to Elgin, 9 July 1896, Pr. Cor. Ind., i, 311-12.

of the Council, A.C.Trevor, and G.S.White, dissented. In the former's opinion the creation of a council for the sake of creating a Lieutenant-Governor involved an inversion of the proper order of things. He pointed out that the argument in favour of councils rested on the presence of favourable political conditions, but since they did not exist in Burma, the proposal was premature.¹ In December 1896, the Secretary of State sanctioned the conversion of Burma into a lieutenant-governorship.² The Punjab and Burma Councils were established in 1897, each consisting of nine members, of whom four were non-officials.

An important question relating to the system of representation was how and to what extent the aristocracy was to be associated in law-making. On 6 June 1861 Sir Charles Wood had said in Parliament: "I believe greater advantages will result from admitting the native chiefs to cooperate with us for legislative purposes; they will no longer feel, as they have hitherto done, that they are excluded from the management of affairs in their own country, and nothing, I am persuaded, will tend more to conciliate to our rule the minds of natives of high rank".³ During 1861-88 a number of ruling chiefs and quite a large number of members belonging to the landed aristocracy were appointed to the Supreme Council.⁴ As the power of nomination rested entirely with the Governor-

1 A.C. Trevor's minute, 21 Aug. 1896.

2 Pub. Des. to India, No.117, 3 Dec. 1896.

3 Hansard, CLXIII, 643.

4 Among those who were appointed to the Supreme Council were the ruling chiefs of Patiala (1862-64), Rampur (1863-64), Jaipur (1869-75) Sirmur (1877-79), and Jind (1880-82). Parl.Papers, LIV (1890), 101-5. Appointments could be made under Sections 10 and 29 according to which the Governor-General or Governor was authorised to nominate such persons "as to him may seem expedient".

General or the Governor, the question of appointing members belonging to these classes presented no difficulty.

At the very outset of his career as Governor-General, Lord Lytton stressed the necessity of efficiently utilising the powerful aristocracy constituted by the Indian Princes.¹ Lytton's scheme was ambitious. He wanted to establish an Indian Privy Council, restricted, in the first instance, to the great chiefs, and empowered to advise the Viceroy. He also proposed to initiate a "Native Peerage" for the Empire of India. Finally, the scheme was reduced to an association of the leading Indian Princes, called "Councillors of the Empress".² Eventually only eight chiefs received this title.³

In October 1888 the Dufferin Committee recommended that the Provincial Councils should have two divisions, one of which was to consist of the representatives of the hereditary nobility and the landed classes.⁴ In October 1889 the Government of Bombay suggested that the Governor should have express powers to nominate Indian Chiefs of States under the political control of the Local Government.⁵ The Government of India remarked that the appointment of ruling chiefs had been made from time to time, and that their validity had never been questioned, but added that if any doubt existed on that point, it was desirable that the Bill should provide for such appointments.⁶ It may be noted that though the Act of

1 Lytton to Salisbury, 11 May 1876, Personal and Literary Letters, ii, 20-21.
 2 Lady Balfour, op. cit., lll.
 3 Pub. Des. from India, No. 21, 1 Oct. 1908, para. 9.
 4 See above, 103.
 5 From Bombay to Govt. of India, No. 4388, 22 Oct. 1889.
 6 Pub. Des. from India, No. 75, 24 Dec. 1889.

1892 made no specific provision, the rules according to which the new councils were reconstituted provided for the representation of landholders. Each Province allotted one seat to them, to be filled, in Bengal¹ and Madras, by nomination, and in Bombay, by recommendation. In April 1898 the British Indian Association pointed out that the Zamindars were inadequately represented in the Bengal Council though they had large stakes in the country. The Association submitted that its claims to representation in the Council should be recognised.² The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal recommended the transfer of one seat from those assigned to the municipalities to the landholders.³ The Secretary of State approved of the proposal. The new seat withdrawn from the municipalities was to be filled by recommendation.⁴

In 1902 Lord Curzon pointed out the difficulty of appointing the Indian Princes to the Supreme Council owing to the restricted number of additional members, and suggested that he should have power to nominate a small number of ruling chiefs as extraordinary members of the Council.⁵ Lord Hamilton did not accept the proposal mainly for two reasons. In the first place, their appointment, he said, would tend to upset the balance of the composition of the Council; and, secondly, there would be

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- 1 The Zamindari Panchayat of Bengal represented that the zamindars "as natural leaders of society" should have more than one seat, and also exercise the privilege of recommendation. Memorial, 29 March, 1893, Pub. Progs., No.143, May 1893.
 - 2 British Association to Govt. of Bengal, 30 April 1898, Pub. Progs., No.114, Nov. 1898.
 - 3 Letter to Govt. of India, 8 Oct. 1898, Pub. Progs., No.113, Nov. 1898.
 - 4 Pub. Des. to India, No.111, 7 Sept. 1899.
 - 5 Curzon to Hamilton, 10 Sept. 1902, Pr. Cor. Ind., XXIII, 434-5; 22 Oct. 1902, XXIV, 112.

difficulty in determining the class from which the selections were to be made.¹ In 1907 Lord Minto's proposals provided for an Imperial Advisory Council, consisting of the great ruling chiefs and the territorial magnates of British India.² The scheme did not materialise, for the Princes were unwilling to sit on a Council which also included the land-holders. In the Act of 1919 provision was made for the appointment of ruling chiefs to both Central and Provincial Legislatures.³

Curzon remarked that though the appointment of the Princes was not likely to improve the practical utility of the Council, their presence would considerably add to its prestige. It is surprising that although the British Government was alive to the political advantages likely to result from the association of the Princes, it did not follow a well-conceived policy to secure their systematic cooperation.

1 Hamilton to Curzon, 8 Oct. 1902, Pr. Cor. Ind., VII, 367.
2 Cd. 3710 (1907), Circular, 24 Aug. 1907.
3 Act (1919), s.23 (2), s.7 (5).

CHAPTER III

Military Policy

On no aspect of British Indian administration was the effect of the Mutiny so deep and lasting as on the army. The main principles of military reorganisation, as laid down by the Peel Commission in 1859, were based on the lessons learnt from it. For more than half a century they continued to guide military policy. The lessons once learnt were never forgotten,¹ and indeed ultimately became the greatest obstacle in the way of reform. The principle of racial equality which was recognised, though of course in an imperfect manner, in the civil service was completely disregarded in the military service. "So far then as the army is concerned", writes Chesney, "the Queen's Proclamation on assuming the direct government of India is a dead letter."²

One of the main recommendations of the Peel Commission dealt with the proportion between Indians and Europeans in the army. In 1856 the European troops numbered 14 per cent. of the total army.³ The Commission fixed the proportion of Indians and Europeans at not more than two to one for Bengal and not more than three to one for Madras and Bombay.⁴ In practice this proportion was fixed at two to one for the

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- 1 In his minute of 8 Dec. 1888 Dufferin emphasised that the British "should always remember the lessons which were learnt with such terrible experience thirty years ago....."
- 2 Chesney, Indian Polity, 3rd. ed. (1894), 268.
- 3 In 1856 the army consisted of 39,375 Europeans and 214,985 Indians (Report of Army Commission (1879), para.11).
- 4 Report of Peel Commission, IX.

whole army.¹ This part of the Commission's proposals came to be regarded as infallible. Even twenty years later when the conditions had considerably changed owing to swifter communications, the Army Commission of 1879 did not recommend the slightest reduction in the proportion of Europeans. In 1885 when the army was increased under the pressure of Russian advance, the proportion was strictly maintained by fixing the strength of Europeans at 10,657 out of the total increase of 27,000.²

According to another recommendation the control of all the arsenals and practically the whole of the artillery was placed in European hands.³ Indians, who were freely taken in the artillery before⁴ 1857, came to be practically excluded, their employment being limited to stations where Europeans were not employed for reasons of health. Moreover, they were entrusted with the weakest and smallest of guns. Military

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- 1 In July the army consisted of 6,002 British officers, 60,341 British and 123,254 Indian soldiers. Report of Army Commission (1879), para.16. In 1896-97 the total European army numbered 72,994 and the Indian army amounted to 141,462. Besides, there were 5,145 European officers in both these armies. The India List (1899), 348.
 - 2 Subsequent additions to the strength of Indians in the artillery (including Indian drivers for British mountain batteries), and to that of the corps of Sappers and Miners, increased their strength by about 20,000 men. The total increase thus amounted to 30,000. Summary of Principal Measures of Dufferin's Viceroyalty (Mil. Dept.), 37-39.
 - 3 The only exceptions were the Hyderabad Contingent and the Punjab Frontier Force. The latter maintained a small number of field, afterwards mountain, batteries for securing a lightness of equipment in the organisation of small columns for rapid operations on the border. Mil. Des. to India, No.26, 7 Feb. 1889.
 - 4 In 1856 the number of Indians and Europeans in the artillery was 8,172 and 6,517 respectively. Report of Army Commission (1879), para. 181.

men continued to regard this part of the Peel Commission's recommendations as perfectly sound, and were not disposed to make the slightest alteration. This can be seen from the attitude of the War Office to a minor change proposed by the Government of India in December 1888. It related to the conversion of the 21st. Bombay Marine battalion into Marine artillery. The object was not to organise separate batteries entrusted with a distinct portion of the defences but only to train the men for service as auxiliary to the Royal Artillery. The War Office maintained that the proposed conversion of 600 men involved a departure from the principle of keeping the artillery in British hands, adding that trained Indian gunmen by passing into civil life after a specified period of service would constitute a source of danger. In default of British gunners it was inclined to prefer Africans to Indians as auxiliary artillerymen.¹ The Secretary of State was also not favourable to the proposal. In February 1889 he had remarked that the proposal would result in the creation of a considerable number of gunners and suggested that in case an increase became unavoidable the number of British men could be increased to man garrison guns in shore batteries at Bombay, Aden and Karachi. In 1891 he negatived the Government of India's proposal.²

It was this mentality which long delayed the arming of Indians with the same rifles as those used by the British. In March 1886 Randolph Churchill told Parliament that when he was at the India Office he

1 War Office to India Office, 19 June 1891, Mil. Progs., No.782, Jan.1892.
 2 Mil. Despatches to India, No.26 of 7 Feb. 1889 and No.111 of 23 July 1891.

had decided to arm them with similar weapons.¹ In November 1899 Curzon urged the improvement of weapons for Indian soldiers but coupled with this the view that it was still politically inexpedient to place them on an equal footing with the British army in the matter of arms. He therefore proposed that they should be armed with the shortened Martini-Enfield rifle of .303" bore which took the same cartridge as the Lee-Enfield rifle used by the British soldier, but was a single loader.² In January 1900 Hamilton, the Secretary of State, decided to remove the distinction on the ground that the Indian army would be placed at a disadvantage when called upon to fight against the Russians equipped with magazine rifles. He pointed out that in the event of a rising or mutiny the British would have their safeguard in the control of the whole of the artillery and the stores of ammunition.³ The above decision is not to be attributed to any change in the attitude of caution and distrust, but to the exigencies of the external situation. The Government thought that the employment of well-equipped Indian troops, in the event of war, against Russia would involve far less danger than that of men armed with obsolete weapons.

To provide a complete safeguard against mutiny in the army, the Peel Commission recommended that it should be composed of "different nationalities and castes, and as a general rule, mixed promiscuously through each regiment".⁴ In British opinion full security would have

1 Hansard's Indian Debates, 25 March 1886, 188; Churchill, Lord Randolph Churchill, new ed. (1951), 374.

2 Mil. Des. from India, No.189, 2 Nov. 1899.

3 Hamilton to Curzon, 26 Jan. 1900, Pr. Cor. Ind., V, 22.

4 Report, XIV.

consisted in the maintenance of an exclusively British army, though it was out of the question on financial grounds. The Government of India observed: "Considerations of economy on the one hand, and of security on the other, prevent us from garrisoning and defending India exclusively with British or exclusively with native soldiers, and the necessity of maintaining a just equilibrium between the two has largely influenced our scheme."¹ The employment of a large body of Indian troops was therefore not a matter of choice but of necessity. The question then was how to make the army as little homogeneous as possible. It was held that the mutiny of the Bengal army, three-fourths of which was drawn from the higher castes, was mainly due to its homogeneous character. As a complete safeguard, the British Government, besides having an effective counterpoise in an enlarged European army equipped with superior weapons and placed in control of the artillery and arsenals, maintained the segregation of the three armies and organised them in such a manner as to set caste against caste, religion against religion and company against company. The principle of divide et impera in the organisation of the army was strongly emphasised by the Army Commission of 1879.²

The principle of organisation, as stated above, becomes clear by taking a glance at the composition of the Bengal army. Before the Mutiny almost the whole infantry was drawn from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, but under the scheme of reorganisation it was subjected to a large reduction. In the 'nineties the Hindustani portion including Muslims

1 Mil. Des. from India, No.135, 14 Aug. 1885.

2 Report, para. 50.

represented about one-fourth of the total Bengal infantry; the Sikhs and Gurkhas constituted one-fourth each, the remaining one-fourth being formed from Punjabi Muslims, Pathans, Afridis, and Dogras. The total strength of the Muslims in the infantry was about one-fourth and in the cavalry slightly less than half.¹ The various communities, represented in this manner, acted as checks on each other. In some cases counterpoise was provided by recruiting men from different parts though they shared the same religious belief. In the Hyderabad Contingent, for instance, stress was laid on the recruitment of a large proportion of Hindustani, as distinguished from the Deccani, Muslims. It not only contained a fixed proportion of men belonging to a number of castes, but also a majority of non-local Muslims. Defining the principle of composition, the Government of India observed that the classes and races should be so represented that no single race or class should greatly predominate, and that the Muslims element should be largely 'foreign', i.e., North Indian, and the force should not be entirely deprived of its local character.²

The principle of counterpoise for Indian troops was provided mainly in two ways: first, as said above, by fixing the strength of the important communities represented in the army; and secondly, by the careful make-up of regiments. The Madras and Bombay armies, for instance, were organised in 'mixed regiments', under which men of different races, religions and provinces were thrown together into the same company or troop.

1 In the cavalry the Muslims formed 40 out of 87 squadrons in 1899. Parl. Papers, LXX (1902), 487-88.

2 Mil. Des. from India, No.90, 15 June 1897.

Such a system of promiscuous mixing was designed to reduce the chances of combination to a minimum.¹ In the Punjab and Bengal armies the majority of corps were 'class company' regiments, that is, the regiments drew their recruits from three or more different races and recruiting grounds, but the men of each class were kept in separate companies.² The Indian officers of each company ordinarily belonged to the race, tribe or sect from which the company was recruited. Under this system each regiment contained elements of checks and balance. In the event of disaffection among a certain class of one or more regiments, the entire corps was not likely to be affected. Moreover, other classes, having no religious or caste affinities with the disaffected group, could be safely employed against it. Care was also taken not to make any one class in a regiment excessively preponderant. The Punjab Committee of

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- 1 In a memorandum of 1891 on the Reorganisation of the Bombay army, the Government of India emphasised the advantages of the class company system, remarking that the general mixture regiment was as liable to mutiny as the former. It observed that the power of putting one class or religion against another would be more developed in the case of class regiments in which a regiment of Sikhs would have no hesitation in shooting down a regiment of Hindustanis or Pathans in case of mutiny, and a regiment of Gurkhas would be opposed to any one of them. (Mil. Progs., No.57, Nov. 1891). The scheme of class company system was finally carried out in Bombay in 1895. In the same year the Government of India sanctioned, with the approval of the Secretary of State, the formation of class companies in Madras. (Summary of Measures in the Mil. Dept. during Elgin's Viceroyalty, 2-3). In 1897 the Secretary of State sanctioned the reorganisation of the Hyderabad Contingent on the class squadron and class company system. (Mil. Des. to India, No.62, 5 Aug. 1897).
 - 2 There were also some 'class regiments' composed exclusively of men belonging to one community or tribe, such as, a number of Gurkha corps and regiments of pure Sikh corps.
Report of Army Commission (1879), para.236.

1858 had suggested that each regiment should have a different predominating class, which, however, was not to exceed one-half of its strength.¹ The Army Commission of 1879 was not disposed to disturb the existing system. It re-emphasised the following observations of the Committee: "As we cannot do without a large native army in India, our main object is to make that army safe; and next to the grand counterpoise of a sufficient European force, comes the counterpoise of natives against natives..... To preserve that distinctiveness.... which, while it lasts, makes the Muhammadan of one country despise, fear, or dislike the Muhammadan of another, corps should in future be provincial, and adhere to the geographical limits, within which differences and rivalries are strongly marked."² In short the Committee recommended that formation of provincial corps on the grounds that it would prevent the assimilation of the various classes in the Indian army and remove the discontent arising from service far from the homes of the soldiers. Generally speaking, it was against the system of homogeneous corps. The Commission of 1879 endorsed the above suggestion and recommended that the bulk of the Punjab and Bengal armies should consist more or less of 'class company' regiments, each with its own principal recruiting grounds.³ This system was modified to a large extent in 1893 when sixteen Hindustani battalions were converted into class regiments.⁴

1 John Lawrence, The Chief Commissioner, Br.Gen. Neville Chamberlain, and H.B.Edwardes submitted their united answers to the questions on the Recruiting and Composition of Corps, 1 July 1858. See supp. to Report of Peel Commission, 28.

2 Quoted in Report of Army Commission (1879), para. 238.

3 Ibid., para. 239.

4 In 1887 the Bengal army, including the Punjab unit, consisted of 42 class company regiments and 22 class regiments, in 1889 it had 22 class company regiments and 42 class regiments. Parl. Papers, LXX, 1902, 487-88.

The Government of India had recommended the change on the grounds that it would increase efficiency and attract recruits of a better stamp. It was pointed out that 'class' regiments would lead to the contentment of soldiers and facilitate their promotion and strengthen segregation by engendering the feeling of rivalry between regiment and regiment.¹

So strong was the faith in the principle of division and counterpoise that in its name many distinguished military men continued to oppose the abolition of the system of the Presidency armies long after it had outlived its usefulness.

The establishment of three armies with their own commanders-in-chief and placed under the administrative control of the Presidency governments, was necessitated by the expansion of the British Empire from three bases, separated from each other by intervening Indian States. During the Company's rule the authority of the Local Governments was substantial, but the new developments, which took place in the second half of the nineteenth century, tended to diminish their control. So far as the Mutiny itself was concerned, it rather strengthened than weakened the cause of the Presidency system. The immunity of the Madras army from infection was a strong argument in its favour, though more powerful arguments could be advanced against it. When the whole of India came under one strong Central Government and all its parts were brought much closer to each other by rapid means of communication, the very raison d'etre of three distinct armies ceased to hold good. The Army Commission of

1 Mil. Des. from India, No.76, 7 June 1892, Mil. Des.

1879, presided over by Sir Ashley Eden, recommended its abolition on several grounds. First, the system was complicated and expensive; secondly, the Government of India's responsibility for the final decision of all great military questions called for a centralised administration; thirdly, provincial governments should not be invested with military administration; fourthly, if Madras and Bombay exercised such functions, other Provinces could reasonably demand separate military arrangements; fifthly, the system affected the efficiency of the army, involved a break in the chain of responsibility and caused much embarrassment in wartime.¹ It may also be noted that the military jurisdiction of the Madras and Bombay Governments was not coincident with their civil jurisdiction. The Madras army served the Presidency proper, Hyderabad, the Central Provinces and Burma; and the Bombay army was in charge of the Presidency proper, Rajputana, Central India and Sind. In 1881 the Government of India remarked that there might have been some justification for the system if the area of their civil and military jurisdiction had been coincident.²

The Army Commission recommended the abolition of the Presidency armies and their replacement by four separate and distinct bodies, each to be commanded by a Lieutenant-General and all placed under central control. The proposed four divisions represented, according to it, the areas of distinct nationalities. The Commission strongly emphasised the necessity of maintaining the segregation of armies in matters of recruitment, and

1 Report, paras. 49, 128, 129.

2 Mil. Des. from India, No.85, 28. Feb. 1881.

added that the existing arrangements under which the Sikhs, the men from the eastern North-Western Provinces, the Muslims of the Punjab and of Oudh served side by side in all parts of the Bengal Presidency was more favourable to amalgamation than to segregation. It claimed for its scheme the advantages of both centralisation and decentralisation.¹

In his minute of dissent, P.S. Lumsden, a member of the Commission, observed that it was the armies of the Presidencies and of the Punjab which had remained loyal during the Mutiny and that it was due to the intimate connection between the Punjab Frontier Force and the Local Government that the latter was able to send substantial help in that crisis. In support of his views in favour of the Presidency system he quoted an extract from Sir Robert Montgomery's minute of 3 December 1862. Sir Robert had said in a passage of mixed metaphors: "...one great lesson of the mutinies was not to trust to one uniform system; not to break down the distinctions of race and character, which preclude the combinations of native troops, not again to stake all upon one cast, but to build our ship in compartments, and, by some varieties of constitution, prevent the circulation of any secret poison throughout the body."²

General Haines, Commander-in-Chief in India, was also opposed to the abolition of the system. He remarked that under the Commission's proposal the Commander-in-Chief in India would become Commander-in-Chief without an army and that his severance from the Supreme Council would

1 Report, paras. 41, 51, 59.

2 Minute, 15 Nov. 1879, Parl. Papers, LIX, 1884-85, 194. Montgomery was Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab from Feb. 1859 to Jan. 1865.

exclude him from all share in the government of the country.¹

Reiterating the same views in another minute he said that it was not wise to place all eggs in one basket and that the Presidency arrangement was part and parcel of that system which gave the British three separate bases from which they could deal with internal trouble while the whole military power of the country was, for purposes of foreign war, at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief in India.²

Arbuthnot, a member of the Governor-General's Council, rightly remarked that the sympathy supposed to exist between the Local Government and their armies was rather imaginary than real, for the attachment of the Indian soldiers was to the military, and not to the civil, authorities.³ Lord Lytton, the Governor-General, gave his unqualified support to the proposals. He characterised them as "thoroughly sound in principle, perfectly safe and easy from a practical and altogether advantageous from a financial point of view." He said that only under a centralised system all units of the army would have an equitable share in the patronage which under the Presidency system had been practically monopolised by the officers of the Bengal army. He pointed out that the existing arrangement deprived the Madras and Bombay armies of adequate opportunities of active service. Lytton also referred to the inconveniences of divided control during the Afghan War. In his opinion, the Commission's proposals, far from weakening the "watertight compartment system", would

1 Minute, 29 March 1880.

2 Minute, 26 Feb. 1881.

3 Minute, 12 April 1880.

tend to extend and develop it. "I am convinced", Lytton emphasised, "that the present system of three separate commands is unwieldy, and unnecessarily expensive. I am convinced that it tends to promote friction between the Supreme and Provincial Governments in time of peace, whilst in time of war it must always be abandoned, so far as relates to any troops sent into the field."¹

Lord Ripon's Government was also in complete agreement with the Commission's proposals. Its main suggestions were: the direct control of the Commander-in-Chief in India over the Madras and Bombay armies; the change of designations of the officers commanding those armies from Commander-in-Chief to Lieutenant-General commanding; the Commander-in-Chief in India to be relieved of the direct control over the Bengal army; the retention of his seat in the Governor-General's Council; and the command of the Bengal army to be placed under two Lieutenant-Generals.² The Secretary of State asked the Government of India to furnish details relating to the above arrangements including the scope of authority proposed to be vested in the Lieutenant-Generals.³ The Government of India said that they would retain, subject to the general control of the Commander-in-Chief, all the military functions of the local Commanders-in-Chief, such as, the selection of officers for regimental promotion, the nomination for staff appointments, and the exercise of the same authority in regard to discipline. It also recommended that the Lieutenant-

1 Minute, 16 May 1880.

2 Mil. Des. from India, No.85, 28. Feb. 1881.

3 Mil. Des. to India, No.203, 16 June 1881.

Generals commanding the two portions of the Bengal army should be placed on the same footing.¹ In October 1881 the Government of India observed that while other countries possessed unity of command, it stood alone in having to conduct its military administration from a number of "quasi-independent" centres. As to the fear that the change would increase its responsibility, it remarked that owing to the swift means of communication the whole Indian military administration was not likely to be more burdensome than that of the Bengal army alone before 1857. It strongly ~~urged~~^{ended} the division of the over-weighty Bengal army into two units much for the same reasons as accounted for the separate armies of Madras and Bombay.²

Kimberley, then Secretary of State for India, rejected the proposals. First, he said, centralisation would tend to produce complete uniformity. Secondly, no complaint had been made to the Home Government regarding the obstructive action of the Local Governments and their failure to place unreservedly the whole resources of their departments at the disposal of the Government of India. Thirdly, a considerable weight of opinion was against the plan. Men like F.Haines, Commander-in-Chief in India, E.Johnson, Military Member of the Government of India, Richard Temple, formerly Governor of Bengal and Bombay, Neville Chamberlain, former Commander-in-Chief of Madras, were opposed to the scheme. Fourthly, the plan was not likely to result in any considerable financial saving.³

1 Mil. Des. from India, No.282, 29 July 1881.

2 Mil. Des. from India, No.401, 29 Oct. 1881.

3 The Government of India estimated the total saving from the abolition and other changes between £500,000 and £600,000 a year.

Fifthly, the political advantages of the existing system which enabled the Madras and Bombay Governments, in the event of any contingency, to act vigorously by themselves, were too powerful to be set aside. Sixthly, the Government on the spot was in a better position to represent the grievances of its army than the Central Government. Kimberley concluded by saying that "looking to the difference of military opinion on the question, to the political objections which may be urged against the proposed changes in the constitution of the Madras and Bombay armies, and the absence of proof of financial saving, they (Her Majesty's Government) do not find such a weight of argument and authority in its favour as would justify them in recommending to Parliament so extensive and fundamental a change in the Indian military system."¹

Kimberley's arguments were essentially in the nature of counter-arguments, their merit being that they can be put forward against the best of plans. The entire question was whether the Presidency system was consistent with the essential conditions of a modern centralised state. Reduction in expenditure was not the main consideration in favour of the proposal. Indeed, the Government of India laid more emphasis on efficiency than on economy. In October 1883 it again observed that the Presidency system violated the first principles of vigour, simplicity and responsibility, and involved a degree of circumlocution in correspondence relating to clothing, equipment, barracks and movement of troops, and that its scheme for the division of the Bengal

1 Mil. Des. to India, No.243, 26 July 1883.

army, which the Secretary of State had rejected, was politically safer. It also remarked that under a system of central control it would not have been possible for the Bombay officers to recruit, in defiance of its orders, one-third of the presidency army from Northern India. Regarding the opposition of the Commander-in-Chief and E. Johnson, to which Kimberley had referred, the Government of India said: "This must be the condition under which all reforms are effected. There are always to be found persons who still predict that dangers and inconveniences will arise from reforms, and it is impossible to prove beforehand that their predictions will not be verified."¹ Kimberley's reply was clear and unequivocal. He told the Government of India that the question had been fully discussed and that no advantage would result from prolonging the discussion.² It is interesting to note that in 1893 it was Lord Kimberley, then again at the India Office, who carried through the abolition act.

The period 1879-84 marked an important stage in the Government of India's attempt to end the Presidency system. As a result the three presidency^{ordnance} departments were amalgamated in 1883, but the goal was still far off. The Government of India had to contend with many difficulties, one of which was sentimental attachment to a system which had long been in existence. The Mutiny had thrown its weight on the side of its retention. The immunity of the Madras army was believed to have been mainly due to the division of the troops into three armies, though it would be more correct to say, as Major-General T.S. Pratt pointed out, that it was due to the different composition of the troops in the

1 Mil. Des. from India, No. 200, 15 Oct. 1883.

2 Mil. Des. to India, No. 76, 13 March 1884.

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 respective armies. The maintenance of their distinct character was not incompatible with the establishment of a unified command, and indeed the Government of India while proposing the change made it absolutely clear that it had no intention of moulding the Indian army into one pattern. Separation was to remain as the cardinal principle of its policy.² Segregation was not, as it rightly said, a necessary consequence of the Presidency system. X

Kimberley's decision of 1884 did not mean the end of the Government of India's efforts. In 1885 it reopened the question under the circumstances of the Russian menace, stressing the necessity of making the army thoroughly efficient.³ It urged the Secretary of State to abolish the Presidency armies, and remarked that it would "regard with considerable misgivings the prospect of undertaking actual war under such disabilities." In its opinion, the time was suitable for reform, since vacancies were going to occur in the Madras and Bombay commands, to which appointments might be made under the new conditions.⁴ Randolph Churchill did not accept the proposals on the ground that parliamentary legislation, without which they could not be carried out, was then difficult to secure. He did not share the Government of India's view that all reduction in staff and departmental changes was contingent on the abolition of the system.⁵

In 1888 the Government of India strongly urged the Home Government

1 Minutes of Evidence, Peel Commission (1859), Q. 4919..

2 Mil.Des. from India, No.401, 29. Oct. 1881.

3 Mil. Des. from India, No.112, 10 July 1885.

4 Mil. Des. from India, No.135, 14 Aug. 1885, paras. 81, 83.

5 Mil. Des. to India, No.275, 29. Oct. 1885.

to carry out the reform without delay. Strong emphasis was laid on the conditions which had changed with the occupation of Upper Burma and the increase of the garrison of Baluchistan. In Burma the responsibility of civil administration rested with the Government of India and that of military administration with the Madras Government. In Baluchistan the military operations were controlled by one authority and the departments of supply were administered by another.¹

In August 1888 the Government of India was asked to furnish a complete draft of the order which it might issue in the event of its proposals being accepted, and also, a draft of all orders to be issued by the Commander-in-Chief regarding all arrangements, such as, postings, divisional staff, the distribution of regiments and officers, etc.² The Government of India's scheme provided for the retention of the position, authority, privileges and titles of the then Commanders-in-Chief of Madras and Bombay; direct communication with Army Headquarters in India; the abolition of the military departments of Madras and Bombay, and the organisation of the Bengal army in two units, the Punjab army and Hindustan army, each to be placed under a Lieutenant-General.³ The draft showed a small reduction of about Rs 3,000 per mensem in the expenditure on office establishments. Remarking on the economic aspect of the question the Government of India said that the measure should be primarily regarded with reference to administrative efficiency and not to financial gain.⁴

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- 1 Mil. Des. from India, No.87, 1 June 1888.
 - 2 Tel. from Secretary of State, 8 Aug. 1888.
 - 3 Draft General Order, Encl. to below.
 - 4 Mil. Des. from India, No.191, 15 Oct. 1888.

Lord Dufferin characterised the change as a complement of all the improvements which had recently been introduced into the army system. He paid a tribute to General Chesney, the military member, whose scheme of army organisation, presented twenty years earlier, was in essential respects similar to that contained in the General Order. He wished that the Home Government should sanction the scheme before his departure from India.¹

It seemed that the end of the Presidency system had at last come. For ten years the Government of India had persistently, though unsuccessfully, tried for it, but when it was asked to submit the draft order, the prospect of success looked very bright. But once again the Secretary of State negatived the proposals for reasons which were frivolous and unconvincing. He remarked that it would be highly inexpedient to have recourse to imperial legislation as "it would certainly give rise to discussions which must cause delay prejudicial to the public service...."² It is difficult to see in what way discussions in Parliament would have affected the public service. It appears that pressure from certain powerful quarters obstructed the plan. The Government of India was of opinion that no extensive and important legislation was necessary, since its proposals had retained the status and titles of the then Commanders-in-Chief and their membership of the councils, and that in case it was decided to exclude their successors from the Councils, it could be done under the Act of 1793 which made the appointment of the Commander-in-Chief

1 Minute, 1 Oct. 1888.

2 Mil. Des. to India, No.110, 30 May 1889.

to the Council of a Presidency dependent on its being "specially authorised by the Court of Directors not otherwise."¹ If it was decided to make the Lieutenant-Generals commanding the Madras and Bombay armies members of the Councils, an Act of Parliament was necessary, but according to the Government of India the matter did not call for immediate legislation.²

It is interesting to note that a large number of changes had already been introduced which had gone a long way towards weakening the Presidency system. By 1889 many departments had been amalgamated. In 1869 the departments of Military Finance and Accounts were centralised with the result that the Madras and Bombay Governments lost the financial control of the local armies. In 1876 the Remounts departments were amalgamated. In 1882 the three separate presidency ordnance departments were amalgamated into one with a Director-General at its head. In 1889 the three Commissariat departments were amalgamated into one department under the orders of the Commissary-General-in-Chief. The clothing department was also placed under the Central control.³ The defence works had already been brought directly under the Government of India. Thus by 1890 the process of amalgamation, in the words of G. Russell, Under-Secretary of State for India, was practically complete.⁴ The only important department which still remained unamalgamated was the medical service.

1 33 Geo.III, c.52, s.32.

2 Mil. Des. from India, No.35, 26 Feb. 1889.

3 Govt. of India to Madras and Bombay, 22 July 1889. Mil.Progs., No.2406, Jan. 1890.

4 Indian Parl. Debates, 8 Sept. 1893.

In July 1889 the Government of India pointed out that urgency of carrying out the proposals in the breathing time of peace it fortunately possessed.¹ It remarked that the proximity of Russia to India had somewhat modified the concept of security inasmuch as considerations of counterpoise which were mainly concerned with the question of internal security, though they might have been applicable to conditions existing a few years before, were no longer appropriate to the changed conditions. "To regard the different armies", the Government of India said, "as mainly intended to act as a counterpoise to one another, would be in our view to lose sight of the circumstance of India as it exists today." It emphasised that owing to certain changes, such as, rapid means of communication, a large proportion of Europeans in the army, want of homogeneity in the Indian army, and the control of the artillery and arsenals in European hands, there was no danger to British rule from within.²

On 27 June 1890 the House of Lords debated the question. Lord Ripon said that four successive Governors-General, who were men of different training and political views, had demanded the abolition of the system. He pointed out the inconveniences by referring to an incident of his viceroyalty. During the Second Afghan War when, after the battle of Maiwand, the expedition was sent to Kandahar, the Bombay Government, without waiting for the Government of India's approval, appointed officers to the command of its own brigades.³ Lord Kimberley remarked that if he

1 Mil. Des. from India, No.126, 5 July 1889.

2 Mil. Des. from India, No.217, 22 Oct. 1890.

3 Hansard's Indian Debates, 1890, 393-94.

were to deal with the question in the face of complete unanimity of views of four Governors-General he would have great hesitation in rejecting them. He endorsed the Government of India's view that the annexation of the whole of Burma, the occupation of advanced positions in Baluchistan and the Russian danger called for the concentration of military authority.¹ Lord Cross, the Secretary of State, remarked that public opinion was yet not ripe for change. He referred to the strong opposition of the Duke of Cambridge, then Commander-in-Chief in England, to the amalgamation scheme.²

On 17 Feb^{ry} 1891 T.R. Buchanan moved in the House of Commons a resolution for the abolition of the Presidency system. He remarked that an important reason for its retention was that it enabled the home authorities to bestow high offices on men who had distinguished themselves at home but had no Indian military experience.³ Sir William Plowden said: "The fact is that the only real ground for the refusal of the demand is to be found in the patronage which rests in the military authorities in this country."⁴ Sir John Gorst, Under-Secretary of State for India, told the House that the reasons for not carrying out further changes were: The absence of any proof of danger or difficulty; the difference of opinion among military authorities; practical difficulty in securing parliamentary legislation; the absence of financial advantage; and the need for watching the effect of the reforms already introduced.⁵ These arguments contained

1 Ibid., 409, 411.

2 Ibid., 404.

3 Hansard's Indian Debates, 1890-91, 80-81.

4 Ibid., 98.

5 Ibid., 84-86.

nothing new. Whatever their value in the first period of the controversy, they had lost all force by 1891. Indeed the real obstacle was the hostile attitude of the War Office, and especially of the Duke of Cambridge. On 21 August 1892 Henry Brackenbury wrote to Campbell-Bannerman, then Secretary of State for War: "I believe the sole obstacle to this reform is the personage whom you used to call the "Pope"."¹ This point is further confirmed by the letter in which Kimberley says that when he informed the Queen of the Government's decision to introduce the change, she "made no objection, only saying that she believed the Duke was much opposed to it."²

In July 1892 the Government of India again urged the Home Government to abolish the system, and added that decentralisation did not signify the isolation and independence of a number of coordinate authorities but delegation by the superior authority of power and responsibility within reasonable limits to subordinate authorities.³ In November 1892 it pointed out that the Presidency system with the centralisation of the departments of Military Accounts, Ordnance, Commissariat, Remount, Clothing and Military Works had been reduced to a shadow of the old system. In addition to the other changes already recommended, it suggested the division of the army into four units, namely, the army of the North, to include the Punjab, the trans-Indus territory and Sind; the army of the West, to include the territories under the civil government of Bombay and such parts of

1 Add. MSS (Brit. Mus.), 41,233, 71-72.

2 Kimberley to Bannerman, 28 Nov. 1892; Add.MS., 41,221, 123.

3 Mil. Des. from India, No.107, 19 July 1892.

Rajputana and Central India as were then garrisoned by the Bombay troops; the army of the East, to include the civil governments of the N.W.P. and Oudh, Bengal and Assam, and the army of the South, to include the territories then garrisoned by the Madras Army. Burma was to form a separate command under a Major-General placed under the direct control of the Commander-in-Chief in India. The Punjab Frontier Force was included in the Army of the North.¹ Here it may be noted that in 1881 the Government of India had proposed five commands, i.e., two for the Bengal Presidency and one each for Madras, Bombay and the Punjab Frontier Force, and in 1888 it suggested four, Sind and Baluchistan were included in the Bombay army and Burma in the Madras army. In 1890 it recommended that Burma should be placed directly under the Commander-in-Chief in India.² The Secretary of State did not accept the proposal relating to Burma, being of opinion that it would dislocate the arrangements under which the Madras army had been kept as a separate army.³

The four divisions of the Indian army, as recommended in the despatch of 2 November 1892, were based on three considerations: first, to frame the division of the army into large military commands, so as to allow room for the change likely to be introduced during the following years; secondly, to maintain the principles of decentralisation; thirdly, to follow the policy of the segregation of races so far as it was consistent with the fighting efficiency of the army. The Government of India also

1 Mil. Des. from India, No.172, 2 Nov. 1892.

2 Mil. Des. from India, No.115, 9 June, 1890.

3 Mil. Des. to India, No.163, 11 Sept. 1890.

emphasised the importance of the army of the North as a bulwark against aggression.

By 1892, with the exception of the Medical department, all important departments had been amalgamated. In October 1892 Kimberley said that he was convinced of the need for abolition, which had become all the more urgent on account of the inconveniences caused by the arrangements under which the Madras regiments in Burma were not under the Government of India.¹ He had decided to go ahead despite the opposition of the Duke of Cambridge. He told Campbell-Bannerman: "It will be excellent if you can bring him into a better state of mind: if not, he will have to be told that we must proceed whether he opposes or not."²

In March 1893 Kimberley informed the Madras and Bombay Governments of his intention to introduce the amalgamation Bill.³ The Madras Government remarked that the measure would be politically inexpedient and deprive the army of the sympathy which a Local Government alone could entertain with its wants.⁴ The Bombay Government was of opinion that the entire question had been discussed from the military, and hardly at all from the civil point of view. It emphasised that the exclusion of the commander from the Council would reduce the balance of power in the Provincial Legislature and affect the efficiency of the Executive Council by reducing

1 Kimberley to Campbell-Bannerman, 2 Oct. 1892, Add. MSS. 41,221, 98-100.
 2 Letter of 28 Nov. 1892, Add. MSS. 41,221, 123.
 3 Mil. Des. to Madras, No.10, 9 March 1893.
 4 Govt. of Madras to Secretary of State, No.24, 19 May 1893.

its strength from four to three.¹ Commenting on these points, the Government of India said that the commander of the army, being frequently a man of little Indian experience, would not be of great value to the Council and that there was little proof that a Council of four was more effective than that of three. As to the question of membership, it expressed the view that special provision for two commanders would be anomalous.² It should be remembered that as late as November 1892 the Government of India had been in favour of their membership, but, when consulted later, it consented to the Secretary of State's decision.

The Madras and Bombay Armies Bill was introduced in the House of Lords in April 1893. The subject which gave rise to much discussion was the question of membership. The Army Commission of 1879 had made no provision for it, but both Dufferin and Lansdowne had been in favour. Kimberley justified the decision on three grounds: The inadvisability of associating the commanders with the Councils after the withdrawal of their armies from the control of the Local Governments; the necessity of placing all the four commanders on the same footing; and the consent of the Government of India to the proposal.³ Lord Cross, former Secretary of State, while in complete agreement with the scheme of abolition, strongly objected to the provision relating to exclusion. He pointed out that the Government of India had recommended their inclusion in the Councils in four of its despatches,⁴ and maintained that the Bill would lower their

1 Bombay to Govt. of India, 11 May 1893; Encl. to below.

2 Mil. Des. from India, No.144, 11 July 1893.

3 Indian Parl. Debates, 4 May 1893, 253.

4 Mil. Despatches of 1 June 1888, 15 Oct. 1888, 26 Feb. 1889 and 2 Nov. 1892.

dignity, deprive the Councils of useful advice in military matters, and upset the balance in the recently enlarged provincial legislatures.¹ It is interesting to note that the Duke of Cambridge, who had been consistently opposed to amalgamation, supported the Bill, but agreed with Cross on the question of membership.² In Committee Cross moved an amendment which restored the membership.³ Kimberley again emphasised the anomaly of including two generals - who by no means commanded the most important of the four armies - in the Councils which were to consult them on matters withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the Local Governments. Such a measure, he said, would produce inequality and jealousy. However, with a view to securing the speedy passage of the Bill, he accepted the alteration,⁴ which was negatived in the Commons by Naoroji's amendment. George Russell, Under-Secretary of State for India, expressed the view that the alteration might jeopardise the fate of the Bill in the Lords.⁵ On 17 November 1893 Kimberley urged the House not to insist upon its own amendment. So the Bill, as altered by the Commons, was passed by the Lords.

Kimberley's reasons for not accepting the Government of India's proposals regarding the exclusion of Burma from the Madras, and of Baluchistan and Sind from the Bombay commands were, first, that they would lead to the most unequal divisions of the army, and, secondly that they would deteriorate the fighting quality of the armies of the South

1 Indian Parl. Debates, 4 May 1893, 260, 263-64.

2 Ibid., 265.

3 Ibid., 16 May 1893, 325.

4 Indian Parl. Debates, 16 May 1893, 327.

5 Ibid., 8 Sept. 1893, 630.

and the West by depriving them of the opportunities of frontier training.¹ These views were mainly those of the Commander-in-Chief in England who maintained that the proposals would result in the loss of efficiency and the over-preponderance of the Punjab army.²

The Government of India re-emphasised its objections to the inclusion of Burma in the Madras command, remarking that it had led to difficulties and delay, and added that the seven battalions, which belonged to the Madras army, drew no recruits from the Madras Presidency. While it did not object to the inclusion of Sind in the Bombay Command, it regarded the transfer of Baluchistan, which had since 1881 been under the control of the Commander-in-Chief in India, as a retrograde step.³ General White, the Commander-in-Chief, objected to the transfer on the grounds, first, that it might lead to political and military friction between the civil and military authorities of Baluchistan and the Punjab, and secondly, that the Bombay General would find it difficult to control from Poona, over a thousand miles away, the daily movements of the troops in the field.⁴ Fowler, then Secretary of State, remarked that the history of numerous expeditions on the North-West Frontier, in which regiments and batteries of the Bengal army and of the Punjab Frontier Force, then under the Punjab Government, ^{had taken part,} showed that the transfer would not affect the operations. Referring to the second objection, he observed that if it were valid it would be equally conclusive against the Government of India's

1 Mil. Des. to India, No.151, 21 Dec. 1893.

2 Memo. by H.R.H. The Commander-in-Chief, Encl. to above.

3 Mil. Des. from India, No.11, 26 Jan. 1894.

4 Minute, 18 Jan. 1894.

proposal for a separate Burma command under the direct control of the Commander-in-Chief in India.¹ The Commander-in-Chief in England said that the objection from the geographical point of view was equally applicable to the Bengal and Madras commands in which the distance from headquarters to their frontier districts was just as great as from Poona to Quetta. He also remarked that field operations would be conducted under the directions of the Commander-in-Chief in India, and not from Poona.² Fowler asked the Government of India to treat the arrangements as final.

The Act of 1893 abolished the military control of the Madras and Bombay Governments and the offices of Commander-in-Chief of the Presidency armies. No provision was made for the inclusion of the commanders of those armies in the Local Councils.³ The Secretary of State did not accept the proposal regarding the formal breaking up of the Bengal army into two divisions, but sanctioned its organisation, for purposes of administration, in two portions, each to be placed under a Lieutenant-General. The commands were designated as Bengal, Punjab, Madras and Bombay.⁴ In lieu of the term the 'Indian army' the designation the 'army of India' was accepted.⁵ Burma remained in the Madras command and Sind and Baluchistan

1 Mil. Des. to India, No.55, 10 May 1894.

2 Memo. on Govt. of India's des., No.11, 26 Jan. 1894.

3 56 & 57 Vict., c.62.

4 The Secretary of State accepted the Government of India's term 'Bengal' in place of 'Bengal and North-West' as suggested by him. (Mil. Des. to India, No.55, 10 May 1894).

5 The Government of India pointed out a technical difficulty in the use of the term 'Indian army', as its legal definition, in its opinion, was Her Majesty's Indian Forces subject to the Indian Articles of War, but the British officers with the Indian forces were subject to the Army Act and not to the Indian Articles of War. The Secretary of State accepted the amendment. Mil. Des. from India, No.11, 26 Jan. 1894.

in the Bombay command. The Act came into force from 1 April 1895 and brought into existence one army under one Commander-in-Chief, placed under the authority of one Government. The change was effected after a year and a half of the passing of the Act, because the Government had to work out a large number of minor changes involved in the process.¹ In September 1895 the Secretary of State sanctioned the amalgamation of the three Medical departments into one, with the Surgeon-General with the Government of India, to be designated Director-General of the Indian Medical Service, as its head.²

Thus ended the Presidency system. Though it had long become completely outmoded, it retained its advocates almost to the end. The system was generally supported by the older military officers, such as, Lord Napier of Magdala, Sir Henry Norman and General Haines, who had been impressed by its value during the Mutiny, whereas it was denounced by officers like Stewart, Roberts and White, who had been strongly influenced by the problem of the North-West Frontier. In 1893 Lord Kimberley told Parliament that a very important consideration which necessitated the reform was the proximity of Russia to the frontiers of India.³ By the time the system was abolished, it had lost much of its substance on account of a series of changes sanctioned by the Home Government. The reasons which delayed its abolition were: ^{attachment} /to a system which had long been in existence; strong belief in its value as a means of

1 Financial Statement, 1895-96, 141.

2 Mil. Des. from India, No.63, 13 March 1895; Mil. Des. to India, No.91; 26 Sept. 1895.

3 Indian Parl. Debates, 4 May 1893, 254-55.

segregation; and the opposition of some influential men. It is interesting to note that early in the nineteenth century Malcolm had advocated the amalgamation of the three armies,¹ but there was no chance of his proposal being accepted in the circumstances of that period.

The abolition did not result in any financial saving; on the contrary, the reorganisation of the army under the four commands involved a slight increase in expenditure.² The Government of India explained it by saying that many of the economies had already been carried out between 1888 and 1895. Indeed the economic aspect of the question was not at all impressive. Nevertheless, independently of financial considerations, the change should have been made much earlier. The decision to exclude the commanders of the Madras and Bombay armies from the Local Councils had much to commend it. Under a unified command a special provision for two commanders was anomalous and unnecessary. Whatever might have been its advantages under the Presidency system,³ it was not relevant to the scheme of 1893.

Similar, in many respects, to the Presidency armies was the Punjab

1 Malcolm, Political History of India, ii, 213.

2 The net annual increase amounted to Rs. 118,000. Mil. Des. from India, No.202, 30 Dec. 1896.

3 In his evidence before the Welby Commission Lord Roberts, former Commander-in-Chief, said that during the four years of his office as Commander-in-Chief in Madras not a single military case ever came up that could be settled by the Madras Government. Minutes, iii, Q. 15,743.

Frontier Force.¹ Its retention as a distinct and separate force was supported more or less on the same grounds. The Army Commission of 1879 recommended its withdrawal from the Local Government and its transfer, as part of the regular army, to the orders of the Commander-in-Chief.² In his minute of dissent, Peter Lumsden remarked that the invaluable service rendered by the Force during the Mutiny was due to its intimate connection with the Local Government.³ Lord Lytton expressed the view that the object of the arrangement was to ensure prompt action, but the conditions under which it was made had been considerably modified by the construction of the telegraph and the railway. It was emphasised that the Government of India's responsibility for general foreign policy and the conduct of frontier operations rendered the retention of the Force under a semi-independent authority highly inexpedient.⁴ In 1883 Kimberley justified the arrangement by saying that the separate character of the Force had been one of the greatest elements of strength during the Mutiny.⁵ Ripon's Government remarked, first, that the system placed

1 Although the Force may be said to have its origin in 1846 with the raising of the Corps of Guides, it will be more correct to say that its foundation was based on a permission given in May 1849 to the Punjab Board of Administration to raise ten Punjab regiments for the protection of the whole western frontier except Peshawar. (Mil. Progs., No.1410, Sept. 1886). Its object, in Dalhousie's words, was "to secure for the Local Government the full and complete control of military means, sufficient to effect any object which political considerations may, in their judgment, render it expedient to secure on the distant frontier."

The designation "Punjab Frontier Force" was given in 1865.

2 Report, para.49.

3 Parl. Papers, LIX (1884-85), 194.

4 Minute, 16 May 1880, paras. 27, 31.

5 Mil. Des. to India, No.243, 26 July 1883. para. 51.

the Force at a disadvantage in its getting an adequate share of staff appointments, and secondly, that due to the presence of an intermediate authority, it led to delay in the carrying out of proposals relating to the Force.¹ In 1884 Kimberley again rejected the proposal.

In August 1885 the Government of India recommended the immediate transfer of the Force with its distinctive local character intact. To the arguments, which it had already advanced, it added one more. In its opinion, a considerable part of the Punjab frontier had ceased to be a frontier in the original sense since it was overlapped and covered by the territory under its occupation in Baluchistan. It also pointed out the defects of the arrangements under which the forces stationed in that part of India were placed under the control of two authorities.² The Secretary of State agreed to the proposal,³ and the Force was transferred accordingly in August 1886.

The Secretary of State took the above decision without consulting the Punjab Government. Aitchison, then Lieutenant-Governor, maintained that the decision was dictated mainly by military considerations, and added that a fair share of appointments could be given to the Force without a radical change. The remedy lay, according to him, in placing the claims of its officers before the Governor-General in Council for consideration on an equal footing with those of the other forces. He added that the Force had always been fully placed at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief in war.⁴

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- 1 Mil. Des. from India, No.200, 15 Oct. 1883.
 - 2 Mil. Des. from India, No.135, 14 Aug. 1885, para. 84.
 - 3 Mil. Des. to India, No.275, 29 Oct. 1885.
 - 4 Mil.Progs., No.583, Sept. 1886.

The Secretary of State had not to overcome any serious obstacles in arriving at this decision. The reasons were: first, the change did not require parliamentary legislation; secondly, in this case the dignity of a Presidency Government was not involved; thirdly, the Force was much younger and smaller than the Presidency armies. The immediate reason, and no doubt an important one, which brought about the change was the Russian menace. Its retention had been advocated on grounds of segregation; and the Mutiny had thrown its weight on this side. Early Viceroys like Canning, Lawrence and Mayo had been its supporters; Kimberley had twice rejected the Government of India's proposal for transfer. Nevertheless the system of provincial armies under the changed conditions had become anomalous. It is interesting to note that while the needs of internal security had strengthened it, those of external security tended to weaken it.

The Panjdeh crisis of 1885 not only led the Government of India to recommend the centralisation of the Local armies but also to propose an increase of the regular army, by 30,000 men. The addition was made at a time when the Indian finances were no longer in a sound condition. Indeed, during 1885-98 the financial situation, owing to the fall in exchange, was grave. When strictest possible economy was needed, the increase put an additional burden on the revenues. Auckland Colvin and C.P. Ilbert, two members of Dufferin's Government, put forward a number of convincing arguments against this measure. First, the Commission of 1879, which had been fully aware of the rapidity and direction of the Russian advance, made no recommendation to this effect. Secondly, a scheme of

strategical frontier railways and defence works, which had been sanctioned and were being vigorously pushed on, were calculated to add immensely to the mobility and the fighting strength of the Indian army. Thirdly, the increase would result in an extra-expenditure of £1,500,000 a year, which would necessitate further taxation, but as an alien people, they remarked, the British should seek their security in making the taxation light. Fourthly, a standing army, larger than necessary, might prove a weapon of aggression. They pertinently asked: "Is it the duty of the Government of India to maintain and charge to Indian revenues a permanent addition to its forces, not required for India, but available for the purpose of extending and securing its dominion beyond India?"¹

The Government of India maintained that the recent advance of Russia had profoundly modified the military problem because the functions of the army were no longer limited to maintaining internal peace and supplying small bodies of troops for foreign expeditions. In its opinion the existing establishments were inadequate for the duties they might be called upon to fulfill. To make the military service attractive for Indians, it recommended the issue of a free railway pass to each man when going on and coming back from furlough, the grant of the second increment after six instead of nine years' service and the third after ten instead of fifteen years' service, an addition of one rupee to the yearly "half-mounting" allowance of four rupees, and the improvement of pension rules by entitling them to pension after a period of twenty-one instead of

1 Minute, 14 Aug. 1885.

thirty-two years' service with the colours.¹ All these recommendations were accepted by the Secretary of State.² In January 1895 the Government of India pointed out the urgency of increasing the pay of the Indian infantry private from seven rupees to nine a month. The pay had stood at that figure for about a century. The cost was estimated at Rs.28 lakhs a year.³ The increase in pay was recommended because of the difficulty in securing efficient recruits. In fact during the Afghan War, recruiting had practically come to an end. The Secretary of State accepted the proposal.

Two observations may be made on the increase of the army in 1885. In the first place, if the addition was unavoidable, it should have been made as a temporary measure. In the second place, in view of the unsatisfactory condition of Indian finances, instead of 11,000 additional British men Indian soldiers should have been recruited. The policy of recruitment which demanded that for any increase in the number of Indian troops there should be a corresponding proportionate increase in that of British troops was essentially defective. Whatever might have been the grounds for insisting on a rigid proportion during a few years following the Mutiny, there hardly existed any in the 'eighties when the capacity of the British Army to deal with any situation had enormously increased. Indeed the entire policy was based on exaggerated fear and suspicion of Indian troops. The Army Commission had emphasised that it "must be

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- 1 Mil. Des. from India, No.135, 14 Aug. 1885.
 - 2 Mil. Des. to India, No.275, 29 Oct. 1885.
 - 3 Mil. Des. from India, No.23, 23 Jan. 1895.

remembered that the native army was a mercenary force serving an alien Government."¹ In 1893 General Roberts said: "It should never be forgotten that the native army of India, loyal as it may be at the present time, is composed of mercenaries, and is therefore always subject to those influences which affect soldiers who are serving alien masters."² Such an attitude towards Indian troops led the British Government to maintain a large body of European troops largely to act as a check on the former. That the maintenance of a certain proportion of European troops was necessary was fully admitted, but such a high percentage was both unnecessary and inexpedient. Within the limits of security the reduction of their strength was quite practicable, but the British Government did not allow financial considerations to influence this aspect of its military policy. Early in the last century Malcolm had made some extremely important suggestions. First, he said, the European army should not be regarded as a check on Indian troops; secondly, a policy of trust was the necessary condition for maintaining their efficiency and attachment; and, thirdly, a European army, being very expensive, should not be too large.³ Suffice it to say that British policy was based on altogether different principles.

In addition to a large European army, the British Government organised a volunteer force composed of Europeans and Eurasians. The Mutiny impressed upon it the necessity of having an organisation for their defence. In 1857 when danger was apprehended to British life and

1 Report of Army Commission (1879), para. 259.

2 Minute, 1 April 1893, Encl. to Mil. Des. from India, No. 78, 10 May 1893.

3 Malcolm, The Government of India, App. 239; Political History of India, ii, 226, 238.

property, they were enrolled as volunteers. At first the object of the force was only to provide security against internal danger, but from 1885 onwards it also provided an efficient supplement to an army called into active service. In Dufferin's words, its function was to fill up the gap in the event of a large proportion of European troops being sent out.¹ The Government encouraged every European and Eurasian to join the force. At the beginning of the present century it consisted of about 30,000 men.²

While the Government of India encouraged Europeans and Eurasians to join the force, it followed an entirely different policy towards Indians. Their repeated offers for enlistment were turned down. Memorials for volunteering were submitted, and the question was widely discussed in the Press, but the Government refused to modify its attitude. The policy of discrimination became the more apparent in view of the fact that when every European and Eurasian was induced to join the force, Indians, who expressed absolute loyalty and showed willingness to play their part in the internal and external security of the country, were not considered worthy of trust.³ When shortly after the Mutiny, applications were

1 Minute, 8 Dec. 1888.

2 In 1884 the volunteers numbered about 12,000, in 1891 about 20,000, in 1896 about 24,000, Mil. Progs., No.1935, April 1885; Financial Statement, 1896-97, 123.

3 Dufferin observed with truth that the admission of Eurasians into the volunteer corps could not but cause resentment. "Full-blooded natives," he said, "naturally resent seeing those who are so closely akin to themselves, endowed with the privilege of carrying arms and being enrolled in our volunteer battalions, while they themselves are debarred from anything of the kind. I imagine this and the fact that the Arms Act does not apply to the Eurasians, occasions much bitterness in the native mind." Minute, 8 Dec. 1888.

received from Indians in Calcutta and Bombay, Lord Canning said that, subject to certain conditions, there was no objection to their admission into the Volunteer Corps. But the door remained practically closed to Indians. The regulations gave commandants a discretionary power of rejecting applicants, and in many instances the rules distinctly limited the admission to Europeans and Eurasians. Thus the Government followed a policy of completely discouraging Indian volunteering without openly prohibiting it.

In 1885, when the situation was alarming, pressing demands were made by Indians for volunteering. Nevertheless, the Government did not modify its attitude. It put forward a number of arguments against the proposal. First, it remarked, the demand was confined to a small section of educated Indians who desired to be recognised as volunteers not because they really liked volunteering but because they claimed to be treated on an equal footing with British subjects. Secondly, the motive of the agitation, according to the Government, was to make political capital out of an awkward demand. Thirdly, if the proposal was accepted, it would not admit of being subjected to artificial restrictions. The Government of India maintained that any attempt to impose limitations on strength would be as unpopular as a refusal to move in the matter at all; and that to accept the scheme without imposing restrictions on numbers, armament and selection of officers, involved a risk which it was not prepared to undertake. Fourthly, their enlistment would necessitate a corresponding increase in the number of European troops. Fifthly, it would be dangerous to train and arm men who would not, in time of trouble

hesitate to use arms against Europeans.¹ Roberts in his minute, drafted just before his departure, remarked that to put arms into the hands of large numbers of disaffected Bengalis or Marathas would be nothing short of madness.²

Though the above arguments were purely speculative in character, they fitted in with the general policy of distrust. In such an approach there was certainly no place for Indian volunteering. But if the Government had slightly altered its attitude, a modest scheme was, within the limits of safety, quite practicable. The political effect of such a policy of discrimination was indeed unfortunate. Persistent inducement in the one case and persistent refusal in the other could not fail to increase bitterness among Indians and bring home to them the discriminatory character of British rule.

The policy of distrust and racial discrimination becomes more evident when we examine the controversy over the question of the appointment of Indians to commissioned ranks in the European grades. In March 1885 the Government of India raised the question of granting a substantive position to men of higher classes and to soldiers of proved fitness. In its opinion, the time had arrived when on grounds of justice and of policy an opening for advancement, similar to that in the civil department, might and should be afforded to them in the army. With a view to securing the attachment of the aristocracy, it recommended the appointment of cadets from higher classes. The Government expressed

1 Mil. Des. from India, No.166, 21 Sept. 1885.

2 Minute, 1 April 1893.

the view that a respectable military career would suit their habits and traditions most. The nature of the proposed employment in the army was to be analogous to that in the Statutory Civil Service. According to these proposals, Indian officers were not required to pass through Sandhurst or obtain their Commissions by a competitive examination, but nevertheless, a good knowledge of English was essential. In view of the difficulty of appointing an Indian officer to a regiment officered by Europeans, it recommended the formation of two regiments, one of cavalry and one of infantry, to be officered entirely by Indians. The regiments were to consist of the posts of a commandant, second-in-command, and an adjutant, to be filled, in the first instance, by transfers of selected Indian officers from regular regiments. To these could be added one 'doing-duty officer', a cadet of good family. The Government of India proposed that the appointment of commandant to each regiment might be in the rank of major, of second-in-command in the rank of captain, and of the remaining two in the rank of lieutenant. Their pay and allowances were to be fixed, as in the Statutory Service, at two-thirds of the rates allowed to Europeans. Vacancies in those regiments occurring thereafter were to be filled up either by cadets of respectable families or distinguished Indian officers from regular regiments.¹

In support of its proposals, the Government of India quoted a few extracts from the writings of Sir Henry Lawrence. He had emphasised that "justice and liberality forge a stronger chain than suspicious and

1 Mil. Des. from India, No.47, 21 March 1885.

niggardly policy", adding that the Mughal Empire owed its fall not to the policy of liberality under which Jai Singh and Jaswant Singh led the armies of Aurangzeb but to the other causes. He was of opinion that men of better education and superior character needed more than the opportunities offered to them. Lawrence concluded by saying that Englishmen could not hold India for ever and therefore they should conduct their affairs in such a way as to have in India a noble ally when the connection ended.¹ In another essay he said that if Asians and Africans could be given honourable position in the armies of Russia and France, Indians, after tried service of a century under England, were entitled to the "same boon - nay, justice."²

The views of Lawrence, though remarkably wise and far-sighted, were not those of the British governing class, which believed not in the withdrawal but in the permanence of British rule; not in a policy of trust but in one of distrust. It is not therefore strange that such an opponent of reform as Sir Ashley Eden³ could not fail to remark that the proposals could only be carried into effect if the British contemplated withdrawal from India.⁴ Eden's argument was no doubt logical but was irrelevant in relation to the small scope of the proposals. While making

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- 1 Lawrence, Essays on the Indian Army and Oudh (Serampur, 1859), 23-24, 48, 50. The Essay entitled "Our Empire in India" was published in Oct. 1844 in the Calcutta Review.
 - 2 Ibid., 190-91. The Essay entitled "The Indian Army" was published in March 1856.
 - 3 Curzon, in his Memo. of 4 June 1900, remarked that in so far as logic and argument were concerned victory rested with the civilian and not with the Generals. Para. 7.
 - 4 Memo., 6 July 1885.

them the Government of India was no less solicitous than Eden about the stability of British rule. Lawrence's extract was intended only to reinforce the argument in favour of reform. Unfortunately it was interpreted by Eden in an altogether different way.

Among a large number of military men whom the Secretary of State consulted, the proportion of those favourable to the plan was high. Some members of the India Council were also strongly in favour. Among critics, Eden, then a member of the Council, was most hostile. His main arguments were: the silence of the Army Commission of 1879 on this question; the absence of evidence that there was any real demand for a military career; the impossibility of fixing a limit to the concession if the principle was once accepted; practical difficulty in placing a senior Indian officer in command of a detachment over British officers of junior rank when their detachments would be stationed in the same cantonment; and the adverse effects of the plan on the safety of British rule and on the efficiency of the army. Eden characterised the proposals as revolutionary and dangerous.¹ Frederick Haines, former Commander-in-Chief in India, remarked that neither the British officer, placed in a subordinate position, nor the British soldier would have the least confidence in an Indian commanding officer. He emphasised that in small as well as in great things British leading was essential to success in the field.² E. Johnson, former Military Member, remarked that the plan would produce capable Indian officers on whose loyalty the

1. Ibid.

2. Memo., 18 May 1885.

Government could not depend in time of trouble.¹ Sir Charles Reid of the Bengal Staff Corps, said that since the Indian army was mercenary, such of its regiments as would not be under European control might, in time of internal trouble, act against the British. He also remarked that any military expenditure on additional forces, not of the highest efficiency, was inadvisable.² Sir Charles Brownlow, also of the Bengal Staff Corps, criticised the plan as a "policy of sentimental adventure." He remarked that "we ought not to allow our emotions to blind us to the fact that a servant, however loyal, is never unwilling to become a master."³

The above arguments were purely hypothetical. At the most the plan was limited to two regiments and eight Indian officers. Even if they had all proved untrustworthy and inefficient, they could not, by any stretch of imagination, affect the loyalty and efficiency of the vast body of Indian troops under European officers. In fact, as Sir Peter Lumsden, then a member of the India Council, said, the Mutiny had demonstrated that the presence of European officers with Indian troops was no guarantee of loyalty.⁴ As regards the cost of the plan, even if it had involved a slight increase, that would have been insignificant in comparison with the expenditure on a number of changes, such as, the increase of the army and the defence works.

So far as the scope of the proposals was concerned, the argument came to this: so small a concession was inadequate to satisfy the Indian demand, and since its extension was not possible consistent with the principles of safety and efficiency, it was not necessary to make the

1 Memo. 22 May 1885.

2 Memo. 19 May 1885.

3 Memo. 24 May 1885.

4 Memo. 20 July 1885.

experiment at all. The apprehension that the appointment of a few Indians would raise up a class of military adventurers was, as Curzon remarked, greatly exaggerated.¹ The difficulty likely to be caused by the seniority of an Indian officer and the unwillingness of European soldiers to work under him could have been overcome by a provision, as Field-Marshal Lord Napier suggested, that the Colonel of a new regiment might have a title carrying no seniority over a British colonel. The same principle could be applied to the other grades also.²

The plan had a very large number of supporters.³ Napier remarked that much greater danger might arise from not giving Indians an opening to regimental command than from their appointments. Sir Neville Chamberlain of the Bengal Army supported it on grounds of justice and of policy, being of opinion that the most likely way to ensure loyalty and self-sacrifice was to bestow more rewards. He preferred the risk involved in higher appointments to the one "inseparable from stagnation," and suggested that the number of corps should be increased to four - two for Bengal, and one each for Madras and Bombay. He added that the Queen's Proclamation demanded that no distinction should be made on grounds of race or creed.⁴ Lieutenant-General Francis Loch of the Bombay Staff Corps said that the appointment of men of the upper classes, who were not attracted by civil service, would ensure their loyalty and make

1 Memo., 4 June 1900, para. 33.

2 Memo., 11 May 1885.

3 Lord Napier, Gen. N. Chamberlain, Gen. A. Taylor, Gen. H. Daly, Gen. Cureton, Gen. S. Browne, Gen. R. Bright, Gen. F. Loch, Gen. R. Meade, Gen. P. Keyes, Col. F. Jenkins, Gen. Lumsden, R. Montgomery, H. Yule, and W. Muir. Curzon's Memo., 4 June 1900, para. 7.

4 Memo., 30 May 1885.

them appreciate more the advantages they derived from British rule.¹

Sir Robert Montgomery, a member of the India Council, supported the plan by saying that in view of Russia's policy of appointing non-Russians to high military posts, the British Government should follow a similar policy. He declared: "If the opponents of the present proposals take the argument of unfitness on the part of the Natives, history and common sense are against them. If they take the argument of political danger, then admitting this to its fullest extent, it is a choice of evils, and the balance is on the whole in favour of a policy which justice and necessity alike demand." He aptly remarked: "It is a policy dictated today by wisdom; tomorrow it will be forced upon us by necessity."²

Sir William Muir, another member of the India Council, was in favour of confining selection to men from "the Upper classes of our own provinces" and associating them in approved regiments with European officers, the object being to provide the chance of friendly combination between the two races in a united command. He was opposed to the idea of having regiments to be officered exclusively by Indians.³

Kimberley did not accept the scheme in the form in which the Government of India suggested, but instead replied by submitting the proposals of General Stewart, then member of his Council. The scheme provided that two local regiments might be raised and localised on the Baluch frontier for the protection of Dera Ghazi Khan and Pishin. The

1 Memo., 22 May 1885.
 2 Memo., 13 July 1885.
 3 Memo., 17 Oct. 1885.

officers were to be taken from among the Indian officers of the army and placed under the supervision of a British officer.¹ In 1887 the Government of India, for financial reasons, abandoned the proposal, but suggested in its place a modest scheme for raising the status of Indian officers by conferring on them the honorary rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, Major or Captain. According to it, the recipients were to be given all the privileges, attached to substantive rank, except command.² General Roberts proposed that those to whom the grant might be immediately made could be chosen partly for past military services and partly for the political importance of their existing employment.³ The Secretary of State remarked that the proposals though limited "at present" to Indian officers doing extra regimental duty were highly inexpedient because they were intended to be extended later to the commissioned officers of the line. He also pointed out that the bestowal of a mere titular British rank of high grade, which would in every essential be subordinate to the lowest grade borne by a British officer of the same battalion, would actually emphasise its inferiority. He, however, proposed that it could be conferred with benefit on officers employed in certain extra-regimental capacities.⁴ These last proposals of the Secretary of State changed the original plan beyond recognition and the question remained where it was before.

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- 1 Mil. Des. to India, No.88, 15 April 1886. The memoranda above referred to are to be found in Selections from Despatches to India (1886), Part I, 481-530.
- 2 Mil. Des. from India, No.139, 12 Aug. 1887.
- 3 Mil. Progs., No.1628, Nov. 1887.
- 4 Mil. Des. to India, No.314, 30 Nov,1887; Mil. Des. to India, No.177, 26 July 1888.

It has been pointed out that the Government of India's proposals provided for the appointment of men of higher classes to the commissioned ranks. Many supporters of the scheme like Napier felt that the sons of loyal chiefs and heads of clan by joining the military service would be warmly attached to the Government.¹ Lieutenant-General Loch was of opinion that such men, having a stake in the country, would be interested in the stability of British rule.² Though the British Government recognised the political advantages of the scheme, it remained satisfied with the practice of granting honorary commissions to some Indian Princes often on political and material grounds. For instance, in November 1887, the Government of India recommended the appointment of Maharaja Pratap Singh of Jammu and Kashmir as Honorary Colonel, 37th Dogras, in order to get more recruits.³ On the main question of appointment to substantive ranks the policy remained unaltered. The Government refused to comply with the requests of some of the Princes who desired for their sons a respectable military career.

On the question of granting commissions to Indians two distinguished military officers of this period - General Chesney,⁴ the Military Member,

1 Memo., 11 May 1885.

2 Memo., 22 May 1885.

3 Tel. 12 July 1887, Mil. Progs., No.1632, Nov. 1887.

4 Chesney was of opinion that the Queen's Proclamation had been systematically disregarded in this respect. In April 1884, in connection with a proposal to confer an honorary commission upon an Indian chief (the Nawab of Mamdot), he (then Secretary) emphasised the necessity of giving not merely honorary but substantive commission. He proposed to begin the experiment with an Indian regiment, starting from the lowest commissioned rank then held by a British officer, to which an Indian cadet of good family should be appointed. He was to be promoted to the higher ranks as successive vacancies occurred. The object was to have the entire regiment officered by Indians. In Jan 1885 he defended the plan also as a measure of economy, observing that an Indian regiment would require fewer Indian officers, who would be paid and pensioned at lower rates. Curzon's Memo., 4 June 1900, para.5.

and General Roberts, the Commander-in-Chief, held opposite opinions. Chesney was strongly in favour of the plan, Roberts vehemently against it, being of opinion that men of a proper stamp were not available and even if they could be obtained their appointment would be a source of danger. Commenting on these remarks, Chesney said that the first point could not be determined until the Government made a trial. As to the second, he said that every course to be pursued in India had its dangers. He maintained that a policy of associating the people of India with the Government by opening up to them prospects of appointment was safer than one of distrust and exclusion.¹

In 1894, Brackenbury, then Military Member, was in favour of granting commissions to the sons of Kunwar Harnam Singh of the Kapurthala family, but the Council did not agree to his proposal. General White, then Commander-in-Chief and other officers were of opinion that the presence of coloured men among the officers of British regiments would not be liked by the British soldier.² Lord Elgin, while in favour of granting commissions in the British army, was opposed to the proposal for commissions in the Indian army.³

In March 1897 Hamilton told Elgin that the insuperable barriers against Indians in the military department could not be maintained for ever, and added that the principle of equality which had been conceded in the civil department was denied in the military service. He pointed

1 Minute, 14 April 1891, para. 27.

2 Elgin to Hamilton, 24 Feb. 1897, Pr. Cor. Ind., IV, 149.

3 Curzon's Memo., 4 June 1900, para. 20.

to the policy of Russia who had opened an almost endless advancement to her Central Asian subjects, some of whom had been appointed to the Imperial Guard.¹ Referring to the good work done by the Indian troops in the Swat and Mohmand country, he remarked: "Can we maintain our present limitation upon the promotion of native officers of good family? If we can keep the affection of the fighting races and higher orders of society in India we can ignore the dislike and disaffection of the intellectual non-fighting classes, the baboos, students and pleaders."² Elgin repeated the objections of White and others, adding that the only exception made in the case of Prince Victor Dulip Dingh was not wholly a success. Commenting on Russian policy, he said that "it would be an evil day for Great Britain when the officers of the British army were assimilated to those of the Russian."³ In a letter of December 1897 in which Hamilton asked Elgin and his advisers to express their views on this subject, He further said that if the concession involved risks there also lay a danger in doing nothing to conciliate or win over to the British side any section of influential Indian society. His approach to this question was determined largely by the necessity of counteracting the

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- 1 Hamilton to Elgin, 19 March 1897, Pr. Cor. Ind., ii, 107-9. Curzon was of opinion that the argument was unsound. He pointed out that Russia gave high military posts almost entirely to her Muslim subjects. Muslim officers were appointed to rule Muslim districts or to command Muslim troops. Moreover, Russia, he said, was free from difficulties as to caste and religion, which beset the Indian problem and made it impossible to place a person of one creed in command of men of another. (Footnote, Memo., 4 June 1900). Curzon could not, however, disprove that Russia's policy was more liberal.
- 2 Hamilton to Elgin, 16 Sept. 1897, Pr. Cor. Ind., ii, 469-71.
- 3 Elgin to Hamilton, 13 Oct. 1897, Pr. Cor. Ind., VII, 177-9.

growing solidarity of Indian opinion in antagonism to British rule.¹ Elgin's attitude was, on the whole, critical. Opinion in England was also not favourable to the proposal.

In 1899 Hamilton reopened the question with the Government of India by asking it to suggest how the racial bar could be broken.² In June 1900 Lord Curzon proposed the formation of a small corps, to be called the Imperial Cadet Corps, consisting of from twenty to thirty young men, drawn from the princely and noble families of India. He dealt with the subject exhaustively in a memorandum, classifying the various proposals made earlier into four heads: (1) Proposals to create new regiments of the Indian army to be officered either wholly or in part by Indians; (2) Proposals to establish ^{an} Indian Military College, for the instruction of Indian officers; (3) Proposals to give commissions in the Indian army to Indian gentlemen, after the ordinary course of examination and instruction; (4) Proposals to do the same in the British army. The scheme of 1885 was based on the creation of new regiments, and it had been strongly supported by General Chesney. On its failure, he proposed the foundation of a military school, open to young and promising Indians of good family. He contended that since education was the key that had unlocked the doors of civil employment, it would, if applied to the military profession, lead to the same results. The third plan was suggested by Brackenbury, who, in consequence of an appeal from Harnam Singh, recommended in 1894 to his colleagues the selection by

1 Hamilton to Elgin, 10 Dec. 1897, Pr. Cor. Ind., iii, 41-45.

the Secretary of State of a limited number of young Indians for Commissions in the Indian Staff Corps, subject to their passing all the requisite tests. The proposal was discussed in the Executive Council on 27 September 1894, and was abandoned. The fourth plan originated in a request to the Secretary of State from the Maharaja of Kuch Bihar in 1897 for permission for his son to enter Sandhurst. The Political Committee¹ of the India Office recommended the occasional admission to commissions in the British army of sons of Indian Princes and gentlemen under a system of careful selection. The War Office rejected the proposal on the ground that once a start was made, it would be impossible to check the process and that a number of Indian Princes were not wanted in the British army.²

The Government of India, in its despatch of July 1900, which was based on Curzon's memorandum, pointed out that there were two ways of dealing with the question. First, the commissions could be granted in the regular army, British or Indian, carrying with them the various stages of official promotion. Secondly, the commissions should constitute an independent category, in fact a sort of honorary reserve, conferring on the officers so honoured the rank, the pay, and the prospects of promotion, but carrying with them the obligations, not of ordinary regimental service, but of military employment in extra-regimental billets,

1 D. Stewart, A. Alison, A. Lyall, and J. Gordon suggested that selection should be made by the Govt. of India, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State in Council and with the concurrence of the War Office and the Sovereign. Curzon's Memo., 4 June 1900, para. 21.

2 Curzon's Memo., 4 June 1900, Encl. to Mil. Des. from India, No.103, 19 July 1900.

to be determined according to the number, the rank, and the aptitudes of the qualified candidates. The objections to the first plan, in its opinion, lay in social difficulties that were certain to arise out of contact between young British and Indian officers in the Regimental "Mess" and in the situation consequent on any attempt to place Indian officers in command of British officers and eventually of British troops. It recommended the second alternative and expressed the view that suitable occupation might be provided for them, with the distinction of British military rank, on the staff of British officers, to whom they would be attached at headquarters, in cantonments, at camps of exercise, and in the field. Curzon was anxious that the plan should come into force not later than January 1901. He expressed the view that it would fill a large gap in the British political and military system in India.¹

Curzon's plan left the Government with discretion in utilising the young men after their probationary period. In case it did not work well, it could even be abolished. It differed from those proposals which had provided either for the creation of special regiments to be officered by Indians or for admission to commissions in the British army. But Hamilton's task in getting the plan accepted by the Home authorities was difficult. There was opposition from all quarters. Members of the Cabinet, with the exception of the Prime Minister, were generally opposed to it; members of his Council, except Iyall, were not favourable;

1 Mil. Des. from India, No.103, 19 July 1900.

and the War Office, the Admiralty, and the Colonial Office were hostile. Commenting on the attitude of the War Office, Hamilton observed that "they will put Tommy Atkins on a pedestal, and pretend that dire consequences will ensue if any one, who is coloured, is ever given any position involving any authority over him."¹ Hamilton no doubt had to fight against heavy odds.

It is clear then that in the early phase of the controversy emphasis was laid on granting commissions to the Indian officers of the army as well to the members of the aristocracy, but later the shift was almost entirely towards the latter. The scheme was supported as a measure of political expediency and on the ground that the conditions which necessitated the appointments of Indians to the Civil Service, the Legislature, and the Courts, called for a similar reform in the military service. Indeed, the considerations which inspired the proposals were mainly political, that is, they were advocated less with the object of adding to the efficiency of the army than of gratifying legitimate ambitions and of attaching the higher ranks of Indian society to the Government. The objections were based mainly on grounds of efficiency and racial discrimination. The first point, as discussed above, was palpably absurd. We conclude therefore that the principal, rather the sole, ground for objection was racial. The British governing class clung fast to the doctrine of prestige and racial superiority, and it was not until about the close of the First World War, which brought

1 Hamilton to Curzon, 26 Dec. 1900, Pr. Cor. Ind., V, 460.

it face to face with new conditions, demanding an entirely different outlook, that it agreed to the admission of Indians to the commissioned ranks.¹ Hamilton, who could not be described of heavy liberal views on Indian questions, observed: "Whilst I agree that we must be careful in not undermining race superiority, it is ridiculous to argue that we must go on facing an increasingly dangerous problem, without making an effort to solve it, because the British Private's feelings would be hurt or annoyed."² But the British Government went on until circumstances forced it to change its policy.

I One of the important military measures, which owed their introduction to the Russian danger, was the formation of Indian reserves. In 1885 the question of increasing the strength of Indian regiments in the event of their being required for war, and of adopting some methods for maintaining that strength in the field, was brought prominently to the attention of the Government. An obvious, and at the same time, cheap and effective method was the creation of adequate reserves. The subject had been referred to by Lytton's Government which observed in 1879:

1 Curzon's scheme of Imperial Cadet Corps came into being in 1901 and was widely welcomed in Indian circles. The Corps consisted of cadets of princely and noble houses. In 1905 a special form of King's Commission in His Majesty's 'Native' Indian Land Forces was instituted for those Indians who passed successfully through the full course of the Imperial Cadet Corps. But this Commission carried only the power of command over Indian troops and the holders of it who could not rise above the position of company officer in a regimental unit, had no effective military career open to them. Thus before 1918 Indians were not eligible to hold the Commission which was held by the British officers of the British and Indian armies. Report of the Sandhurst Committee, (1927), para. 6.

2 Hamilton to Curzon, 26 Dec. 1900, Pr. Cor. Ind., V. 460.

"The Indian army is now the only large army in the world which has no reserves. In other words, India is the only country which, maintaining a large army, pays in peace time for the whole available force which it can put into the field in war."¹ It expressed the view that the cost could be reduced by forming a reserve. General Haines, the Commander-in-Chief, did not favour the proposal, arguing, first, that it could not be worked in accord with the system of service in the Indian armies, and, secondly, a reserve must be "over and above our present means; in other words a source of outlay rather than economy."² The Commission of 1879 recommended the formation of a strictly limited reserve of 200 men to every infantry regiment. Privates after twelve years' service with the colours could choose to pass into the reserve on a salary of four rupees a month.³ Commenting on this proposal, Johnson, the Military Member, remarked that a system of Indian reserves, if perfect, was dangerous, and if imperfect, was useless and costly.⁴

In March 1885 the Government of India suggested two alternative schemes. The first plan provided that the men joining the reserve would continue to belong to their respective regiments and rejoin them when called out, being, in effect, on long furlough. The second plan made the reserve territorial in character, that is, the men passed into the reserve should not belong to any particular regiment, but would be called up and formed into a battalion to be stationed at some place near

1 Mil. Des. from India, No.168, 22 May 1879.

2 Minute, 20 May 1879, para. 17, Encl. to above.

3 Report, Para. 260.

4 Minute, 4 March 1880.

their homes. The Government of India was in favour of giving a trial to both plans. Under the first plan men were to be called up for training once a year or once every two years, receiving pay while under training and a gratuity not exceeding twenty rupees for each month of such training. It was recommended that the number of long furlough men might be limited to 250 men per regiment. The second plan provided that men would be called out for thirty days' duty once a year, and paid a gratuity of twenty-four rupees. Long furlough men could either join these local reserve battalions for their annual training or some corresponding class regiment of their own if the regiment to which they belonged was too far off. It was suggested that the term reserve should be confined to the territorial battalions. No man of more than ten years' service was to be admitted into the reserve.¹

The Secretary of State refused to sanction the plan of reserve battalions, being of opinion that they would fail to provide for the immediate strengthening of corps proceeding on service, or to keep their ranks supplied while in the field. He further remarked that bound by a common territorial tie and employed solely in maintaining internal order, they were likely to be a source of anxiety in the event of any reverses befalling the regular forces in the field. But he entirely concurred in the long furlough plan, and authorised the Government of India to give effect to it to such an extent as it might deem advisable. The objection was not to the reserve scheme, but to a particular system of raising

1 Mil. Des. from India, No.44, 17 March 1885.

reserves.¹

In 1886 the measure was introduced in the first instance in the Bengal army and the Punjab Frontier Force.² Two reserve forces were created, an active reserve composed of men transferred after not less than five and not more than twelve years' service with the colours; and the garrison reserve, formed of soldiers pensioned after twenty-one years' service or of men who had completed a total colour and reserve service of not less than twenty-one years. Men belonging to the garrison reserve were not liable to be employed beyond the frontiers of India. Men of both reserves were given full pay and good conduct pay while embodied for training or called up for service during war.³

The Government's estimate was that the changes introduced in 1887 would give not before long a total strength of 26,000, but the rate at which men joined that reserve was very slow.⁴ In 1890 a committee, with J.W. McQueen as President, was appointed to inquire into the causes of the unpopularity of the system and make suggestions for its improvement. The Committee's recommendations relating to the increase of bonus from five rupees to twenty-five, granted to men transferred from the colours to the reserve, as compensation for the value of kit left with regiments for further use and the abolition of the garrison reserve were accepted.⁵

1 Mil. Des. to India, No.192, 23 July 1885.

2 The strength of the reserves of the Bengal army was raised from 100 to 218 men per battalion in 1887. At the same time the system of reserves was extended to the Madras and Bombay armies, the numbers being limited to 160 men per battalion. Summary of Measures during Dufferin's Viceroyalty, (Mil. Dept.), 45-46.

3 Havildars, Naiks and Sepoys of both reserves, while at their homes, drew pay at the rates of Rs.4, Rs.-3-8-0 and Rs.3 a month respectively. Mil. Progs., No.3232, Dec. 1886.

4 In 1895 the number of active reserves was about 13,000.

5 Mil. Progs., Nos.1381-85, July 1891.

However, the rate of admission into the reserve, remained unsatisfactory. In his evidence before the Welby Commission, Gokhale observed that of the two systems, regimental and territorial, the latter would have been popular and succeeded better.¹

The formation of reserves, in addition not only to the existing but to the enlarged strength of the army, ruled out the question of reduction in expenditure. The scheme would have been most acceptable to Indian opinion if it had relieved the pressure on Indian revenues, but in its existing form it offered no financial relief. Another point which may be noted is that though the Government had fixed the strength at a small figure the supply of reserves remained inadequate for many years. The system of territorial reserve, which was not accepted in 1885, mainly on grounds of distrust, would no doubt have proved more successful.

II An examination of the British policy of army recruitment is significant in revealing governmental motives. Before 1857 the bulk of the Bengal infantry was composed of the 'Purbias' - men drawn from Oudh and the adjacent districts - about three-fourths of whom belonged to the higher castes. In the post-Mutiny period the Bengal army underwent a revolutionary change in composition. Because of their connection with the Mutiny the 'Purbias' came to be thoroughly and permanently discredited. In the 'nineties the Hindustani portion of the Bengal

1 Minutes of Evidence, iii, Q. 18219.

army numbered only 16 regiments of which less than ten were composed of Rajputs and Brahmans. The British Government did not modify its attitude, and as a result the 'Purbias', who had rendered great services in the past, remained permanently excluded. Service with the Hindustani army - which was so popular in the Company's day - lost much of its attraction. Writing in 1891 General Chesney said that it was very necessary to restore the prestige of the discredited Hindustani army.¹ It was indeed unfortunate that the British Government continuing distrust did not make use of a valuable source of recruitment.

In the post-Mutiny period the recruiting field shifted largely to Nepal, the Punjab, and the North-West. Fighting efficiency and loyalty were the principal considerations which determined the area from which the recruits were drawn. It is clear that loyalty alone was not the determining factor. Had it been so, it would have been easy to recruit any number of loyal men from other parts of India. The gradual reduction in the strength of the Madras army, the elimination of the lower castes, and the persistent rejection of the Anglo-Indian community's requests for enlistment in the army were not based on the matter of loyalty. But the perfect combination of efficiency with loyalty was not easy to obtain. The Gurkhas² no doubt satisfied this condition, and indeed General Roberts regarded them as by far the best and most trustworthy of all the Asian soldiers of Britain.³ In the case of Punjabis

1 Minute, 14 April 1891, para. 40.

2 The number of Gurkha regiments in the Bengal army was 5 in 1862 and 15 in 1892. Mil. Des. to India, No.107, 4 Aug. 1892.

3 Minute, 8 Feb. 1890.

it was not loyalty so much as efficiency which accounted for their large recruitment. Just about the end of the Mutiny in 1858 a number of distinguished men expressed the opinion that the services of the Punjabis were not rendered from disinterested motives.¹

The policy of recruiting larger numbers of Gurkhas and Punjabis was dictated mainly by considerations of efficiency. The process was facilitated by two factors: the complete distrust of the 'Purbias' and the availability of better fighting material. The first point has been discussed above; as regards the second, it may be pointed out that with the expansion of the Empire in the Punjab and the North-West the area of choice was correspondingly extended. The Government was concerned to improve the quality of the army. An obvious method was to draw recruits from those parts of the country which supplied the best men. Moreover, the importance of the Punjab and the North-West as recruiting fields became much greater with the approach of Russia towards Indian borders. For twenty years the Russian menace remained the most dominant factor in Indian military policy. It was strongly emphasised by British military authorities that the Indian army which might be called upon to meet a

1 Sir George Clerk (Governor of Bombay in 1847, and again in 1860-62, and member of the India Council, 1864-76) attributed the loyalty of the Sikhs to the lust for plunder. Report of Army Commission (1859), Q. 1172.

Major-Gen. Mansfield, then Chief of the Staff in India, observed that it was not out of love, but out of hatred of the Bengal army, that the Sikhs flocked to the British standard. Minute, 13 July 1858, App. to Minutes of Evidence, Army Commission (1859), 97.

The Punjab Government remarked that the hope of sharing in the spoils of Delhi turned the Punjabis towards British service. Punjab to Govt. of India, 25 May 1858, Selections from Punjab Correspondence, iv, No.1, 46.

formidable power like Russia should consist of the best available men. In 1885 when the army was increased, as many as nine battalions were raised from Punjabis and Gurkhas. In 1890 four Hindustani regiments were disbanded and replaced by Punjabi Muslims, Pathans, Dogras and Gurkhas. Military authorities maintained, and the Government of India shared their views, that the problem of Indian security had largely changed in character since 1885. In 1890 O.R. Newmarch, Military Secretary to the Government, observed that before 1885 military organisation was based on considerations of internal security, but since then the Indian Government, instead of looking inwards, had been required to face outwards. He recognised that there was danger in strengthening too much the war-like classes of the army, but the risk, he said, had to be run under the changed situation.¹ In 1893 General White expressed the same view when he said that the greatest danger against which they had to guard was aggression from without whereas in 1859 and the following years the problem was mainly one of internal security.²

During the period 1885-93, when General Roberts was Commander-in-Chief, the policy of replacement by more war-like troops was actively followed. He fully exploited the situation on the North-West Frontier and succeeded in introducing many changes which tended to substantially increase the importance of the Punjab and the North-West as recruiting fields. In October 1887 he recommended the replacement of 2,018 men of

1 Minute of 30 April 1890 on Govt. of India's Mil. Des., No.63 (1890).

2 See his Minute of 4 Feb. 1895, Encl. to Mil. Des. from India, No.46, 20 Feb. 1895.

the Bengal army by Rajputs, and Jats, These men, serving in 19 regiments, belonged to the lower classes.¹ The Government of India accepted the proposals. Accordingly the commanding officers were instructed not to enlist from the lower castes in future.² The main grounds for this were, first, the difficulty in entrusting them with the command of companies or troops consisting of men of higher castes, and secondly, their habitual submissiveness to the authority of the superior castes. But if the attitude of the higher castes had been the only obstacle, it could have been overcome by forming separate regiments from the lower classes. It is thus clear that the decision was taken mainly on grounds of efficiency.

The policy of elimination was not confined only to the Bengal army. In October 1891 the Government of India observed that certain low castes, such as, Parwari, Mang and Ramusi, who formed ten to eleven per cent., and other low caste men amounting to five to six per cent. of each battalion in the Bombay army should be replaced by the better fighting material available within the area.³ In October 1895 the Bombay Government's proposal to pension off 15 Indian officers of such low castes as Parwari and Mochi, irrespective of the length of service, was sanctioned.⁴ The same policy was followed towards the low castes of

1 Among those who were eliminated Ahirs numbered 1260, Gujars 186, Kurmis 96, Pasis 72, Bhats 41, and other castes like Lohars, Chamars, Khatiks, etc. numbered below 40.

Mil. Progs. No.273, Feb. 1888.

2 Mil. Progs., No.1655, May 1888.

3 Letter to Bombay Govt., 21 Oct. 1891 and Memo., Mil. Progs., No.57, Nov. 1891.

4 Mil. Des. from India, No.171, 10 Sept. 1895; Mil. Des. to India, No.100, 31 Oct. 1895.

the Hyderabad Contingent. In 1891 Brigadier-General Prothero, Commanding Hyderabad Contingent, recommended that the enlistment of Dhers and Mangs, except as battery drivers, should be stopped. He expressed his opinion against the enlistment of low caste men, adding that the question of their promotion as non-commissioned officers was of extreme difficulty. On the one hand, he said, there were objections to their promotion because they lacked influence, and, on the other hand, if they were not promoted, they became discontented.¹ In 1895 the enlistment of Dhers and Mangs was completely stopped.²

General Roberts' entire scheme of military reform was dominated by the single consideration of how best to meet Russia if war came. He subordinated to this object even principles of counterpoise and balance existing in the form of separate armies. In September 1886 he urged the desirability of substituting soldiers of the most war-like classes for men of doubtful qualities. He held very strong views on the fighting qualities of the various classes, placing them in order of fitness as follows: Gurkhas, Dogras, Sikhs, Punjabi Muslims (north of the Ravi and west of the Jhelum), Jats, and Pathans. "I have no hesitation myself in stating," he declared, "that except Gurkhas, Dogras, Sikhs, the pick of Punjabi Muhammadans, Hindustanis of the Jat and Ranghur castes (such as enlist in the cavalry), and certain classes of Pathans, there are no native soldiers in our service whom we could

1 Letter to Resident, Hyderabad, 9 Nov. 1891, Encl. to Mil. Des. from India, No.31, 3 March 1897.

2 Mil. Secretary to Govt. of India to Resident, Hyderabad, 11 March, 1895. They were not to be recruited even as drivers in the artillery.

venture with safety to place in the field against the Russians."¹

In 1889 Roberts submitted a plan for the larger recruitment of the trans-Indus Afghan tribes on military grounds as well as political. He emphasised that their presence in the army would give the British a certain pied a terre in the trans-Indus region, and their local knowledge and influence would be very valuable in any military operations in that direction. His proposals for adding eight Afridi companies was accepted by the Secretary of State. On 1890 he recommended the reduction of the Madras cavalry from four to two regiments and the increase of the Punjab cavalry and infantry by one regiment each. The Secretary of State did not accept these proposals. In 1891 the Government of India submitted a modified plan providing for the reduction of the Madras cavalry by only one regiment and the addition of one squadron to each of the three remaining regiments. Under these proposals the total strength of the Madras cavalry was kept intact. In the same despatch the Government of India observed that the Indian army should be looked upon as a fighting machine and not as something to gratify the feelings of each Presidency or to provide employment for unwarlike soldiers. The Secretary of State accepted the modified proposals.

The history of the Madras army reveals the same governmental motives at work. The army was reduced in size several times, and later a considerable portion of it was replaced by men from outside.² These

1 Minute, 8 Feb. 1890.

2 In 1861-62, four out of eight regiments of cavalry and eight out of fifty-two infantry regiments were reduced; in 1864-65 four more infantry regiments were reduced; and in 1882, the strength was further reduced by eight regiments. Between 1902 and 1904 two regiments were converted into battalions of Moplahs, one into a Gurkha Corps, and nine into battalions of Punjabis.

changes were introduced despite its unimpeachable loyalty and its record of valuable service in the Mutiny. Even so not a few military authorities were of opinion that the Madras army was inefficient as a fighting force. Sir George White, who later succeeded Roberts as Commander-in-Chief, reporting on the Madras soldier, said that "there is a want of war-like instinct and manliness in the class from which he is taken that precludes the hope of making him into a valuable soldier, and that it would be injudicious to put him in front line against any fairly armed enemy we are likely to meet, or even against the irregular and badly armed bands of such braver races as we have on our north-west frontier in India."¹

Newmarch, the Military Secretary, remarked that many officers were of opinion that the Madras army could never be more than a military police.² In 1891 General Chesney maintained that it could only be employed against a European enemy at a tremendous risk. He emphasised that it did not provide a counterpoise adding that in his view it had not provided even in the Mutiny inasmuch as its Indian portion had suffered only 30 casualties.³ These observations at least indicate that the sources from which the army was recruited were not considered so good as Gurkhas and Punjabis.

The Madras army underwent two important changes in its composition. Between 1890 and 1893 its seven regiments were broken up and replaced by men from the military police levies in Burma then in course of reduction.

1 White (late Commanding Upper Burma Force) to Adj. Gen. in India, 1 July 1889, Encl. to Mil. Des. from India, No.142, 2 Aug. 1889.

2 Minute, 30 April 1890.

3 Minute, 14 April 1891, paras. 35-36.

A portion of the Madras command, consisting mainly of Punjabis, was permanently stationed in Burma,¹ a change introduced principally with the object of making that portion of the army more efficient. Another change resulted in the elimination of the Telingas whom the Commander-in-Chief of Madras characterised as "the bane of the army."² In 1895 their recruitment was discontinued. The Government of India's policy was to reduce the strength of the army in the south to a figure just sufficient for local purposes. In 1890 it had recommended the reduction of two Madras cavalry and one infantry regiments. In 1892 it suggested a reduction of six battalions on the ground that they were not required for the security of southern India.³ If these recommendations had been carried out, the Indian portion of the Madras army would have been reduced to twenty-five regiments including the fourteen regiments serving in Burma.

We see then that the Madras army was reduced in size and changed in composition because the sources of recruitment did not, in the opinion of military authorities, compare favourably with those in the north. An important reason why better material did not enlist in the south was, as Colonel Faunce pointed out, that the terms of service were such as could be acceptable only to the poorer classes.⁴ The attitude of the

1 In 1900 of these regiments one was a class regiment of Gurkhas and six were class company regiments, comprising Sikhs - 22 companies, Dogras - 2; Punjabi Muslims - 16; Hindustanis - 1; Pathans - 3; Rajputs - 2; and Brahmans - 2. Parl. Papers, LXX (1902), 488.

2 Adj. Gen., Madras army to Madras Govt., 8 Nov. 1890, Mil. Progs., No.1549, April 1891.

3 Govt. of India to Govt. of Madras, 25 Oct. 1892, Mil. Progs., No.676, Nov. 1892.

4 Memo. by Col. E. Faunce, Deputy Adj. Gen., Madras Army, 25 Nov. 1885, Mil. Progs., No.3224, Dec. 1886.

Government was that if for the same cost better men were available in the North-West, it was not advisable to spend more than was absolutely necessary on inferior material. In 1891 the Government of India remarked that the army was not meant to afford an easy means of livelihood at the public expense.¹ The reaction of the Madras Government to the policy of reduction was one of disapproval, and in 1890 its Commander-in-Chief strongly emphasised the necessity of fixing the strength of the army on a permanent basis.²

The case of the Bombay army, which consisted of about thirty per cent. of 'foreigners,' stood on a different footing. The persistence of the Bombay authorities in the recruitment of men from outside, in disregard of the clear and repeated instructions of the Government of India, shows on the one hand the defects of the 'Presidency' system and on the other, the necessity of maintaining a balance in the composition of the army.

In September 1883 the Supreme Government asked the Bombay Government to restrict recruitment generally to territories under its control. Stress was laid on the necessity of maintaining, as far as possible, the distinct nationality of the army by reducing the strength of 'foreigners' to a minimum. In a resolution of 6 June 1885 the Bombay Government recommended that the Presidency army should be permitted to recruit without restriction in the Punjab and the prohibited districts of Rajputana.

1 Mil. Des. from India, No.41, 4 March 1891.

2 Adj. Gen., Madras to Secretary to Govt. of Madras, 8 Nov. 1890.
Mil. Progs., No.1549, April 1891.

The Supreme Government made some modification in its decision by adding Alwar, Ajmer, and Jaipur to the areas of its recruitment.¹ The Bombay officers, however, continued to recruit from the prohibited districts. According to the Government of India, 15 regiments of the Bombay army had no less than 3,985 men from the Punjab and the N.W.P., or an average of 265 men per regiment as against 150 at which the maximum strength of 'foreigners' had been fixed.² The Bombay Government maintained that while their presence in such small strength did not materially affect the nationality of the Bombay army, it acted on the other hand, in some measure, as a leaven upon the predominant Maratha element.³

The explanation for the attitude of the Government of India lies largely in the policy of recruitment which was to a considerable extent determined by political considerations. In a despatch of August 1889 it remarked: "From a military point of view the whole Indian army should be recruited only from the war-like classes. But political considerations are in many respects as weighty as military." It expressed the view that if military efficiency only had to be taken into account, all the three armies would require a certain amount of reconstitution.⁴ However, in explaining the Government of India's attitude we have also to take into consideration its hostility to the Presidency system. Perhaps its criticism of the Bombay Government was intended to reinforce the case for its abolition.

It must be remembered that the Marathas, who formed a considerable

1 Letter to Bombay Govt., 10 Aug. 1885, Mil. Progs., No.183, Sept. 1885.

2 Letter to Bombay Govt., 4 Feb. 1889, Mil. Progs., 2415, Feb. 1889.

3 Mil. Progs., No.2412, Feb. 1889.

4 Mil. Des. from India, No.142, 2 Aug. 1889.

proportion of the army, were efficient soldiers and could well have supplied more men, but recruitment beyond a certain limit would have upset the balance. It appears that the Bombay Government under such circumstances preferred to recruit efficient men from outside.

The composition of the Hyderabad Contingent, which had about 50 per cent. of its men from Northern India, illustrates the point more clearly. Though the Contingent had an extremely restricted military jurisdiction, in composition it was only half local.¹ The Government of India no doubt tried many a time to fix the proportion of 'foreigners' at a smaller figure, but it failed because of anⁱⁿadequate supply of fit men from the local sources. In 1876 and again in 1882 it insisted that recruiting should be restricted to the Deccan and Southern India; and in November 1887 it fixed the admission of 'foreigners' at 25 per cent.² The orders were issued in October 1888. In 1891 Prothero pointed out the extreme difficulty of obtaining recruits of a suitable stamp in the Provinces south of the Narbada and Mahanadi rivers. He strongly urged the Government of India to remove the 25 per cent. restriction.³ The Commanding Officers, whom he had consulted, were of opinion that suitable men were not available. Kirkwood, Commanding Officer of the 6th Infantry went so far as to say that the material

1 In 1893 the percentage of men belonging to Southern India was about 48. The Contingent numbered about 7,500 strong. In 1903 it was incorporated in the regular army.

2 Mil. Des. from India, No.220, 29 Nov. 1887; Mil. Des. to India, No.10, 12 Jan. 1888.

3 Letter to Resident, Hyderabad, 9 Nov. 1891, Encl. to Mil. Des. from India, No.31, 3 March 1897.

available in the South was, with very few exceptions, "worse than useless." Although the orders, restricting the proportion of 'foreigners' were issued in October 1888, they were not put into effect. In 1893 Prothero observed that if they were to be rigidly enforced, the regiments would fall considerably below the strength, and asked whether the Government of India was prepared to accept such a situation.¹ In 1894 the proportion of 'foreigners' was fixed at 50 per cent. but the recruitment of frontier or trans-frontier Pathans was forbidden.²

The attitude of military authorities towards the employment of Anglo-Indians in the army is quite relevant to our discussion. The Anglo-Indians had completely identified their interest with the British Government, and were also encouraged to join the volunteer corps, but their repeated offers for military service were systematically rejected. In 1857-58 three local corps of Eurasians, namely, the Lahore Light Horse, the East India Regiment, and the Eurasian Battery of Artillery had been formed, but the first two were disbanded in 1864-65 and the last in 1870. Between 1870 and 1900 the Anglo-Indian community submitted many memorials urging the Government to provide a military career for it. Military authorities like Roberts, White and Lockhart were opposed to their recruitment almost entirely on grounds of efficiency. Roberts said that since a Eurasian regiment would cost as much as a British regiment, the money would be better spent on the latter. In 1893 Brackenbury suggested

1 Letter to Resident, Hyderabad, 10 Oct. 1893, Encl. to Des. No.31.

2 Mil. Secretary, Govt. of India to Resident, Hyderabad, 22 Feb. 1894, Encl. to Des. No.31.

that a small number of Eurasians could be appointed, as an experimental measure, in the garrison artillery, their cost to be met by reducing the number of the less valuable Indian troops. The scheme was dropped on account of General White's opposition. In 1898-99 C. Nairne, then Commander-in-Chief, and his successor, W. Lockhart were strongly opposed to the recruitment of Eurasians. Nairne was of opinion that their efficiency as gunners would not be more than two-thirds of the same number of British gunners. Lockhart observed that their habits and aptitudes fitted them for a civil rather than a military career, and added that the army should not be utilised as a charitable institution. In 1899 the Government of India expressed its opinion in favour of making an experiment by raising a Eurasian regiment,¹ but the Secretary of State did not accept the proposal on the grounds, as pointed out by the military authorities, that a Eurasian regiment could only be maintained in addition to, and not in substitution for, any part of the existing garrison and that it would involve expenditure incommensurate with the advantages to be obtained.² The importance of the question of Anglo-Indian recruitment is that loyalty alone was not the passport to admission to the military service. Considerations of efficiency weighed very largely with military authorities in matters of recruitment.

A policy of recruitment based on efficiency was bound to result in a country like India in the preponderance of certain sections of the population. Though the principle of balance and counterpoise, as provided

1 Mil. Des. from India, No.55, 30 March 1899.

2 Mil. Des. to India, No.6, 18 Jan. 1900.

in the shape of local armies composed, as far as possible, of local element, remained the keynote of British policy, it was considerably modified by the predominance of the Punjabi element. In 1861 the Indian army, as reconstituted after the Mutiny, was composed of four separate bodies of nearly equal strength, but as the years passed, and especially since 1885, an increasingly greater emphasis came to be placed on recruitment in the Punjab and the North-West. In 1892 the Government of India observed that the Indian army in any campaign beyond the North-West Frontier must be composed mainly of Sikhs, Punjabis, Pathans, Baluchis and Gurkhas.¹ In his able minute of April 1891, Chesney remarked that the inevitable tendency would be to move the centre of gravity of the military system more and more to the north-west, and such a necessity, he said, would be incompatible with the policy which demanded four separate and, as far as possible, equal armies.² The Punjab continued to supply a large proportion of the Indian army. Even after the end of the Russian menace, consequent on the Japanese victory of 1905, the British Government made no departure from its policy of drawing recruits largely from Nepal, the Punjab, and the North-West. The preponderance of the Punjabi element took place at the expense of the other classes in the army. Consequently, the system of balance provided ^{by} the constitution of more or less equal armies - a point on which the Army Commission of 1879 had laid strong emphasis - was considerably disturbed, but the other principle of counterpoise, namely, the organisation of the army on the

1 Mil. Des. from India, No.172, 2 Nov. 1892.

2 Minute, 14 April 1891, para. 42.

basis of castes and classes, was never abandoned. The Indian army indeed contained within itself the elements of equilibrium. In 1892 the Secretary of State remarked that the preponderance of the Punjab division was somewhat counterbalanced by the larger proportion of Sikhs and Dogras of whom it was composed.¹ Moreover, 15 regiments of Gurkhas, a class distinct from all others, and a large proportion of European troops supplied the most effective counterpoise.

V.G. An important question on which the War Office and the Treasury took decisions often in disregard of the views and protests of the Government of India related to the payment of troops employed outside India. That India must supply troops for imperial purposes was not the point which the Indian Government could call in question. The point at issue was whether she should also pay for the troops employed for purposes with which she was either not connected at all or very indirectly connected. The occasions when England supplied troops for India were much fewer than when India did for England, and whenever England lent troops, for instance, in the Mutiny, she charged to Indian revenues every farthing of the expenses incurred, but in the case of India the principle of reciprocity was honoured more in the breach than in the observance. Though the Act of 1858 had provided that the consent of both Houses of Parliament was necessary for spending Indian revenues on troops employed for any purpose except for "preventing or repelling actual invasion"² of India, it was not

1 Mil. Des. to India, No.107, 4 Aug. 1892.

2 21 & 22 Vict., c.106, s.55.

difficult for any Government to get the necessary sanction.

In the nineteenth century Indian troops were employed many times outside India. In the Chinese War of 1839-40 all the ordinary charges were borne by India and the extraordinary charges by England. In the war with Persia in 1856 India paid the ordinary and half the extraordinary expenses. In the Abyssinian war of 1867-68 she paid the ordinary and England the extraordinary charges. In the Perak¹ expedition of 1875 India bore the ordinary and England the extraordinary cost of the troops. In the Malta expedition of 1878 England paid both the ordinary and extraordinary charges. In the Egyptian expedition of 1882 India paid the ordinary and sixty per cent. of the extraordinary expenses.² In the Suakin expedition of 1885-86 India paid only the ordinary charges. In the Mombassa expedition of 1896 England paid both the ordinary and extraordinary expenses. In the Suakin expedition of 1896 India paid the ordinary and England the extraordinary charges. Each time when India was asked to pay, the War Office and the Treasury argued that Indian interests were also involved in the areas where the expeditions were sent.

On this question the Government of India took throughout a consistent and strong stand. In 1868 Lawrence declared that India had not the slightest interest in Abyssinia and that the war was being fought for the vindication of English honour. He further remarked that India was very differently treated from the Colonies inasmuch as none could think

1 In the Malaya peninsula.

2 Kimberley's speech, 16 March 1885, Hansard, ccxcv, 1223.

of asking them to pay.¹ On 28 November 1867 Cranborne, former Secretary of State for India, told the Commons that India should not be "looked upon as an English barrack in the Oriental seas from which we may draw any number of troops without paying for them."² In 1882 the Government of India strongly protested against the Home Government's decision on many grounds. First, it argued that since it represented the people of the country, it had a claim to be heard before being asked to pay the expenses. Secondly, while the sole interest of India lay in the safety of the Suez canal, the interests of Britain were much greater. Thirdly, the British Colonies, such as, New Zealand, Australia, Hongkong and the Straits Settlements, which were equally interested in the safety of the Canal, were not called upon to pay their share. Fourthly, from the political point of view, a decision which imposed more burden on a poor country having smaller interests would be injurious to the relations between England and India.³

In 1885 the Indian troops were sent to Suakin. The Government of India protested against the financial arrangements remarking that the operations neither involved the safety of the Canal, nor were they connected with any Indian interests. It expressed the view that on the above grounds it might be justified in opposing the employment of Indian troops, but since it was not in a position to refuse assistance, it must protest by saying that the Indian taxpayer had an overwhelmingly strong

1 Minute, 20 Jan. 1868; Encl. to Fin. Des. from India, No.28, 3 Feb. 1868.
2 Hansard, CXC, 406.

3 Fin. Despatches from India, No.239 of 4 Aug. 1882 and No.274 of 1 Sept. 1882.

case for total exemption from the cost.¹ In his minute of 19 February 1885, Sir William Muir, a member of the India Council, declared: "This is an Egyptian affair, arising out of Egyptian complications, undertaken for the purpose of clearing the Egyptian frontier."²

By May 1885 the active operations were suspended, but the Indian troops were retained in order to relieve the British troops of duty in a very hot climate. The Government of India justifiably demanded that under the changed circumstances it should not be asked to pay the ordinary charges with effect from 15 May 1885.³ Kimberley replied that if the withdrawal of the Indian garrison was delayed beyond May 1886, representation would be made to the Treasury.⁴ The reply, as the Indian Government rightly interpreted, practically admitted the validity of its claim.⁵ Kimberley's successor, Cross did not press the matter, but urged the Treasury not to charge, without the Government of India's concurrence, any portion of the expenses on troops employed in duties not directly concerning Indian interests.⁶ The Treasury agreed that on such occasions the views of the Indian Government and the Secretary of State would be "respectfully weighed" by the Imperial Government.⁷

Early in 1896 an Indian regiment was sent to Mombassa, on the coast of East Africa. The India Office said: "There is no justification

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- 1 Fin. Des from India, No.53, 17 Feb. 1885.
 - 2 Minutes of Dissent (1881-1900), 183.
 - 3 Fin. Des. from India, No.53, 9 Feb. 1886.
 - 4 Fin. Des. to India, No.92, 31 March 1886.
 - 5 Fin. Des. from India, No.336, 26 Oct. 1886.
 - 6 Fin. Des. to India, No.51, 3 Feb. 1887.
 - 7 Treasury to India Office, 19 Jan. 1887, Encl. to above.

for charging upon Indian revenues any portion of the cost of this force so long as it is employed out of India and for purposes exclusively Indian."¹ The Treasury maintained that in this case there was a stronger claim upon Indian funds for ordinary pay than in the expeditions of 1867 and 1885. It expressed the view that India had substantial interests in the trade of Zanzibar and that many of the leading commercial firms were Indian in personnel. The India Office rightly remarked that it could be shown with much greater force that though the British had large interests in Indian trade, the English Exchequer did not pay for the military force in India.²

In the Suakin expedition of 1896 India had to pay the ordinary charges of the troops. The India Council decided by a majority that the precedent of 1885 should be made applicable.³ In a very able document which also traced the history of previous transactions, the Government of India showed how the Treasury had very often acted in a most arbitrary manner in matters of payment. Elgin observed: "But I fail in this case to see where an equitable claim on us comes in."⁴ On 2 June he said that Colonies like Australia, which were also interested in Egypt, could contribute, if not by men, at least by money. He went on to say that he took the Indian side on this question, because the sentiment was so strong that any opposition would have become a personal one.⁵ The Government of India protested against the decision mainly on four grounds. First, there was no reciprocity between India and England

1 India Office to Foreign Office, 27 Feb. 1896; C.8131 (1896).

2 India Office to Treasury, 15 April 1896.

3 Secretary of State's Tel., 15 May 1896.

4 Elgin to Hamilton, May 1896, Pr. Cor. Ind., ii, 649.

5 Elgin to Hamilton, 2 June 1896, Pr. Cor. Ind., ii, 681.

other people's work in a foreign country¹."

In June 1896 the Secretary of State laid down three principles according to which the relations between India and England were to be regulated. First, when the temporary loan of a military force was urgently required, either by Britain or India, such assistance was to be promptly given so far as the resources and situation of either country at the time might permit. Secondly, if the Government lending the troops had no special interest, the whole cost of the force, including ordinary and extraordinary charges was to be borne by the borrower. Thirdly, if the Government supplying the troops had a distinct and specific interest in the matter, which though ^{it} might not be so strong as in the case of the country requiring assistance, the former should be content to bear, in one form or another the burden which the operations involved.² The Secretary of State expressed the view that the principles were based on justice and equity. He defended the Suakin arrangement on the basis of the third principle though the Government of India in its despatch of 2 June 1896 had strongly protested against it. Thus the real difficulty lay in the application of these principles, because the decision as to whether or not Indian interests were involved rested with the Imperial Government which was judge as well as the dominant party.

The Suakin expedition provoked a lively discussion in Parliament on 6 July 1896. The Government of India's despatch of 2 June 1896 strongly strengthened the position of the opposition. Morley characterised the transaction as an act of "melancholy meanness," and remarked that it

1 Minutes of Dissent (1881-1900), 379.

2 Fin. Des. to India, No.106, 30 June 1896.

was not advisable to run the risk for a paltry sum of £35,000.¹ Fowler expressed the same view when he asked whether it was wise or statesman-like to defy the public opinion of India and to overrule the opinion of the Indian Government for that small sum.² Though A.J.Balfour, First Lord of the Treasury, devoted most part of his speech to defending the decision and replying to the criticism, he hinted at the advisability of constituting some kind of tribunal of arbitration for determining questions of that character.³ Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister, also said in the Lords that early in the present year he consulted his colleagues about the appointment of an impartial tribunal which should have the confidence of the taxpayers of both England and India, but they did not consider the details because they thought it best to await the report of the Welby Commission.⁴ Michael Hicks-Beach, Chancellor of the Exchequer, observed that he held strong opinions against placing the Government of India in a position of almost independent authority.⁵ Salisbury remarked that though the sum was small, its payment involved a principle of great interest to the British taxpayer.⁶

Though Morley and Fowler argued convincingly against the Suakin arrangement, the Opposition case was weakened by the fact that the Liberals themselves had created bad precedents which they now asked the Conservatives to set aside. When the Government justified the policy on the principles

1 Indian Parl. Debates (1896), 215, 222.

2 Ibid., 262.

3 Ibid., 266.

4 Indian Parl. Debates, 16 July 1896, 319.

5 Ibid., 6 July 1896, 254.

6 Ibid., 16 July 1896, 316.

of payment adopted in the years 1882 and 1885, it no doubt had a strong argument in its favour. Fowler, however, rightly remarked: "A bad precedent does not demand, much less justify, its repetition. The Government which was responsible for the decisions of 1882 and 1885 was not infallible."¹ Nevertheless, Salisbury's Government refused to revise the decision.

It is interesting to note that the British Government tried to justify its policy also on grounds of principle. Salisbury told Parliament that the question involved an important principle. But the Government of India was of the view that the principle to which the Imperial Government adhered was not correct. In 1890 it strongly emphasised that the Imperial Exchequer should pay all the expenses when the objects of expeditions were not connected with India.² So far as Indian opinion was concerned, it was strongly opposed to the principle of payment, as laid down by the Imperial Government. As early as 1868, commenting on Northcote's statement that India would be required to pay a small sum for the troops in Abyssinia, the Hindu Patriot wrote: "We do not care for the amount, but the principle involved is of vital importance to India."³ In view of the wide scope of Imperial interests, even the principles of 1896 marked, in practice, little improvement on the earlier position. In August 1890 the War Office had emphasised that any nice distinction, such as the Government of India seemed to contemplate,

1 Ibid., 6 July 1896, 263.

2 Memo., para. 20, Encl. to Mil. Des., No.70, 25 March 1890.

3 Extract from an article in the Hindu Patriot, 13 Jan. 1868, Encl. to Fin. Des. from India, No.28, 3 Feb. 1868.

between Imperial and Indian interests could not be drawn, since the vital interests of India extended very much beyond the confines of her own territory.¹ Lord Rosebery rightly observed that if it were asked in what foreign questions India had an interest, it would not be difficult to prove that all British Mediterranean interests were in the main connected with India.²

It is clear from the above that the Treasury and the War Office dealt with the question in a most arbitrary and unsympathetic manner, and when they insisted on payment by India of small sums, they evidently showed a pettifogging and huckstering mentality. The way in which they approached the question can, to some extent, be seen in the following arguments. In April 1896 the Treasury said that if there could be any absence of reciprocity, it was on the side of India and not of England. It further remarked that the arrangement imposed no additional burden on India and that she should not save money as the result of the employment of her troops outside.³ To the Government of India's argument that in fixing expenditure the poverty of the country should be taken into consideration, the War Office replied that the time when a plea of poverty could be put forth on behalf of India had not yet arrived.⁴ Much of the controversy of this character could have been avoided if the British Government had frankly stated that the entire cost of the troops supplied by India in imperial interests was to be borne by her. Such a

1 War Office to Treasury, 13 Aug. 1890.

2 Ind. Parl. Debates, 16 July 1896, 322.

3 Treasury to India Office, 29 April 1896, Parl. Papers, LXI (1896), 528.

4 War Office to Treasury 13 Aug. 1890.

declaration would have made the policy absolutely clear and unambiguous.

Military expenditure was one of the most important questions on which Indian leaders held very strong views. That India could not do without an army was recognised by all. The main point on which British and Indian opinion greatly differed was whether or not defence expenditure could be substantially reduced without impairing security. Indian leaders thought that there was considerable scope for reduction while the British Government maintained that the existing army was just sufficient for India's requirements. Military men held still stronger views. In 1885, D.M. Stewart, then Commander-in-Chief, recommended an addition of 41,000 men to the army, whereas the Government of India proposed an increase of 27,000. His successor Roberts was dead against any proposal for reduction. Roberts' successor White remarked that in view of the enormous area to be guarded and the proximity of Russia to Indian borders in the north-west and of France in the south-east, reduction was neither safe nor practicable.¹

In 1888 Lord Dufferin said that the question of reduction might be considered when the Imperial Service Troops and the reserves would provide an additional force numbering between 50,000 and 60,000 men.² In 1893 and again in March 1894 Brackenbury emphasised that military expenditure could be reduced mainly in three ways: decrease in the number of troops, the reduction of their pay, and the reduction of the reserves of stores.³ He remarked that the first two proposals were not possible,

1 Minute, 4 Feb. 1895, Encl. to Mil. Des. from India, No.46, 20 Feb. 1895.

2 Minute, 8 Dec. 1888.

3 Brackenbury's Minute, Encl. to Mil. Des. from India, No.39, 8 March 1893; Financial Statement, 1894-95, 113.

and the third method involved danger because in a vast country like India the Government could not run the risk of restricting the supply of the munitions of War. Moreover, the strength of the army, he said, was not only a question of India but also of Imperial policy. In 1895 the Government of India pointed out that the reserve and the Imperial Service Troops consisted of 13,329 and about 18,000 men respectively and made it clear that it was not possible to reduce the strength of the army and to effect any material reduction in expenditure.¹ Two years earlier Lord Lansdowne had remarked that the Government would do its best to resist further attempts to increase the expenditure.² Thus it is clear that from the Government's point of view the question was not so much to decrease the expenditure as to prevent its further increase.

The Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure, presided over by Lord Welby, pointed out that military expenditure had remained stationary during 1862-84 but it went up during 1885-97. The second period was marked by a heavy fall in exchange, by an addition of 30,000 men to the army, by the annexation of Burma, and by several expeditions on the North-West Frontier.³ A large number of coastal and frontier defence works and

1 Mil. Des. from India, No.46, 20 Feb. 1895.

2 Financial Statement, 1893-94, 113.

3 The total net expenditure in India on the army was £11,500,000 in 1856-57, £11,293,000 in 1884-85, £14,799,000 in 1892-93, and £16,437,000 in 1896-97. In 1884-85 and the subsequent years the fall in exchange entailed additional payments in India (included in the above figures) on account of the pay of British troops and compensation to officers amounting to Rx. 184,000 in 1884-85, Rx. 1,117,000 in 1893-94, and Rx. 1,500,000 in 1896-97.

Indian Expenditure Commission, IV, para.202 with footnote.

Rx. represents tens of rupees.

additional expenditure on equipping the British infantry with the Lee-Metford magazine rifle - the ammunition of which cost twice that of the old rifle - added considerably to military expenditure. The fall in exchange was no doubt an important cause of increase, but the other measures, undertaken during this period, placed a heavy burden on Indian revenues.¹ The Indian proposals for reducing the expenditure were: the formation of a large reserve force, the organisation of an Indian volunteer corps, the appointment of Indians to the higher ranks of the army, and the reduction of the army establishment, especially of the British army. If the British Government had modified its policy of distrust, it would have been quite practicable, and a sound policy too, to give effect, at any rate on a small scale, to these proposals. A return, immediately after the end of the real crisis, to the early 1885 strength and a smaller proportion of Europeans would have considerably relieved the pressure on the Indian Exchequer. The British soldier was enormously expensive, and there was a further increase in ^{the} cost due to the fall in exchange. The Government of India admitted that there had been a large increase in the pay of the British soldier during the past sixty years.² Nevertheless in

1 Three members of the Commission, Wadderburn, Caine and Naoroji showed, in a separate report, that the Indian Exchequer was saddled with a huge amount of additional expenditure incurred on the following items during 1885-6 - 1895-6:-

	Rx.
Addition to the Army (10 years)	16,000,000
Military Charges in Upper Burma	8,655,650
Special Defence Works	4,610,063
Military Railways (11 years)... ..	11,000,000
Frontier Expeditions and Field Operations ..	7,360,000
	<u>47,625,713</u>

(Indian Expenditure Commission, IV, 175).

2 The net receipt by the private of infantry was Rs.10-1-0 in 1840 and Rs.23-13-3 in 1897-98.
Mil. Des. from India, No.47, 24 March 1898.

1898 it granted him an allowance of $2\frac{1}{4}$ annas per diem on account of groceries and extra messing in addition to the abolition of the grovery stoppage, that is, a total allowance of 3 annas (3d) a day. The ground for increase was that the British soldier at home and in the Colonies had been granted an allowance of an equivalent amount. The allowance was given irrespectively of a large increase in the rupee pay of the British soldier.

The cost of the training of the British soldier was an important subject which gave rise to much controversy between the India Office and the Government of India on the one side and the War Office on the other. The War Office maintained that India was required to pay less than the actual cost of training and to contribute a very small sum of £100,000 towards the cost of her general naval defence and the protection of her trade. Referring to the Government of India's argument that the short service system was more expensive, the War Office observed that it was introduced with a view, first, to providing the force economically by reducing the charge for pensions and, secondly, to meeting the objection to long service in the army. In reply to the argument that the Indian army was of great value to Britain, it remarked: "The assumption that India is a great reservoir of strength to England may be sound, but the

1 The Indian Navy, maintained at a cost of about £300,000, was abolished in 1862, and the Royal Navy undertook the duty of defence. No contribution was asked for six years. From 1869 India paid a contribution which varied from £70,000 to £40,000. Finally it was fixed on the principles laid down by two Prime Ministers, Salisbury and Rosebery, at £117,000 for a period ending in 1901. The contribution was reduced with the consent of the Admiralty and Treasury to an annual sum of £100,000. Indian Expenditure Commission, IV, para. 313.

British army is rapidly becoming simply a feeder to the Indian army.

India gets the best men for the best of their service.¹"

On this question the India Office and the Government of India were almost invariably on the same side. Successive Governors-General and Secretaries of State urged the War Office to deal with it in a more sympathetic manner. They continued to press for the reduction of certain charges connected with the training of British recruits in England at their pensions. In 1890 the Government of India, in an able despatch accompanied by a memorandum, showed, first, that the cost of recruiting was excessive;² secondly, the short service system was defective, because

1 War Office to Treasury, 13 Aug. 1890.

2 The effective charges included the cost of recruiting and training in England; the non-effective charges included the pensions and other allowances paid to officers and men who had served in India. In 1860 a committee with Sir. A. Tulloch as president was appointed to determine an average rate for the effective charges in England. It fixed a capitation rate of £10 on every soldier on the British establishment in India. This was fixed up to 1869. In 1870 the Government of India disputed the fairness of the rate, and pending revision of the arrangement, declined to pay more than certain sums "on account." The payments on account average £440,000 a year. In 1879 a committee with Lord Northbrook as Chairman was appointed to fix the capitation rate. The Northbrook Committee submitted specific sums for payment by India. These sums, including deferred pay, averaged £520,517 for the six years of payment. Subsequently, the Committee recommended payments for each of the years till 1889-90. For the year 1890-91 and the following year its recommendation fixing the capitation rate of £7.10s. per man on the establishment of the British force in India was accepted. According to the Indian Expenditure Commission report, the rate amounted to £35 per recruit. Report (IV), paras. 258, 270.

Up to 1823 India paid nothing for non-effective charges. Between 1824 and 1861 she paid £3 per head, or £60,000 in all. From 1861 to 1871 a capitation rate of £3.10s. was in force. Then capitalisation was introduced, which lasted up to April 1884. After this the Govt. of India paid the proportion attributable to service in India of the pensions granted subsequently to that date. See Cullen's Memo., para. 55, Indian Expenditure Commission, iii, 408 and para. 291 of the report (IV).

India received less service for a larger cost: thirdly, India provided a large reservoir of military strength on which England could always draw, and also a large part of the British army was trained at her cost; fourthly, the depots were organised on a scale far larger and more expensive than was warranted by Indian requirements; fifthly, a large number of soldiers trained at the expense of India formed a highly trained and valuable portion of the home reserves; sixthly, India spent a large sum on the increased strength of the army and on armament and fortifications mainly to maintain British supremacy in the East. "The scope of all these great and costly measures," the Government of India remarked, "reaches far beyond Indian limits, and the policy which dictates them is an imperial policy." It rightly suggested that the expenditure charged by England "should be limited not by arithmetical details, but by states-¹manlike and broad appreciation of the conditions of the two countries." The Memorandum pointed out that India had to pay for changes in the British service about which she was not consulted at all. As early as 1874 the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Indian Finance had observed that charges in some instances had been imposed on India which ought to have been borne by England.² In October 1893 the Government of India suggested that the apportionment between Britain and India of the payments in England should be investigated by a Royal Commission. Kimberley refused to accept the suggestion saying that since the questions raised by the Indian Government involved important principles of policy,³ they should not be submitted to an independent inquiry. Moreover, an

1 Mil. Des. from India. No. 70. 25 March 1890.

2 Report From the Select Committee on East Indian Finance (1874), IV.

3 Fin. Des to India, No. 32, 15 Feb., 1894.

inquiry, he said, might give an opportunity to the War Office to press for an increase of the expenditure.¹ In 1895 as the result of the acceptance by the Liberal Government of Naoroji's amendment to the Queen's Address, the Welby Commission was appointed to inquire into the administration and management of the military and civil expenditure incurred by India and the apportionment of the charges between the United Kingdom and India for purposes in which both were interested.

The Welby Commission was in full agreement with the following recommendations of the Select Committee on Indian Finance: First, strict impartiality in financial arrangements must be effectively secured by watchfulness on the part of the Commons; secondly, English estimates ought not to be relieved at the expense of Indian revenues; thirdly, India, as a component part of the Empire must be prepared to share in the cost of the system, the expense of which might be enhanced for Imperial purposes; fourthly, the India Office should be consulted on changes affecting India; fifthly, payments by India to England should be in the form of fixed rates for particular charges and should continue for a period of years.² The Welby Commission strongly emphasised that no changes should be made without consultation with the India Office.³ It

1 Mil. Des. to India, No.33, 15 Feb. 1894.

2 Report From the Select Committee (1874), IV-V.

3 In 1894 the War Office argued that as it was responsible for recruitment, it should decide what reforms should be introduced to attract men of a proper stamp. Fowler protested and emphasised that the Secretary of State should be consulted before changes having a financial bearing were extended to India. He pointed out that under the Act of 1858 control over Indian finances was vested in the Secretary of State in Council.
Encl. to Mil. Des. to India, No.68, 7 June 1894.

also supported the Government of India's suggestion that no change involving expenditure should take effect before 1 April next. In 1895 the Indian Government had strongly urged that it should have sufficient time to enable it to make provisions in the estimates.¹ The Commission accepted the contention of the War Office that the capitation rate of £7. 10s. was not excessive, being of opinion that India would have to pay more were she to maintain a separate army and separate recruiting establishments. Referring to the short service system, it remarked that though it had increased the expenditure temporarily, it would be ultimately more economical since the saving on pensions would more than counterbalance the increased cost of transport and the additional charge involved in the grant of deferred pay.² The Commission, however, recommended that half the cost of the transport of troops to and from India should be defrayed by the Imperial Government.³

It is clear from the above that the approach of the War Office and the Treasury was very different from that of the Indian Government and the India Office. The very fact that successive Governors-General and such Secretaries of State as Wood, Argyll, Salisbury, Kimberley and Cross, who did not belong to the same political school, protested against the manner in which India was treated in these matters, shows that the attitude of the Treasury and the War Office towards India was unsympathetic and arbitrary. In a letter of 8 September 1871 the Duke

1 Mil. Des. from India, No.48, 27 Feb. 1895.

2 Indian Expenditure Commission, IV, para. 269.

3 Ibid., IV, para. 335.

of Argyll had observed that it was neither politic nor just to make India pay the entire cost of a recruiting establishment which was extravagant and had no reference to the exigencies of Indian service.¹

Remarking on this aspect of relationship between Britain and India, Ripon's Government said in August 1883 that it was a partnership in which the rich and powerful partner prescribed the conditions with very little reference to the wishes and the means of the poorer and weaker partner.²

Sir Henry Brackenbury, in his evidence before the Welby Commission, remarked that nobody in India believed in the fairness of the capitation charges.³ Indeed, in dealing with the question the War Office and the Treasury showed throughout a bargaining mentality and took no account of the immense value of India to British military strength. Britain maintained at India's cost a large European army - numbering about one-third of the Imperial army - which was undoubtedly an important factor in her position as a great Asian Power. The fact that the British soldier, either in India, or as reserve, existed for the maintenance of the British Empire was in itself an unanswerable argument in favour of a just, nay generous policy. E.Collen, the Military Member, rightly observed that when India was asked to pay every farthing of military expense - which in fact she did - the enormous value of the Indian Empire to England and her trade was not taken into account.⁴ The War Office and the Treasury did not, however, allow such considerations to influence their policy. Both Kimberley and

1 Ibid., ii, 364. Quoted in India Office Memo.

2 Ibid., 365.

3 Ibid., iii, Q. 14840.

4 Memo., 17 March 1897, para. 57 (Ibid., iii, 408).

Cross made no secret of the fact that the India Office had to face enormous difficulties when it had to deal with these departments.¹ The combat was no doubt most unequal. When Lord Cross told the House that it would not be long before the Indian people would force the British to do them justice,² he could not have denounced more strongly the attitude of the War Office and the Treasury.

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/// The broad principles of military organisation, according to the Secretary of State, were: The organisation of the army in such a way as to provide an effective safeguard against combination; the selection of the best fighting men who were most likely to prove faithful; the equalisation of the proportion of each class; the adoption of precautionary measures, such as, localisation in order to keep the "national characteristics" of the various classes distinct and unimpaired,³ to which must be added a large proportion of Europeans in the army; and the control of the artillery and arsenals in European hands. These principles were essentially the same as those laid down by the Peel Commission in 1859 and re-affirmed twenty years later by the Eden Commission. In composition, however, the Indian army, as reorganised in 1861, underwent an important modification. The approach of Russia towards Indian borders led the Government to make Nepal, the Punjab and the North-West its principal recruiting grounds. The Punjab army grew in size at the expense of the

1 Indian Parl. Debates, 15 May 1893, 311, 315.

2 Ibid., 317.

3 Mil. Des. to India, No.107, 4 Aug. 1892.

other armies with the result that the principle of equilibrium, which had existed in the form of more or less equal armies, was largely modified.

The British looked upon the army for the strength and permanence of their rule in India. There are many statements to this effect. In 1880 E. Johnson, then Military Member observed: "India can admittedly only be held by force; to count on the love and loyalty of the masses would be fanciful and fatal to the continuance of our existence here." ¹ They continued to believe in the dictum that India was conquered by the sword and must be retained by the sword. Even Ripon's Government declared "it is true," but it went on "we do not consider it is the whole truth; and, moreover, we disagree with many of the conclusions which are frequently drawn from this argument."² The fact, however, remains that the ultimate basis of British power was the army, and a cardinal feature of British policy was the distrust of Indians and Indian troops. There were no doubt a few men like Brigadier-General Jacob and Bartle Frere who did not allow their better judgment to be warped by the heat and passion of the Mutiny, but theirs was a cry in the wilderness. In 1858 Jacob said: "Thus I am convinced that this great empire also cannot be controlled by English bone and muscle, by numbers of English bodies, but it can be held in perfect safety and security by English mind, by English moral power, by the influence of a moderate number of cultivated English gentlemen rather than by a multitude of rude soldiers." He emphasised that any number of English soldiers would be powerless when

1 Minute, 4 March 1880.

2 Mil. Des., No.223, 10 Aug. 1883.

placed in opposition to the whole people of India, and remarked that Indians, treated liberally and commanded as men, could be as good and faithful as Europeans.¹ Bartle Frere, acknowledging the influence of Jacob, expressed similar views. He showed a clear and correct appreciation of the situation when he observed that the vital question was what size of army Indian finances could afford and not what the British Government thought desirable or sufficient. He said that the British should govern India through the respect and with the consent of Indians and that it would be more economical to equip a few Indians with better weapons than to put inferior ones in the hands of many.² It will suffice to say that the views of Jacob and Frere needed for their acceptance an atmosphere of goodwill and trust and not the one of suspicion and fear, which prevailed then and continued thereafter.

In fixing the strength of its army the most important consideration which a country has to keep in view is the state of its finances. In the late nineteenth century the British Government's strong view was that a vast country like India could not do with an army smaller than she had. In 1893 Roberts stressed that there was not one battalion too many even for the ordinary peace requirements.³ Indian politicians, on the other hand, persistently demanded the reduction of military expenditure. The question of the irreducible minimum which India must maintain consistent with her internal and external security was not one on which

1 Jacob to Durand, 7 June 1858, Supp. to Report (1859), 90.

2 Frere to Durand, 6 Nov. 1858, Supp. to Report (1859), 61, 66.

3 Minute, 1 April 1893.

both parties were likely to agree. The strength of a country's standing army depends upon the functions it is called upon to discharge. According to the Commission of 1879 the Indian army had to do three main duties: The maintenance of internal security, protection from external danger, and the watching and overawing of the armies of the Indian Princes, particularly of Sindhia and the Nizam.¹ As regards the last function, it may be noted that the formation of the Imperial Service Troops in 1889 - an army maintained by the Indian Princes and placed at the disposal of the Government - marked an important development in the relations of the Crown with the States, inasmuch as the British Government felt it could count on the active support of the Princes. The functions of the army were therefore in practice by this time mainly twofold: internal peace and external security, for which purposes the Indian army, without accession to its strength in 1885, should have sufficed. The creation of a reserve and in emergency a temporary increase of the army should have been adequate. If the British Government had kept the proportion of European troops at a lower figure and avoided a permanent increase, more money could have been spent on civil development and the return, even from the British point of view, would have been great. Apart from suspicion, the reason why it did not follow this course was that the Indian army was required to discharge functions not exclusively Indian. In his evidence before the Welby Commission, Lord Lansdowne remarked that the Indian army served both Indian and

1 Report (1879), para. 17.

imperial purposes, that is, it had been organised with a view to the possibility of its employment in operations which had nothing to do either with the internal policy of the country or with the mere repression of tribal disorders on the frontier.¹

A highly objectionable and arbitrary course in which the War Office and the Treasury persisted related to the payment by India of the ordinary expenses of the army used for imperial purposes. The repeated protests of the Government of India failed to convince them of the justice of its stand. While the saving to the British Exchequer was often small, the policy emphasised, each time when the question came up, that the British attitude was unjust and unsympathetic towards India. If the art of the politician lies in balancing the advantages and disadvantages of a particular course of action, British politicians indeed showed themselves lacking. In his evidence before the Welby Commission, Sir Henry Waterfield, then Secretary of the Finance Department, India Office, said that it was inexpedient to encourage the belief that wars could be waged in other countries at India's expense.²

In 1893 Lord Kimberley said that British supremacy in India rested on three bases: the loyalty and goodwill of the Indian Princes and population, the maintenance of a European Civil Service, and the magnificent European army.³ While a portion of higher appointments was thrown open to Indians in the Civil Service and the principle of legal

1 Indian Expenditure Commission, iii, Qs. 15983-84, 15996.

2 Ibid., Q. 15324.

3 The Times, 13 June 1893, 10.

equality was recognised in this branch, the doors of the military service remained closed, though in view of a very large number of commissioned officers, being five times the strength of the Indian Civil Service, a similar policy could have been conveniently followed. In 1894 General Chesney emphasised that apart from considerations of justice and good faith, the association of men of talent and ambition with the Government was surely safer as a matter of policy than their systematic exclusion.¹ British military policy, in this respect, was marked by selfishness, immobility, want of imagination and racial discrimination. It is a sad commentary on British rule that during its entire history no Indian rose above the rank of Brigadier.

1 Chesney, op. cit., 271.

CHAPTER IV

The British Attitude towards the Indian National Movement

The Indian National Congress held its first session at Bombay on 28 December 1885. In its composition, in its aims and objects, and in its method it represents a unique movement and, indeed, with its foundation there opens a new chapter in Indian history. The Congress embodied the wishes and aspirations of a new India which was growing into political consciousness under the impact of such forces as English education, the Press, swift means of communication and a period of internal and external security under a strong central administration. Early Congressmen looked upon the movement as "the soundest triumph of British administration" and sought inspiration from British and not from Indian political ideas and institutions. The Mutiny of 1857, which some prefer to call the war of Indian independence, found no place for admiration and pride in the hearts of nationalist leaders. Whatever may be its place in Indian history, it cannot be connected, either in its organisation or its methods, or even in its aims and objects, with the early Congress. In fact, the Congress leaders, British as well as Indian, viewed the Mutiny as an unfortunate incident. Thus the Congress movement opens a new chapter:

1 A.O. Hume, the Father of the Indian National Congress, says that not one per cent. of the masses took any part in "what has been called by some a rebellion, but was, in reality, mainly a widespread mutiny of mercenaries." India, April 1896, 104.

the Mutiny marks the end of an old one.

The early Congress was entirely a political movement. No doubt the founder of the Congress, A.C. Hume, had at first desired to establish an all-India social organisation, leaving the political work to the existing provincial bodies. However, on the advice of Lord Dufferin, who impressed upon him the need of an organisation which might perform functions similar to those of Her Majesty's Opposition in England,¹ he changed his mind and a political congress came into existence.² It would have been a great misfortune for the Congress if it had decided to enter upon a career of social reform. A national body like the Congress, composed as it was of men belonging to different castes and communities, could only at a great peril to its existence play a social role. In 1886 Dadabhai Naoroji, President of the Second Congress, explained the role of the Congress in unmistakable terms, and his interpretation came to be regarded as authoritative.³ A number of Congress presidents reaffirmed the

1 William Wedderburn, A.O. Hume, 59-60; W.C. Bonnerjee's Introduction Indian Politics (1898), vii.

2 W.C. Bonnerjee writes that in April 1885 Hume was in Calcutta and saw many friends and placed before them his original plan and the plan suggested to him by Dufferin. He was also consulted. Bonnerjee further says that "it was to a great extent on my advocacy that the Congress leaders agreed to leave out social questions from the Congress movement and make it a purely political one." The Hindustan Review, Dec. 1903, 478.

3 Naoroji observed that the Congress was a political body and that if one blamed it for ignoring social questions one "should equally blame the House of Commons for not discussing the abstruser problems of mathematics or metaphysics." He further said that in view of the presence of many castes and communities, and of the differences in customs among the Hindus of the same caste, a national Congress must confine itself to questions in which the entire nation had a direct participation, and leave the adjustment of social reforms to class congresses. Report of Second I.N.C. (1886), 54.

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 above opinion. In 1888, at the instance of Badruddin Tyabji, who had presided over the third Congress, a resolution was passed, which provided that the Congress would not discuss any subject to which Hindu or Muslim delegates as a body were unanimously or nearly unanimously opposed.² The object was to remove the fear of the minority community -- the Muslims. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the well-known Muslim leader, and many other opponents of the Congress had already started calling the Congress a Hindu body. The resolution provided a safeguard for the protection of Muslim interests.

It is true that on most of the questions which the Congress took up there was much room for agreement, mainly because the concessions were sought from a foreign ruling power. However, even in the political sphere of its activity, the Congress had to encounter strong Muslim opposition. Two of its most important demands, namely, council reform on an elective basis and simultaneous examinations for recruitment to the

1 Badruddin Tyabji said that the Congress should confine its discussions to such questions as affected the whole country and should abstain from the discussion of social questions which must of necessity affect some particular part or some particular community. Report of Third I.N.C. (1887), 75.

In 1892 W.C. Bonnerjee, President of the Eighth Congress, said: "I am one of those who have very little faith in the public discussion of social matters ... We know how excited people become when social subjects are discussed in public ... How is it possible for a Hindu gentleman to discuss with a Parsee or a Mahomedan gentleman matters connected with Hindu social questions? ... We do not all understand in the same sense what is meant by social reform." Bonnerjee was strongly of opinion that political reform was not dependent upon the reform of the social system. Report of Eighth I.N.C. (1892), 11-12.

Surendranath Banerjea, President of the Eleventh Congress said: "Ours is a political and not a social movement; and it cannot be made a matter of complaint against us that we are not a social organisation any more than it can be urged against any of my lawyer friends that they are not doctors." Report of Eleventh I.N.C. (1895), 15.

2 Resolution xiii, Report of Fourth I.N.C. (1888).

Indian Civil Service, were looked upon by Sir Syed and his followers as harmful to the interests of the Muslims. The Congress failed to convince him that its demands were in the interests of Hindus and Muslims alike. It is significant that as early as 1889 it agreed to Bradlaugh's proposal which provided that the total number of seats for minority communities, to be filled by election, should not be less than ¹ the proportion of their population in a province.

It may be pointed out that even among the Hindus there was a wide divergence of opinion on matters of social reform. The Congress consisted of men of both progressive and conservative views. The orthodox section, while quite willing to support a scheme of political reform, would have been most unwilling to undertake social reform. For instance, while all agreed that simultaneous examinations should be held in India, a strong section including Rajendralal Mitter, Chairman of the Reception Committee, was opposed to the proposal that candidates selected in India should have a compulsory training in England. The opposition ² was based mainly on religious grounds. The result was that Congress resolution of 1886 omitted the condition of foreign training which a resolution of 1885 had provided. In 1888 John Adam reopened the ³ question and asked the Congress to give a clear verdict, but owing to strong opposition the resolution of 1886 was retained. Another instance of the difference of opinion is afforded by the controversy over the Age

1 Resolution II, Report of Fifth I.N.C. (1889).

2 Report of Second I.N.C. (1886), Introduction, 34. The Report says: "On this question the difference of opinion was notoriously fundamental and radical in its character, and it was, therefore, excluded from the report ..."

3 Report of Fourth I.N.C. (1888), 33.

of Consent Bill in 1891, which sought to mitigate the evils of child marriage by providing that the consummation of marriage should not take place before a wife reached the age of 12. The division of opinion on such a reasonable and absolutely necessary measure shows clearly the character of the national organisation. Hume was in favour of the Bill; R.C. Mitter, afterwards Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Calcutta Congress in 1896 and a former judge of the High Court, was opposed to it. B.G. Tilak, who later became the foremost leader of the extremist party, was vehemently against it. In 1895 his group objected to the Congress 'pandal' (pavilion) being used by the National Social Conference. The controversy, which was mild in the beginning, roused strong passions and threatened at one time to do serious harm to the Congress itself. It was the sagacity and patriotism of Ranade, who did not insist on holding the Social Conference in the Congress 'pandal', which saved the national cause from harm.¹

Thus in the interests of the solidarity of the organisation it was necessary to confine its activity to political matters. Battle against the deadweight of ignorance and prejudice was certainly more hazardous than that for political rights. In the former resistance would have been offered not only by the uneducated people but also by the educated social reactionaries, but in the latter there was much common ground for a united stand. Moreover, to the educated classes the criticism of a foreign government and persistent demands for

1 Report of Eleventh I.N.C. (1895), Introduction.

political concessions appealed more than the rather monotonous work of social reform. Valentine Chirol, a hostile critic of the national movement, observes that it diverted many of the best talents from social reform but he also admits that work on the social side was thorny whereas political agitation offered a popular field.¹ We must also remember that a number of organisations, such as, the Brahma Samaj, the Arya Samaj and the Theosophical Society had already been doing social and religious work. In 1897 Swami Vivekananda established the Ramkrishna Mission Association and in 1899 he founded a math (monastery) at Belur, near Calcutta to train a band of monks for self-realisation and the service of the world. It is true that the activity of these associations was determined by the conditions of their religious approach, but it is difficult to see how the Congress could have avoided those limitations and retained its national character. It is thus clear that its dissociation from a programme of social reform contributed on the whole to its strength and unity.

The fact that the National Social Conference held its session in the Congress 'pandal' and that a number of Congress leaders also attended its meetings might produce the impression that the Conference was the adjunct of the political body and, indeed, some Congressmen regarded it as such. But nothing could be further from the fact. The work of the Social Conference was separate and distinct and found no place in the Congress report. The Congress was entirely political and eschewed the discussion of social questions from the very beginning.

1 Valentine Chirol, Indian Unrest, 156-57.

The holding of the two meetings at one place, as India says, was a matter of general convenience, as most of the visitors sympathised with both lines of reform work.¹

There is also a tendency among writers on the national movement to connect it with the religious and social movements of the nineteenth century, which, in their opinion, created an atmosphere of national consciousness from which the Congress derived much inspiration. The view ignores two obvious facts: first, the unadulterated political character of the Congress; and, secondly, the part played by the non-Indian leaders of the Congress, namely, Hume, Wedderburn and others. During the first fifteen years their influence on its policy was indeed very great. The very fact that the originator of the movement was an Englishman, who was not associated with any of the above-mentioned religious bodies, substantially weakens the force of this contention. Moreover, such prominent Indian leaders as Dadabhai Naoroji, W.C. Bonnerjee, Surendranath Banerjee and Pherozeshah Mehta do not appear to have been influenced by any of these movements. It is therefore a mistake to connect the Congress with the non-political movements of the last century.

Only a passing reference to the composition of the Congress can be attempted here. The Fifth Congress was described as "a compendium of all the races, castes, creeds, professions, trades and occupations"²

1 India, Feb. 96, 52.

2 Report of Fifth I.N.C., Introduction, iv.

To these we may also add provinces. Indeed, the Congress has always consisted of these elements, but such a broad description does not give us any correct idea of its true composition. A glance at the lists of Congress delegates shows, however, a great disparity in the representation of various classes, occupations, provinces and castes of which the Congress was composed. Among the classes, the educated middle class was by far the largest; among the occupations, the legal profession was heavily represented among the castes, the Brahmans were comparatively larger in number; and among the provinces, Bengal, Bombay and Madras, which were educationally more advanced, took an active part. The masses, partly due to lack of education and partly due to the absence of any programme of mass contact, practically took no part. The landed classes, mainly due to the Government's unsympathetic attitude towards the Congress, held aloof. Thus the Congress was almost entirely a middle class affair.

Early Congressmen had great faith in the efficacy of peaceful and constitutional agitation. The Press, the platform and the annual sessions were methods by which they carried on the work. The Press was a very powerful force, and indeed it was the only agency through which Congress propaganda was carried on throughout the year. Not a few Congress leaders were editors of English or 'vernacular' newspapers. Besides, a host of other Indian papers supported the Congress demands. The tone of these papers was often strongly critical. In 1887 the Bengal Government wrote: "It is not a slight thing that the daily mental

1 Many Congressmen were associated with newspapers. A few names may be mentioned here. Surendraneth Banerjee was editor of the Bengalee. G. Subramania edited the Hindu. The Kesari and the Mahratta were edited by Tilak. The Indu Prakash was in charge first of Telang and next of Chandavarkar. Narendra Nath Sen was editor of the Indian Mirror.

food of a whole generation of students should outside their lessons, consist in systematic denunciation of the honesty, justice, and good intentions of the English." ¹ Hamilton, /the Secretary of State, as we shall see later, felt extremely irritated at the criticism of the Indian Government in the newspapers, particularly, in the Congress organ India.

Among the various methods of Congress propaganda the holding of annual sessions was by far the most important. It was at these meetings that Congress leaders discussed the Government's policy and put forward their demands in an authoritative manner; and it was then that the Congress machinery was in full swing. The annual sessions not only attracted the attention of the educated classes but also of the Government. But the greatest defect of the Congress was that it functioned as an organised body only for three days in the year. It set up no committees to carry on the work during the long interval between the annual sessions. Writing in 1903, Hume rightly said: "You meet in Congresses; you glow with a momentary enthusiasm; you speak much and eloquently ... but the Congress closes, every man of you, broadly speaking, goes off straightway on his own private business, and not one per cent. of you seem to give thereafter any earnest thought or many days' real work to poor India's public business."²

Congressmen believed that the British nation was essentially just and good and that if it could be acquainted with the true state of Indian affairs, all their grievances would be redressed. The

1 Government of Bengal to Government of India, 25 Nov. 1887, Pub. Progs., March 1888.

2 The Hindustan Review, Dec. 1903, 480.

only obstacle to reform, in their opinion, was the bureaucracy. Samuel Smith, who had visited India in 1885, observes that the Indians had the impression that the British nation was just and good and that the English officials stood between them and their just rights.¹ The fertility of Congressmen's imagination which drew such a nice distinction between the nation and the machinery which it had set up for the administration of the ruled evokes surprise and pity. They failed to understand that the British machinery in India was only carrying out the orders of that section of the British people who exercised the supreme power.

The Congress urged the Government to introduce a number of reforms, the more important of which were the reorganisation of the councils, simultaneous examinations, the abolition or reconstitution of the India Council, the separation of the judiciary from the executive, the repeal of the Arms Act, the enlistment of Indians as volunteers, the appointment of Indians to the commissioned ranks, the reduction of military expenditure, and the extension of the Permanent Settlement to other parts of India. Besides, the Congress expressed its opinion on all the important measures of the Government and protested against the unpopular ones. It emphasised that the only way to make the British Government popular, and thereby stable, was the acceptance of its demands. It repeated most of its important demands year after year because there was little response from the Government. It is interesting to note that during the first twenty years there was practically no

1 Samuel Smith, India Revisited (1886), 28-29.

change in the Congress programme. Judged from its resolutions, the Congress showed maturity at its very inception. The major demands remained more or less the same as those formulated at its first two or three sessions.

In spite of its many limitations the Congress was a thoroughly national body. Its doors were open to all classes and communities. Indeed, there was nothing in its programme to which any class could take exception. It was a supporter of the interests of the landed class, and though it kept the affairs of the Indian States outside its programme, it was also a friend of the Indian chiefs. In 1889 Charles Bradlaugh, who was a great supporter of the Congress, took up in Parliament the cause of the Maharaja of Kashmir, who had been deposed.¹ In 1896 the Congress passed a resolution that no Prince should be deposed on the ground of maladministration or misconduct until the charge was established to the satisfaction of a public tribunal commanding the confidence alike of the Government and of the Princes.² As regards the landed classes, Congress policy was largely in their favour. The Congress stood for the extension of the Permanent Settlement,³ which had been so greatly advantageous to the zamindars and so little to the ryot and the State. Accounting for this aspect of Congress policy, Lord Elgin observed with truth that the Bengal zamindars were powerful and had "business relations with the men" who did the talking and writing

1 Hansards Indian Debates, 20 June 1889, 330-31.

2 Resolution XVIII, Report of Twelfth I.N.C. (1896).

3 A.O. Hume was not in favour of the proposal. He said that the Bombay and Madras delegates, who looked upon it as a remedy for the poverty of the masses, had no practical experience of a permanent settlement. He emphasised that in Bengal where the system had been in operation for one hundred years the masses were comparatively much poorer. Report of Second I.N.C. (1886), 68.

in that province.¹ Though the Congress did not succeed in securing the active cooperation of the aristocracy, it did enjoy their sympathy. Its programme was broad enough to accommodate all interests. It was not a party but a movement though the leadership and, for the most part, the following were supplied by the educated classes. The aristocracy and the masses practically held aloof. Nevertheless, the movement was national because it transcended all local and exclusive interests.

Some of the important features of the movement may be now summarised.² First, the Congress was loyal to the ruling power. The expression of loyalty was genuine because Congressmen fully appreciated the advantages of British rule. The only alternatives to British rule, said Wedderburn, were Russian rule or anarchy, and none of which commended itself to Congressmen.³ Secondly, the stability of British rule was, in their opinion, the sine quo non for India's progress. Thirdly, while they acknowledged with gratitude the grant of concessions, they urged the Government to meet their demands in full. Fourthly, their constitutional agitation was based on strong faith in the justice and reasonableness of the British nation. Fifthly, the Congress organisation and its method were adapted to a body of intellectuals who persisted in constitutional struggle under all circumstances. In other words,

1 Elgin to Hamilton, 1 June 1897, Pr. Cor. Ind. V, 255

2 Wedderburn said that the Congress had three great principles: first, all its actions were based on the stability and prosperity of British rule; secondly, its methods were open and above board; thirdly, its method was strictly constitutional and law-abiding. Indian Parl. Debates, 5 Aug. 1897, 363.

3 India, Nov. 1897, 367.

Congress leadership was in the hands of those who barked well but shrank from biting. The advantage of this method was that the movement went on without serious opposition from the Government; the disadvantage was that it lacked the necessary strength which alone could make the ruling authority part with some of its powers and privileges.

The Congress also carried on its work in England. This side of Congress activity during our period is extremely important. It was no doubt to a considerable extent responsible for stiffening the British attitude. The reasons for starting Congress propaganda were quite obvious. The year 1887 marked the end of friendly relations between the Congress and the Government. The Congress found itself discouraged by the unsympathetic official attitude. It was felt that work in England would be carried on in an atmosphere free from suspicion and fear. Moreover, the seat of power was there, and the Congress believed that if the British nation and Parliament were properly informed, success would soon follow. Prominent Congress leaders like Wedderburn, Hume and Naoroji laid much emphasis on propaganda in England. Though the result of their efforts remained consistently disencouraging they continued to believe in the soundness of the movement. Naoroji wrote in October 1898: "Any well-directed effort here will always be far more effective, as this is the fountainhead where the chief work lies."¹ Writing in 1903 Hume urged upon Indians the necessity of "consistent and persistent importunity" both in India and in England, and more specially in the latter, for the

1 Letter to Chambers, 5 Oct. 1898, quoted in R.P. Masani, Dadabhai Naoroji, 415.

purpose of securing their aims.¹ As late as 1913, when the Congress movement in England had little vitality left in it, Wedderburn wrote: "Unfortunately the party of progress in India ... have brought upon themselves endless woes by futile resistance in India to irresistible force, while neglecting to conduct effectively in England the operations which, with a moderate expenditure of labour and of money, would have secured to them a painless victory."² Wedderburn and Naoroji were the heart and soul of the movement in England and regarded it as important as that in India.

The object of the movement in England was to educate English opinion on Indian affairs. In 1888 a paid Indian Agency was established in England under the charge of William Digby. An energetic campaign of meetings and publications was started. In July 1889 the British Committee of the Indian National Congress, with Wedderburn as Chairman and Digby as Secretary, was established. The Congress voted every year about £3,000 for carrying on the work in England. The establishment of the British Committee was indeed a very important event. Congress propaganda was placed on an active and organised footing. The Press, the Platform, and Parliament were the means by which the Committee sought to achieve its aims. In 1890 the Committee started a monthly paper India which supplied an authoritative and detailed information about the national movement both in England and in India. The articles and comments, which appeared in it exercised a great influence on the Indian

1 The Hindustan Review, Dec. 1903, 481.

2 W. Wedderburn, A.O. Hume, 86.

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 Press. In July 1893 the British Committee succeeded in forming an Indian Parliamentary Committee consisting of those members who were willing to cooperate in favour of a just and sympathetic policy towards India.² They were not committed to the Congress programme and reserved their full discretion. Herbert Paul, one of the original members, said that he would not speak or vote in the Commons for any scheme, merely because the Congress supported it, and that he would keep himself perfectly free to take his own line on any Indian subject.³

Before the formation of the Parliamentary Committee interests in Indian affairs had been taken by a few isolated individuals of whom the most prominent were John Bright, Henry Fawcett and Charles Bradlaugh. In 1883, ~~three~~ years before his death, Bright approved the formation of an informal Indian Committee having for its object to secure combined parliamentary action. Some fifty members of Parliament were willing to cooperate on the broad ground of a just and sympathetic policy towards India.⁴ However, there was little progress in this direction and nothing was heard of the proposal after 1885. In 1888 Bradlaugh,

1 C.S. Bayley, General Superintendent of the Thagi and Dakaiti Dept. wrote that one leading object in the establishment of the Journal was "to bring grist to the Congress mill." His note says that the paper was popular and exercised a "pernicious" influence on the Indian Press. Note of 18 June 1899, Encl. to Curzon's letter to Hamilton, 28 June 1899, Pr. Cor. Ind., XIV, 63.

The Bengal Government wrote that of the 6,000 copies published in England 1,500 were allotted to Bengal, and that all the leading zamindars of Bengal were subscribers.

2 In 1894 the Indian Parliamentary Committee consisted of 152 members. In 1895 the strength dropped to 85 because of the defeat of a large number of members at the general election, In 1896 forty new members joined, bringing its total strength to 125. India, Sept. 1895, 259; May 1896, 133.

3 India, Nov. 1893, 337.

4 Ibid., Aug. 1893, 241.

on the persuasions of W.C. Bonnerjee, Norton, Naoroji, and Digby, agreed to support the Indian cause. John Gorst, Under Secretary of State for India, expressed concern at Indian questions being brought before the Commons by a group of men. He remarked that clever men had begun to look upon Indian affairs as a promising field for earning parliamentary distinction, and pointed out that the Congress party had connection with several members of Parliament.¹ During 1888-90 Bradlaugh strongly advocated the Indian cause. He asked questions on almost all important matters relating to India. In 1890 he introduced two Bills which provided for the enlargement of the councils and the extension of their functions. His death in January 1891 was regarded a terrible loss in India. During the last three years of his life he was really the spokesman of the Congress in Parliament. His biographer Robertson aptly remarks: "In his last enfeebled years he did for India what some men might have reckoned good work for a life time."² Bradlaugh's services should not, however, be measured in terms of the amount of success. In 1892 several members of Parliament, such as Schwann, MacNeill, Seymour Keay, pressed for the introduction of the elective system in the Indian Councils Bill. Speaking on the Bill, Samuel Smith, a great supporter of the national movement, remarked that the Congress was loyal and constitutional, and "an exact copy of ourselves in Indian form." He emphasised that there was no way of getting at Indian opinion more reliably than through the national Congress.³ Schwann laid emphasis on the representative character

1 Letter to the Viceroy, 23 Nov. 1888, quoted in Newton, op. cit., 60-62.

2 Bradlaugh Bonner & J.M. Robertson, Charles Bradlaugh, 416.

3 Indian Parl. Debates, 28 March 1892, 182.

and the elective basis of the Congress, and added that it represented¹ to a great extent, the national voice of India.

The British Committee of the Congress attached very considerable importance to agitation in Parliament. "India to him (Wedderburn)",² writes Ratcliffe, "was in a pre-eminent sense a House of Commons concern." With the election of Naoroji and Wedderburn to Parliament one finds a sort of organised agitation on behalf of the Congress. Naoroji was returned in 1892, and was the first Indian to achieve this distinction. Wedderburn was elected in 1893 and for seven years during which period he was a member he strongly advocated the Indian cause. There was hardly any important Indian question which he did not bring to the notice of the House. In June 1893 the supporters of the Congress succeeded in carrying through a resolution for holding simultaneous³ examinations. In September 1893 Naoroji's amendment to the Madras⁴ and Bombay Armies Bill was accepted. In the same month he urged the House to hold an independent inquiry into the condition of India. On 14 August 1894 a resolution moved by Samuel Smith, and seconded by Naoroji pressed the same demand. Fowler, the Secretary of State, undertook to appoint, at the commencement of the Session, a select committee to inquire into the expenditure of the Indian revenues. In 1895 as the outcome of Naoroji's amendment to the Address, the Indian Expenditure Commission was appointed. In 1896 some of the important

1 Ibid., 28 March 1892, 136-37.

2 S.K. Ratcliffe, Sir William Wedderburn, 76.

3 See above, 68.

4 See above, 187.

subjects which were discussed were the Cotton Duties, expenditure relating to the Suakin expedition, and the deposition of the Maharaja of Jhalawar. In 1897-98 Wedderburn moved an amendment to the Address for a full and independent inquiry into the condition of the people of India.

For seven years Wedderburn was the spokesman of the Congress in Parliament. He was also the chairman of the Indian Parliamentary Committee. Judged by results, the Committee achieved little. The reason was that it did not function as an organised group committed to the Congress programme. Explaining its organisation, Wedderburn said that it consisted of two portions: (i) those who were prepared actively to advocate the Indian cause and (ii) those who were prepared to give both sides an impartial hearing.¹ The number of active members was indeed very small, perhaps between 20 and 30. The London Correspondent of the Amrita Bazar Patrika who rebuked the British Committee for doing nothing in opposition to Fowler's decision not to give effect to Paul's resolution of 2 June 1893 admitted that if the friends of the Congress proceeded to a division and the Government made it a matter of confidence, not more than 20 or 30 would stand by their vote of last year.² On 13 August 1896 only 30 members supported Wedderburn's amendment, which provided that accounts should each year be examined and reported on by a select committee of the House.³ Even after the formation of the Indian Committee debates on

1 India, Oct. 1894, 305.

2 Ibid., Sept. 1894, 258-59.

3 Indian Parl. Debates, 13 Aug. 1896, 384.

the Indian Budget took place in a very thin House. Except on a few occasions, the Opposition was more or less indifferent to Indian questions. In February 1898 when the Sedition Laws and the detention of the Natus² were debated in Parliament the leaders of the Opposition took no part, and the discussion remained confined to a few members of the Parliamentary Committee. Hamilton remarked that Wedderburn was completely "blown upon."³

Though success in Parliament was far from encouraging, Wedderburn remained undaunted. Some prominent Indian leaders, too, believed in the soundness of this method of agitation. In a message issued to the Indian people, on his defeat in 1895, Naoroji said that the battles of grievances and necessary reforms had to be fought in the Commons.⁴ It was, however, certain that unless Indian affairs were drawn into the arena of English party politics no substantial results were likely to attend the agitation in Parliament. As regards the work done by the Parliamentary Committee, Ratcliffe observes with truth that it "was a valuable aid to the keeping alive of Indian questions in the House."⁵

Congress leaders believed that the national interests would be better served if a few Indians became members of Parliament. Even

1 An amendment widened the scope of Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code. The insertion of Section 108 in the criminal Procedure Code enabled magistrates to deal with persons alleged to be offenders under Section 124A.

2 In 1897 Rand, officer in charge of plague preventive operations, and Ayerst, on plague duty, were assassinated by the Chapekar brothers. The Government suspected a conspiracy. The Natu brothers were deported under Bombay Regulation XXV of 1827 without a trial.

3 Hamilton to Elgin, 25 Feb. 1898, Pr. Cor. Ind., iii, 118.

4 India, Aug. 1895, 241.

5 S.K. Ratcliffe, op. cit., 76.

before the establishment of the Congress, Lal Mohan Ghose unsuccessfully contested Deptford. In 1886 Naoroji failed to get returned as a candidate for Holborn. In 1892 he succeeded as a Liberal candidate by a majority of three votes.. His election was received with great satisfaction in Congress circles. In 1895 Naoroji was unseated, and another eminent Congress leader, W.C. Bonnerjee, who was a candidate for Barrow-in-Furness was also defeated, but another Indian, though an opponent of the Congress, M.M. Bhowmaggree, was returned a Unionist candidate. He played the role of a hostile critic of prominent Congress leaders.¹ He challenged the bona fides of Naoroji, Wedderburn and others to speak on behalf of India, and thus served, in the hands of the Conservatives, as a counterpoise to the Congress agitation in Parliament. In 1897 he was awarded a knighthood for, according to Hamilton, his courageous and able fight against the Congress and also for producing the impression that "honour and notoriety can be obtained as well by supporting as attacking the Government."² The elections of 1895 resulted in a considerable decrease in the strength of the Indian Committee. Of the nine members of the British Committee five were defeated.³

1 One or two instances of how he attacked the Congress may give some idea of his role in Parliament. He remarked that the public opinion of India, which Wedderburn and his supporters claimed to express, was manufactured in a small room, not far from the House of Commons. Indian Parl. Debates, 26 Jan. 1897, 32.

He ridiculed the merit of the witnesses, who appeared before the Welby Commission, by saying: "One of them was a schoolmaster, another was a clerk in a mill office, and a third was a leader writer on a native paper." Indian Parl. Debates, 7 June 1898, 656. The remark that such men as G.K. Gokhale, D.E. Wacha, and G. Subramania Iyer were not fit persons for giving evidence shows little regard for truth.

2 Hamilton to Elgin 27 May 1897, Pr. Cor. Ind., ii, 235.

3 E.H. Bayley, W.S. Caine, Seymour Keay, W.S.B. McLaren, and Dadabhai Naoroji.

The question of representation of India in Parliament, though formally taken up by the Congress much later, was referred to as early as 1886 by Naoroji in his presidential speech. He observed that not a single genuine voice was there in Parliament to acquaint it with Indian opinion on any question.¹ In 1893, in his presidential speech at the Lahore session, he emphasised the need of direct Indian representation in Parliament.² In 1897 Gokhale, in his evidence before the Welby Commission, suggested that India should have six representatives in Parliament. He remarked that while such a small number would introduce no disturbing factor, the House would be in a better position to ascertain Indian opinion. As regards the method of appointment, he proposed that the elected portion of the legislative councils of Madras, Bombay, Bengal, the N.W.P., the Punjab and Burma should each appoint one member.³ In 1898 A.M. Bose, the Congress President, suggested that fifteen seats should be assigned to the inhabitants of some of the chief cities of India.⁴ In 1904 the Congress unanimously passed a resolution that each Province or Presidency should be authorised to send at least two members to the Commons.⁵ The resolution was repeated in 1905. Some British men were also in favour of Indian representation; for instance, W.W. Hunter, who had long served in India and was author of several books,

1 Report of Second I.N.C. (1886), 56.

2 Report of Ninth I.N.C. (1893), 23.

3 Minutes of Evidence, iii, Qs. 18016-17. It may be pointed out that the legislative councils of the Punjab and Burma, which were established in 1897, consisted of official and nominated members. The Indian Councils Act of 1892 was not applicable to them.

4 Report of Fourteenth I.N.C. (1898), 34.

5 Resolution IX, Report of Twentieth I.N.C. (1904)

was of opinion that India should be represented in Parliament by Indians¹ elected by British constituencies.

It is clear from the above that membership of Parliament had a great appeal to many Congress leaders. The reasons are not far to seek. First, it was believed that the presence of Indian members would accelerate the pace of reform. Secondly, association with Parliament would, as Gokhale said, elevate Indians from the position of a subject² race to an equality with the rest of the Empire. Thirdly, the atmosphere of Parliament was suited to the temperament of early leaders.

It is idle to speculate what benefits would have accrued to India from the membership of a few Indians. But if the proposal had been accepted certain complications must have inevitably arisen. In case some of the Indian members had decided to join one party and some had associated themselves with the other, the situation would have been extremely difficult. We have seen how Bhownagree, in his role as an opponent of the Congress, became a source of much inconvenience to its supporters in Parliament. The Congress proposal presumed for its success that all members would share more or less the same views, but in all probability such a condition would have been difficult to obtain. Moreover, a handful of members, even if they had worked as a team, would not have succeeded in bringing to bear adequate pressure on British political parties to do justice to India. On the other hand, their presence, as Robert Knight rightly says, would have served as a pretext for declaring that India enjoyed the same

1 W.W. Hunter, India of the Queen, 48.

2 A Debate on the Awakening of India, London, 15 Nov. 1905.

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representative rights as the people of England. The reviewer of Knight's book remarks that this would have been true if it were proposed to introduce into the House members from Calcutta and Bombay but it could not be applicable to Indians sent by British constituencies.² But we have seen that the Congress resolution provided for the bestowal of franchise on the Provinces. Indeed, there were difficulties associated with either of the two methods of Indian representation and the success of the proposal even under favourable conditions, would have been highly problematical.

The Congress, as has been pointed out, had full faith in the justice of the British people. The question was how to convince that "great tribunal" of the justice of its stand. Delegates were sent from time to time, who appealed to the British nation to redress Indian grievances. In 1885, just before the establishment of the Congress, a delegation consisting of N.G. Chandavarkar, Manomohan Ghose and Salem Ramaswamy Mudaliyar spoke at several meetings. They appealed to British electors to take a pledge from the candidates, Liberal or Conservative, to support some of the Indian demands. These demands were more or less the same as those put forward by the Congress in 1885 or subsequently. In 1889 the Congress appointed the first official deputation to England. The team, which visited England in 1890, consisted of Surendranath Banerjea, R.N. Mudholkar, W.C. Bonnerjee, Eardley Norton and A.O. Hume. In 1890 the Congress appointed George Yule, Pherozeshah Mehta, Bonnerjee, John Adam, Manomohan Ghose, Hume, Naoroji, K.C. Banerjee, and D.A. Khare

1 Robert Knight, The Indian National Congress, (1898), 16.

2 India, 13 May 1898, 292.

to represent its views in England and press upon the consideration of the British public the political reforms which it had advocated.¹

Another resolution provided that a Congress of not less than 100 delegates should meet in England in 1892.² In 1891 The British Committee invited the Congress to hold the proposed session in 1893, some time after the General Election of 1892.³ It may be noted that the plan of the Congress to hold a session in England never took effect. In 1897 G.K. Gokhale, Surendranath Banerjea, D.E. Wacha and G. Subramania Iyer, who had gone to England to give evidence before the Welby Commission, addressed a large number of meetings. In 1898 A.M. Bose, who presided over the Congress session of that year, and W.G. Bonnerjee spoke at various meetings. In January 1899 Bepin Chandra Pal addressed a series of meetings in Scotland.

It is impossible to say how far these deputations changed the political climate of England in India's favour. Perhaps not to any appreciable extent. But the Congress continued to believe in this method and persisted in it for a long time. The British Committee always impressed upon the Congress the need of sending more Indians to England for this purpose. However, one thing became very clear. From the very beginning Congressmen received no encouragement in their efforts from Conservative politicians. Though the Indian delegates of 1885 had made it perfectly clear that they had no mind to depend upon the support of any one party, they found little response from Conservative circles. The

1 Resolution XV, Report of Sixth I.N.C. (1890).

2 Resolution XI.

3 India, 27 Nov. 1891 291.

meetings were organised mostly by a number of Liberals, who were sympathetic towards the movement, and even the audience for the most part, consisted of Liberals. The Congress deputations and speakers later had the same experience. Thus the want of sympathy on the part of the Conservatives drove the Congress into the arms of the other party. In fact, Raja Rampal Singh, a Congress leader, charged the British Committee and the Congress authorities with having made the Congress an appendage of one political party in England. In reply to this charge, India pointed out that there was little response from the Conservatives and that the Tory papers, in general, were most unsympathetic. W.S. Caine, who was a member of the British Committee and attended the Congress session of 1896, asked Congressmen not to expect anything from the Tories, and added that the Congress in India and the Liberal party in England had similar aims and objects and must work together.

The above account of the composition, aims, and methods of the Congress would be of great value in our assessment of the British attitude towards the national movement.

We have seen how the Congress came into existence as a political body on the advice of Lord Dufferin. The founders of the Congress wanted to work in complete harmony with the Government and indeed they suggested that Lord Reay, then Governor of Bombay, should preside over the first session. Dufferin did not approve of this proposal on the grounds that in the presence of a high official Congressmen would not speak out their minds and that the association of the Government might lead to other complications. In 1886 a considerable number of Government servants

1 India, 5 Feb. 1892, 34.

2 Report of Twelfth I.N.C. (1896), 73.

visited Calcutta at the time of the Congress session, and though they took no part in the proceedings, they privately gave the delegates of their own Provinces advice at many of the informal consultations.¹

According to the Congress report, the impression, however, prevailed, and well or ill-founded it was universal, that European officials as a body were hostile to the movement. At a large party given at the Town Hall to welcome the delegates only a very few Europeans attended it though invitations had been sent to the majority of the leading official and non-official Europeans.² This attitude was not likely to be a cause of much concern so long as the Viceroy was sympathetic. Lord Dufferin was friendly and gave private interviews to a number of delegates, explaining, however, that he received them not as delegates but as distinguished visitors. He also entertained them at a garden party.

In 1887, the year of the Queen's Jubilee, at a very large number of meetings held all over India, resolutions for the enlargement of the councils were passed. The Punjab Government pointed out that the leading part in getting up the meetings and in forming some of the societies was taken in most places by Indian officials. The question naturally arose whether officials should be permitted to take part in the proceedings of such meetings. While the Government of India was not disposed to issue any formal order prohibiting officials from participating in them, it was laid down that an official attending a meeting at which an improper attack was made on the Government's policy

1 Report of Second I.N.C. (1886), Introduction, 30..

2 Ibid., Introduction, 7, 17.

or action, was liable to be called to account by his official superior¹ without any special rule or order. The year 1887 was otherwise marked by friendliness towards the Congress. The Madras Government showed its sympathy by lending a large number of tents to supplement the Reception Committee's preparations when, at the last moment, a large number of delegates appeared. Lord Connemara, Governor of Madras, invited the² Congress delegates to a garden party.

The Madras session marks the end of cordial relations. From then onwards the attitude of the Government was far from friendly if not actually hostile. The Congress Report of 1887 says that animosity did not extend to the highest and most enlightened officials and mentions the names of Dufferin, Connemara, Reay and Auckland Colvin among the sympathisers of the movement, but the publication of the report was followed by a marked hostile attitude in the highest official circles. In a letter of 19 September 1888 to Colvin, Hume said that "you are personally hostile to the Congress - that you desire to ruin all who take a prominent part in it - that you will favour and reward all who oppose it . . ."³ A circular of 29 October prohibited Government servants⁴ from collecting subscriptions for political purposes. In November, on the eve of his departure, Lord Dufferin denounced the Congress in the strongest terms. Thus within a few months friendly relations between Government and Congress became a thing of the past.

1 Punjab Govt. to Govt. of India, 2 Sept. 1887; Govt. of India to Punjab Govt., 26 Sept. 1887.

2 Report of Third I.N.C. (1887), Introduction, 19.

3 Audi Alteram Partem (1888), 5.

4 To Provincial Govts., 29 Oct. 1888, Pub. Progs., April 1890.

Auckland Colvin took very great exception to the pamphlets entitled "Catechism on the Indian National Congress" and "A Conversation between Maulvi Fariduddin and Rambaksh", which had been distributed in thousands and had appeared as appendices to the Third Report.¹ He remarked that the "hideous caricatures" of British rule could not but undermine the loyalty of the people, and added: "I think it was an evil hour for the interests of the Congress party that those pamphlets were penned or published". He criticised the Congress for laying claim to represent the majority of the people, for not devoting itself to social reform, and for demanding representative institutions, unfamiliar to the vast masses and unsuited to Indian conditions. He also pointed out that some of the newspapers supporting the Congress used scurrilous language and ^{added} that it was highly objectionable that the Indian Government and its officials should be held up to the hatred of the people as standing between them and the benevolence of Her Majesty's Government.

1 They appear as Appendices II and III to the Report. Colvin selected a few passages to show how dangerous the pamphlets were. One or two extracts are given below:

"So the English Nation, as a body, has no conception of all the hardships and disadvantages under which we labour ... Nor do the English officials in India ever report to the Members of Parliament what we know to be the true state of this country ... The Government offer some native gentlemen seats in the Council ... to lead the people of England into the belief that in the Government of this country Native opinion receives due weight ... these Councils are a mere sham ... And they (members) dare not fight for the people's cause on pain of never being appointed ... From Catechism.

The second pamphlet draws distinction between the happy state of the villagers of Shamshpur and those of Raja Harbansrai, who "lives away in the Sudder, and he never comes near us, and he never reads any of our petitions, and never consults any of us ... sends out an order for us to speak to the Naib, (his Deputy or agent) or the Gomashtah (Factor) ... and as for the Gomashtah he never knows anything about us or the village, for one comes for six months and then goes ..." Colvin said that Harbansrai was obviously the Govt. of India and the Provincial Governors were his naibs. Audi Alteram Partem, 10-15.

As to the benefits of British rule, Colvin remarked that anything which Congressmen said on this point was completely obscured by the
¹
 vehemence of their attack.

In a long letter A.O. Hume, General Secretary of the Congress, dealt with all the points raised by Colvin. He said that the Congress was the most efficacious safety-valve for the escape of great and growing forces, that it represented the people of India not less faithfully than the House of Commons represented the people of England, that the bulk of its representatives would always be drawn from the more highly educated classes, that the Congress demanded a more liberal and less bureaucratic policy, and not representative institutions; and that a large number of Congressmen had been working
²
 for the regeneration of India along other lines also.

The Auckland-Hume controversy raised some very important questions as to the composition, functions and methods of the Congress. We have already discussed these points and need not go over the same ground. One looks in vain for a dispassionate analysis of the national movement by Sir Auckland who had then thrown himself heart and soul into an anti-Congress movement, nor, in view of Hume's position as General Secretary, can we accept as entirely correct all his arguments and claims in favour of the Congress. For instance, the elective basis and representative character of the organisation - on which he

1 Auckland Colvin to A.O. Hume, 8 October, 1888.

2 A.O. Hume to Auckland Colvin, 13 October, 1888.

laid much emphasis - can be accepted in a very limited sense. But Colvin's charge that the Congress was weakening the loyalty of the people was absolutely unfounded. It is to be regretted that so much importance was attached to the pamphlets and little to the proceedings of the third Congress. The Madras Session more or less had reaffirmed what had been discussed at the previous sessions.

A much harder blow was struck to the Congress by Lord Dufferin in his speech at St. Andrew's dinner on 30 November 1888. He emphasised the division of India into two mighty political communities and a number of minor nationalities, and criticised the Congress for seeking the introduction of a parliamentary system which England herself had reached by slow degrees. In his words, the adoption of democratic methods would be "a big jump into the unknown." He remarked that under the existing condition of the people with their "multitudinous interests, and their tessellated nationalities," no real or effective representation of the people was possible. He characterised the Congress as a microscopic minority, which could not be allowed to control the administration. In support of his argument he said: "If they had been really representatives of the people of India - that is to say, of the voiceless millions - instead of seeking to circumscribe the incidence of the income tax, as they desired to do, they would probably have received a mandate to decuple it." He further observed that the Congress should have devoted its attention to such matters as excessive and useless expenditure on marriages and other ceremonies, the chronic indebtedness of the peasant to the money-lenders, sanitary reforms, the reform of the bad customs of

Hindu society, and the problem of over population and the excessive pressure on land. He went on to say that the Congress could have supplied the Government with valuable information about social and religious questions, but it concerned itself with matters in regard to which its assistance was likely to be less profitable. He denounced the Congress for distributing pamphlets with the manifest object of exciting the hatred of the people against the public servants. He also referred to a letter of 6 November 1887 in which Hume had said that the large body of more or less educated (not English educated) men who were supporting the movement "do hold in their hands the keys of a good many magazines of physical force, though they are not going to put those keys in the locks." He remarked that such a "silly" threat was not calculated to restore confidence in the discretion of Congressmen even when accompanied by an assurance of doing nothing of the kind.

Dufferin had already recorded these observations in his famous minute which contained recommendations for the reform of the Council. On putting the speech and the minute side by side, one, however, finds that the tone of the letter is more militant. He observed that in nine out of ten cases, the instinct of the classes who formed the Congress and other like associations was actuated by the desire to promote their own interests. In support of this point, he said that the Indian members of the Supreme

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- 1 The Pioneer, 24 Nov. 1887, 6. Hume said that in two years the great bulk of the Indian army could become strong supporters of the movement, but the Congress was opposed to any step which would lead the Government to suspect its loyalty. He added that the Congress did not encourage Indian military officers, when at their homes on furlough, to take part in its demonstrations.
- 2 Dufferin, Speeches (1884-88), 237-44.

Council, while accepting an increase of the salt duty, showed a strong dislike to the income tax, and added that the Government's land legislation, such as, the Bengal Tenancy Act and the Oudh Rent Bill, had been undertaken in the interests of the peasants. Referring to the Congress resolutions on the Arms Act and Indian volunteering, he said that they were neither wise nor practical, because far from increasing the military strength, the measures, in view of the unfriendly relations between different creeds and communities, would add to the numerous anxieties of the Government. He remarked that in thousands of pamphlets issued by the Congress "the most libellous and caluminous accusations" had been preferred against the Indian Government and the civil servants, and added that instead of trusting to the benevolence of the English people at large, the Congress was committing the mistake of endeavouring to associate itself with a particular party in England. In his opinion, Congressmen "neither represented the aristocratic sections of Indian society, nor are they in special contact or sympathy with the great masses of the population; they do not understand their wants or necessities, if indeed they are not indifferent or even opposed to them - as was evidenced by the strenuous resistance of the important native associations to our recent land legislation ...". He went on to say that the transfer of the Government of India, either partially or otherwise, to such a body of men would "simply be to place millions of men, dozens of nationalities, and hundreds of the most stupendous interests under the domination of a microscopic minority, possessing neither experience, administrative ability, nor any adequate conception of the nature of the tasks before them"¹

1 See Dufferin's Minute, Encl. to Pub. Des. from India, No. 67, 6 Nov. 1886.

Many of the points emphasised by Dufferin were more or less identical with those which Colvin had dealt with in his letter to Hume. The speech was received in Congress circles with great disappointment, the more so because it came from the head of the Indian Government and from one who was believed to have been a sympathiser since the beginning of the movement. The Congress leaders denied that they demanded representative institutions on the British model and that their propoganda had seditious objectives. ¹ As to the representative character of the Congress, they said that though the masses did not take part in large numbers in election, the delegates were elected by associations or at open public meetings and represented all classes and creeds. So far as the indifference of the Congress to social matters was concerned, it must be remembered that Dufferin himself had encouraged the formation of a political congress. In its role as a political body, believing in constitutional methods, it could not perhaps have functioned very differently. As regards the Congress demand for raising the amount of minimum taxable income from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,000 it is difficult to agree or disagree with Dufferin's criticism that Congressmen were actuated by selfish motives. Reports are silent on the question of the incomes of delegates. A Congressman, however, remarked that the demand was put forward in the interests of the lower middle class and not of the delegates, of whom very few had an annual income less than Rs. 1,000. ²

1 As regards the objectionable character of the pamphlets, Eardley Norton said that the authoritative exposition of Congress policy, was contained in its resolutions and not in the "Catechism" which stated the personal views of the writer. The National Congress Vindicated or Norton versus Dufferin, 18.

2 Report of Third I.N.C. (1887), 131.

Opposition to the Congress in 1888 came not only from the Government but also from other quarters. In the N.W.P. the anti-Congress movement was active, and it was an open secret that Auckland Colvin, the Lieutenant Governor, had encouraged it. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan delivered two militant speeches, one on 28 December 1887 when the Third Congress was meeting at Madras and the other in March 1888, in which he denounced the Congress as a Hindu body inimical to Muslim interests. It was believed that the second speech was delivered at the instigation of Colvin. He warned the Muslims not to fall in the trap laid for them and urged the Government not to accept its demands. He asked his co-religionists to win the confidence of the Government and not to join a movement which would make them the subjects of the Hindus.¹ In August 1888 the United Indian Patriotic Association was formed at Aligarh, which both Hindus and Muslims joined. Sir Syed was the principal figure in this movement. Its object was to counteract the Congress agitation and to strengthen British rule. In 1893 a new organisation called the Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association was formed, the objects of which were to protect Muslim interests, to prevent political agitation from spreading among the Muslims, and to strengthen British rule. Sir Syed remained hostile to the last days of his life, and in his anti-Congress work he was greatly assisted by Theodore Beck, Principal of his College at Aligarh.²

The year 1888 was also marked by opposition from some members of the aristocracy. In a pamphlet entitled "Democracy Not Suited to India,"

1 For details see Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Present State of Indian Politics (1888).

2 See Rajendra Prasad, India Divided (1946), 98-101.

Raja Udai Pratap Singh of Bhinga denounced the programme and the representative character of the Congress. He remarked that the real subjects pressing for solution were social problems, which Congress leaders had neither the energy nor the moral courage to take up.¹ The Maharaja of Banaras observed that if the Government did not put down the mischievous movements and writings, the minds of the ignorant masses might be prejudiced against it. He, too, maintained that representative institutions were not suited to India.² In 1894 Udai Pratap Singh went to the length of accusing Congressmen of encouraging the Hindu-Muslim riots of 1893. The charge was not only absurd, it was also mischievous. The Raja criticised the British Government for showering honours on those who had been trying to subvert it and suggested that the British nation must define the lines on which India was to be governed.³ As to the responsibility of Congressmen for the riots, Herbert Reynolds rightly observed that it was inconceivable that the Congress which was endeavouring to weld together various classes and communities into one harmonious nationality would foster enmity among them.⁴

Thus in 1888 the Congress had to encounter opposition on many sides. The Government, a section of the aristocracy and Sir Syed's party had become hostile. In reply to a question on this subject, John Gorst, Under-Secretary of State for India, said that the Government of India had

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- 1 Raja of Bhinga, Democracy Not Suited to India, 90. Hume said that the Raja could not write a single page of really good English and got some one to write for him. The Hindu of Madras observed that he wrote the pamphlet under "dictation" from Sir Auckland Colvin. The Hindu's opinion quoted in India, May 1893, 156.
 - 2 The Times, 13 Aug. 1888, 5.
 - 3 Article on "The Cow Agitation," The Nineteenth Century, April 1894.
 - 4 India, May 1894, 146.

received representations from Indian Chiefs and leading Muslims regarding the mischievous effect of the publications and the speeches made by the Congress delegates.¹ J.M. Maclean, who asked the question, expressed the view that the Congress aimed at destroying the security of British rule in India.²

The Congress of 1888 met in an atmosphere altogether different from that of the earlier sessions. Ajodhyanath, Chairman of the Reception Committee, referred to the difficulties which the organisers had to encounter in fixing the site for holding the session. The authorities gave and cancelled permission, first, for the use of the Khusro Bagh, then, of a plot of waste land lying between the Fort railway station and the Fort. Then the Congress managed to secure a group of houses belonging to members of the Reception committee and other friends. Some of the houses were situated within the Cantonment limits, and the military authorities raised obstacles.³ In spite of these difficulties the Congress session was held at Allaha bad, of course, not at the above-mentioned places, but at Lowther Castle which, soon after its purchase by the Maharaja of Darbhanga, was made available for Congress use. Ajodhyanath also pointed out that the officials in many districts had told the people that they would come to grief if they joined or helped the Congress. The report says that a number of subscribers wanted to keep the fact of their aid secret and

1 Hansard's Indian Debates, 6 Dec. 1888, 1145.

2 Ibid., 4 Dec. 1888, 1143.

3 See Pandit Ajodhyanath's Speech, Report of the Fourth I.N.C. (1888).

that the money came also from nobles and chiefs and even from men whose names appeared among the leaders of two or three anti-Congress associations, got up by Government officials.¹

The Government's attitude, during Lansdowne's Viceroyalty, was neither friendly nor hostile. Strong and outright condemnation of the movement in the manner in which Dufferin had done was avoided. In reply to a question, John Gorst said that Dufferin and Colvin had not objected to the Congress, but to the action of some of its supporters, the language of some of the newspapers, and the character of the pamphlets.² It is interesting to note that even in Liberal dovecots the language of the pamphlets caused some flutter. Speaking on the Indian Councils Bill, Lord Northbrook said that some of them had been couched in language which, if read by any large number of Indians, might be decidedly dangerous.³ It would be wrong to say that but for these publications friendly relations would have lasted much longer, but they did contribute, to some extent, to the hastening of the crisis.

In December 1890, on the eve of the Congress session at Calcutta, a disconcerting situation, though it was short-lived, arose out of the Bengal Government's circular which pointed out that the Government of India's orders definitely prohibited the presence of Government officials at such meetings. The seven cards of admission to the visitors' enclosure of the Congress pavilion, which had been sent to the Lieutenant Governor and the

1 Report of Fourth I.N.C. (1888), vii.

2 Hansard's Indian Debates, 22 Feb. 1889, 16.

3 Ibid., 6 March 1890, 54-55.

members of his household, were returned. When the Congress drew the attention of the Governor-General to this matter, he at once declared that the orders had no special reference to the Congress movement which was "perfectly legitimate" and which private persons were free to promote. The letter goes on to say that the Government of India looked upon the Congress as representing what in Europe would be called the more advanced liberal party and that its attitude was one of neutrality so long as it acted strictly within constitutional limits. Government servants were also asked to maintain a similar attitude and to abstain from active participation in political or quasi-political movements of all kinds, and not to put pressure upon others in order to induce them to join or not to join them. It was also pointed out that the orders did not apply to pensioners.¹ The Governor-General's clarification was received with much satisfaction.

The attitude of Lansdowne's Government remained more or less indifferent.² When interviewed by a representative of Reuter, Dadabhai Naoroji, on his return to England after presiding over the Congress of 1893, said that all he could say was that the "Government shows no hostility nor opposition to the movement. Of course it is being closely watched."³

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- 1 Report of Sixth I.N.C. (1890), Introduction, XXXIV; Pub. Progs., Nos. 1-4, Jan. 1891.
- 2 Congressmen reacted favourably to the viewpoint of Antony Macdonnell, then Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, who, just before the seventh Congress was held at Nagpur, told Narayan Swami, Chairman of the Reception Committee, and others that he would not think any the better or any the worse of any man because he was a Congressman or not. He further said that if they asked him as a private friend, then "I shall say that if you see your way to benefit your country and your fellows by these Congresses, then must certainly do your duty as good citizens and attend." Cf. India, Oct. 1893, 291.
- 3 Ibid., 1 March 1894, 89.

Critics of the Congress spared no pains to emphasise that it was a very small minority with which the people were not concerned. In 1892 Curzon, then Under Secretary of State for India, told Parliament that it represented a minute and microscopic minority whose plans and policy left the "vast amorphous residuum", that is, the ryots and peasants, absolutely untouched.¹ Fitzpatrick, Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, said that the Congress represented an infinitesimal fraction of the population, and that the question of larger admission of Indians into higher services, as demanded by it, might be considered when it would represent a great mass of the population.² Among distinguished men, George Chesney, formerly Military Member of India, was extremely hostile. He remarked that the Congress had been for the most part connected with the representation of that small and special class which desired to get a large share of the official loaves and fishes, and criticised it for demanding the reduction of the income tax - the one tax, he said, the middle class paid.³ At another place he observed that the Congress resolutions, if taken seriously, were in the strongest degree condemnatory of the Government, and if carried out, they would make all government impossible. "In truth, the holders of these congresses," writes Chesney, "are a set of inept, blundering, political charlatans. They have never made one useful or practical suggestion, but their proceedings, when not merely silly, are undoubtedly mischievous."⁴

1 Indian Parl. Debates, 28 March 1892, 131-32.

2 Note of 23 Sept. 1893, Pub. Progs., No. 67, Nov. 1893.

3 Indian Parl. Debates, 21 Sept. 1893, 675.

4 Article on "India - The Political Outlook," The Nineteenth Century, June 1894, 897, 901, Indian Polity (1894), 385-87.

The above views are marked by a great deal of exaggeration. The Congress, despite its limitations, had many strong points in its favour. In reply to Chesney's accusations, Sir Richard Garth, former Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court and Tory in his personal views, made some important observations. He said that the Congress was a large and influential assembly of patriotic men, who had dared to think for themselves and for the millions of ignorant men, had the courage to denounce abuses and propose important reforms, such as, the reduction of extravagant expenditure, the reform of the Police administration, inquiry into the Home charges, a Council for the Punjab, and the establishment of military colleges. He further remarked that many persons of high rank and position had been deterred from taking a direct and open part by the "determined jealous hostility"¹ shown by the Government towards the movement. Garth's assessment of the movement well accords with the facts; and is remarkably sober and well-balanced.

During the first two years of Elgin's Viceroyalty, there does not appear to be any marked change in the Government's attitude. In January 1896 India wrote that there was good reason to believe that the Government² of India was adopting a more sensible and friendly attitude. However, this optimism did not last long and there ensued a long period during which the Congress looked in vain for sympathy, and indeed in Curzon's time contemptuous treatment coupled with hostility was its lot. Lord Hamilton,

1 India, April 1895, 122.

2 Ibid., Jan. 1896, 1.

who was Secretary of State for India for about seven and a half years, remained consistently suspicious and unsympathetic. Elgin, however, showed a better understanding of the movement, but he was too weak to take any independent line of action. The Government's attitude took a turn for the worse during the last three years of his administration when a number of events, such as, the outbreak of famine, the unpopularity of the plague operations resulting in the assassinations of Rand and Ayerst, the arrests of the Natu brothers, the imprisonment of B.G. Tilak, the enactment of sedition laws, and the North-West Frontier expeditions, provoked strong criticism in Congress circles.

In 1897 Elgin's Government suspected a conspiracy for the purpose of obtaining possession of the correspondence between the Viceroy and the Secretary of State. Elgin said: "What a bombshell it would be if we could put one of the most prominent leaders of the Congress in the dock on the charge of stealing letters!"¹ Babington Smith, Private Secretary to the Governor-General, gives a list of documents which had leaked out saying: "The man who receives them and pays for them is W.C. Bonnerjee, one of the Congress leaders and a successful Calcutta barrister. The agent he employs for the purpose is one O'Brien Moore, manager of the 'Cambridge Press' - a low-class press in Calcutta."² Even if the details furnished

1 Elgin to Hamilton, 10 March 1897, Pr. Cor. Ind., IV, 175-8.

2 Babington Smith writes that information was received in Dec. 1895 that a printed copy of the Viceroy's letter to the Secretary of State, dated 23 October 1894 was in the hands of the Editor of the Editor of the Amrita Bazar Patrika. Other documents which leaked out were the Viceroy's letter to the Secretary, 13 Jan. 1897, the Secretary's letter to the Viceroy, 12 Feb. 1897, the Viceroy's letter to the Secretary, 3 March 1897, and a page from the Secretary's letter to the Viceroy, 5 Feb. 1897. Encl. to Elgin's letter to Hamilton, 10 March 1897, IV, 181-85.

by Smith may be taken as correct, there is nothing to prove that the Congress was interested in getting possession of secret papers. The Congress stood for certain reforms and it knew well that the Government was not sympathetic. Moreover, Bonnerjee is not to be identified with the Congress.

The Government was anxious that the movement should receive no financial help from rich men and indeed it derived much satisfaction from the disclosure that Wedderburn, despite his repeated protests, was supplied with inadequate funds for Congress work in England.¹ The financial position of the Congress was always unsound. Much difficulty was experienced in raising about £3,000 for the expenses of the British Committee in England. In a strongly worded letter to Congressmen, Hume said: "As a fact, however, but a small sum, comparatively is provided - a wholly inadequate sum, and even that, though promised, is paid so tardily that thousands of letters, circulars, and reminders are needed to get in even this ineffectual contribution."² One need not accept this statement on its face value, but the fact of the unsound financial position was fully realised by Congressmen. Until 1887 members of the aristocracy,³ who sympathised with the movement, helped it openly, but when the displeasure

1 On 13 Oct. 1899 Hume and Wedderburn wrote that Congressmen did not fully realise the trouble and anxiety which their dilatory habits entailed upon those who had been fighting a most difficult battle in England for justice in the face of much obloquy. They emphasised that unless the Congress remitted the sum promptly, the work of the British Committee might come to an end. According to this letter, out of Rs. 60,000, being the sum voted annually for the British Committee, only Rs. 16,205 had been received on account of 1898, and Rs. 2,064 on account of 1899, then in its last quarter. Encl. to Curzon's letter to Hamilton, 28 Dec. 1899. Pr. Cor. Ind., XV, 395-401.

2 Hume's letter of 16 Feb. 1892, India, 13 May 1892, 139.

3 The Congress Report of 1886 mentioned the names of the Maharajas of Cooh Bihar, Darbhanga, Hathwa, and Dumraon. Darbhanga had contributed Rs. 2,500. (Report, Introduction, 10). According to the Report of 1887

of the Government became known, only a few had the courage to support it. Some of them no doubt continued to help it secretly, but as the years passed, the number of such sympathisers became almost negligible. The Report of 1898 says that the Madras Reception Committee received no contributions from Rajas and Maharajas or the rich classes and that its funds were chiefly obtained by house to house collections.¹ In 1899, when the Congress session was held at Lucknow, the richer classes and the landed aristocracy rendered no material help. The official report² says that they lived in constant dread of inquisitorial officialdom.

In 1899 Hamilton asked the Government of India to find out the names of those rich men who financed the Congress. Since 1888 Congressmen, for fear of the Government's reprisal, had been maintaining strict secrecy about this matter. Among the early supporters of the Congress the name of Maharaja Sir Lakshmeshwar Singh of Darbhanga stands out pre-eminent. The Government was fully aware of this fact, but it had imperfect information about the precise amount of support. The Intelligence Department supplied some details in this connection, which though they cannot be accepted as wholly correct, reveal some important details. It has already been pointed out that he had contributed Rs. 2,5000 in 1886 and purchased Lowther Castle in 1888 and thus enabled the Congress to hold its session at Allahabad. He helped in the publication of the Congress journal India. Government circles believed

the Maharajas of Mysore, Vizianagaram and Travancore donated Rs. 1,000, 1,000 and 500 respectively. The Rajas of Coching and Venkatagiri gave Rs. 500 each. Raja Gajapathy Rao and the Raja of Bobili donated Rs. 325 and Rs. 200 respectively. (Report, Introduction, 13) In 1895 the Maharaja of Ramnad contributed Rs. 10,000.

1 Report of Fourteenth I.N.C. (1898), Introduction, iii.

2 Report of Fifteenth I.N.C. (1899), Introduction, V.

that it was largely owing to his assistance that it became a weekly paper in 1898 and that he also contributed Rs. 10,000 annually to the Congress. The note of C.S. Bayley,¹ however, says that there was nothing to prove that he gave that particular amount, though his pecuniary assistance was no doubt very large. The note goes on to say that in 1888 it was rumoured that he was going to be nominated President. In 1890 he and the Raja of Vizianagaram each subscribed Rs. 5,000 towards the cost of "Surendranath Banarjis deputation"² to England, and in the same year he was said to have given Rs. 2,000 to W.C. Bonnerjee as his first instalment towards the expenses of the next Congress. On 2 February 1894 Surendranath Banerjea said that the Maharaja had given Rs. 20,000 in the previous year. In 1893 and 1895 an "Indian Friend", who was supposed to be the Maharaja, gave Rs. 15,000 to the Permanent Fund of the Congress and Rs. 8,000 to the Special Fund for "India".

The Note gives further details about other supporters. It points out that the Maharaja of Baroda had financed Naoroji's election to Parliament. The note refers to a letter from Colonel Biddulph, then Agent to the Governor-General, who stated that the Maharaja had drawn one lakh of rupees from the Treasury, presumably for some secret purpose. It gives no information about the contributions of the Maharaja of Bhavnagar. According to the note, J.N. Tata subscribed Rs. 500 in 1895 and the same amount in 1896.³

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- 1 Then General Superintendent of operations for the Suppression of Thagi and Dakaiti (Dacoity).
 - 2 Banerjea writes in his autobiography that members of the Congress deputation of 1890 paid every farthing of their expenses. A Nation in Making, III.
 - 3 U.S. Bayley's Note, 18 June 1899, Encl. to Curzon's letter to Hamilton, 28 June 1899, Pr. Cor. Ind., XIV, 63-65.

Another confidential letter on this subject says that many of the Chiefs and leading men of India sympathised with the Congress movement, some of whom also gave pecuniary help in a very secret and indirect manner and that it was impossible to find out the extent of help. The letter points out that the Princes of Kolhapur,¹ Baroda and Gondal² were believed to be subscribers to the Congress Fund. On 28 June 1899, in the course of conversation with Curzon, the Maharaja of Baroda admitted that he had given £1,000 towards Naoroji's election expenses, and had³ subscribed Rs. 1,000 annually towards the Congress Fund.

A letter of the Chief Secretary to the Bengal Government throws some light on the attitude of the Bengal zamindars to the movement. According to it, they did not subscribe largely though a few of them were regular subscribers, and the principal subscribers were the members of⁴ the legal profession and their clients.

1 J.W. Wray, Political Agent, said that he could not find that the Raja of Kolhapur had contributed to the Congress Fund. Encl. to Curzon's letter to Hamilton, 27 Sept. 1899, Pr. Cor. Ind. XV, 35.

2 H. Kennedy to E.G. Cox, 20 July 1899, encl. to Curzon's letter to Hamilton, 27 Sept. 1899, Pr. Cor. Ind., XV, 33. Kennedy writes that only four Congress leaders - Wedderburn and Naoroji in England, and P.M. Mehta and D.E. Wacha in India - could give the information about the help given by the chiefs and leading men:

In a letter of 21 Sept. 1899 to W.R. Lawrence, Private Secretary to the Viceroy, C.S. Bayley wrote that from inquiries it appeared that none of the Chiefs or leading Indians of position in Rajputana contributed to funds of the Congress or to India. Pr. Cor. Ind., XV, 39.

3 Encl. to Curzon's letter to Hamilton, 12 July 1899, Pr. Cor. Ind., XIV, 172.

4 Among the regular subscribers were Manmath Nath Mitra and Narendranath Mitra, Raja Benoy Krishna Deb of the Sobhabazar family, Maharaja Jagendra Nath Roy of Nator, Raja Sashishikaseshwar Roy of Gahirpur, Maharaja Suryakant of Mymensingh, and Yotindranath Chaudhri of Gatri. Sir Jotindra Mohan Tagore and Sir Surendra Mohan Tagore subscribed to the Congress, not, says the letter, from active sympathy with the movement, but from fear of newspaper attacks. Members of Debendra Nath Tagore's family were active Congressmen. Maharaja Mohendra Chandra Nandi of Kasimbazar was believed to have given until then no pecuniary help though

It is clear from the above that a number of the Indian Princes and big zamindars helped the Congress. In his biography, R.P. Masani also refers to the help rendered by a few Indian Princes to Naoroji. In 1892 the Maharaja of Baroda placed at his disposal twenty coaches on the day of polling, and about the end of the year when he was in financial difficulties, he received substantial help from Gondal, Bhavnagar, and other Indian states.¹ Though our information as to the exact amount of help given by the Chiefs and zamindars is scanty, we can say with a degree of certainty that the Congress had its friends also among the upper classes. The reason was that it was a supporter of the interests of the landed aristocracy and Princes. In 1891 the Bengal Government remarked that whenever the relations of the Indian Government with any Chief attracted public attention,² the sympathies of the Press were strongly on the side of the latter.

The private letters of Hamilton to Elgin and Curzon are very significant in revealing his attitude towards the movement. He appears to have been extremely irritated at the criticism of his policy in the Indian Press and in Parliament. In some of his letters he no doubt shows a fairly correct reading of the situation, but his failure to put forward constructive suggestions is also evident.

his predecessor Maharani Swarnamoyee had contributed liberally. According to the letter, the late Maharaja of Darbhanga had paid Rs. 10,000 annually. To Gen. Supt. T & D. Dept. 18 July 1899, Encl. to Curzon's letter to Hamilton, 2 Aug. 1899. Pr. Cor Ind., XIV, 227-30.

1 R.P. Masani, op. cit., 276, 325.

2 Bengal to Govt. of India, 13 June 1891, Pub. Progs., No. 261, Oct. 1891.

Writing about the famine and plague of 1897, he said that, while the Congress and its friends exaggerated the famine and attributed it to the Government, they ignored the plague because it was due to the uncleanliness of Indians. Then he comments: "They are all of them a thankless, ungrateful, venomous crew, and Wedderburn ought to know better than head the gang."¹ In June 1897, after the murder of Rand and Ayerst at Poona, he observed: "The more I see and hear of the National Congress party the more I am impressed with the seditious and double-sided character of the prime-movers of the organisation."² Poona was, in his opinion, the centre of a seditious propaganda and the headquarters of the more violent section of the national Congress. He called the Maratha Brahmans the ablest and most determined of the opponents of British rule.³

Hamilton's letters show how greatly annoyed he was at the criticism of the Government's policy. He says that ever since Wedderburn had been in Parliament he used his whole influence to discredit the Indian Government and that all his questions had that object in view. He was so bitter that he declined to meet Wedderburn when the latter expressed⁴ his desire to see him with a view to clearing up misunderstandings. One can have some idea of the degree of his irritation by the use of such terms as "Wedderburn and Co." and "Nacroji and Co." for the supporters of the Congress. About Nacroji he said that long residence in England and

1 Hamilton to Elgin, 5 Feb. 1897, Pr. Cov. Ind., ii, 29.

2 Hamilton to Elgin, 24 June 1897, Pr. Cor. Ind., ii, 295.

3 Hamilton to Elgin, 20 Oct. 1899, Pr. Cor. Ind., IV, 363, 16 Nov. 1898, Pr. Cor. Ind., iii, 486.

4 Hamilton to Curzon, 22 Feb. 1900, Pr. Cor. Ind., V, 55.

association with the "least reputable portion of the political world have hopelessly deteriorated whatever brains or prescience he may originally have possessed."¹ He expressed his extreme dislike of the Congress journal "India" which he called the "pernicious little rag" edited and written by men holding extreme radical views. Much of the information about India, Hamilton said, was derived from this paper.² Its articles and comments were no doubt strongly critical of the Government's policy and exercised a great influence on Indian newspapers.

Referring to the educated classes of Bengal, Hamilton said: "We have certainly contrived to produce a hybrid or rather I should say a mongrel personality in the educated Baboo possessing the most annoying and useless attributes."³

He accused Dufferin of purchasing popularity by leaving to his successors unpleasant legacies. The origin and development of the Congress, he observed, was due to his mismanagement and want of judgment.⁴

As regards the loyalty of Congressmen, Hamilton said that they did not fail, either in speech or writing, to criticise the Government of India and its officers. He added that though the Indian Press did not advocate the overthrow of British rule, its everlasting criticism "must ultimately make an impression just as perpetual drip wears out stone."

He remarked that in India criticism was unalloyed by praise or appreciation.⁵

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- 1 Hamilton to Elgin, 2 April 1897, Pr. Cor. Ind., ii, 129.
 - 2 Hamilton to Curzon, 18 May 1899, Pr. Cor. Ind., IV, 137.
 - 3 Hamilton to Elgin, 7 April 1897, Pr. Cor. Ind., iii, 239.
 - 4 Hamilton to Curzon, 17 May 1900, Pr. Cor. Ind., V, 169.
 - 5 Hamilton to Elgin, 30 Oct. 1896, Pr. Cor. Ind., i, 411.

Some of the observations only reveal his resentment and annoyance at the strong criticism of his policy, and some clearly indicate the imperfect appreciation of the situation with which the British Government was confronted. To say that the Congress had a double-sided character was far from correct. The leadership of the Congress was in the hands of extremely moderate men who had blind faith in constitutional agitation. The only eminent Congressman whom the Government suspected of being the leader of the more violent section was B.G. Tilak, but even if we admit, for the sake of argument, that he was so, the fact remains that the Congress as an all-India body dominated by moderate leaders had not in the least changed its character. So far as the criticism of British policy was concerned, the tone of Congressmen was strong. This is to be attributed to the fact that they found little response to their appeals and protests. Rebuffs and disappointments they had galore. Therefore when they gathered at the annual meetings or when they wrote and spoke something they employed stronger language. Talk, written or spoken, was their first and last weapon. As regards Hamilton's remark that while the Congress was so vociferous in the criticism of British rule it was so niggardly in the appreciation of its merits, it may be said that some of the important advantages, such as, internal and external security, equality before the law, and the development of the means of communication, had by that time come to be taken for granted. Even so Congress were deeply conscious of the advantages and it was the recognition of this fact which made them lay so great an emphasis on the stability of British rule. The Congress movement represents a phase in Indian history when the various forces which had been at work called for a new approach on the part of the British.

Hamilton's criticism of Dufferin is hardly correct because the formation of a political body like the Congress could not have been long delayed.

Elgin's letters to Hamilton, however, show a better appreciation of the Congress movement. In 1896 he said that, though Congressmen might be discontented, they were not disloyal, and added that it was incredible that men like Pherozeshah Mehta would wish to overthrow the Government.¹ In another letter he expressed the view that he did not find in Indian papers "much trace of a desire to substitute for British authority a native, far less another, foreign rule." He went on to say that Indian papers not uncommonly appreciated the work of British officers who had earned a reputation for fairness and kindness.² In 1897 he observed that Indian politicians of necessity used a little "spicy" language but did not mean anything offensive. He expressed the view that the Central and Provincial Councils were the right place for some of them, because they were able men and could do good work when not carried away by platform oratory.³ As regards the Indian Press, Elgin said that it had been useful to him in giving him some indication of what the people were thinking about.⁴ About the advisability of prohibiting the Congress, he observed that, though it was a red-rag to many Britishers, no responsible person would propose its prohibition.⁵

1 Elgin to Hamilton, 25 Aug. 1896, Pr. Cor. Ind., 11, 828

2 Elgin to Hamilton, 7 Oct. 1896, Pr. Cor. Ind., 111, 1-3.

3 Elgin to Hamilton, 21 April 1897, Pr. Cor. Ind., IV, 445-6.

4 See Hamilton's letter to Curzon, 3 Aug. 1899, Pr. Cor. Ind., IV, 252.

5 Elgin to Hamilton, 27 July 1897, Pr. Cor. Ind., VI, 151.

The Government's attitude towards Congressmen in matters of nomination to certain offices may now be examined. During 1885-1900¹ a number of Congressmen were appointed as High court judges and a very large number of them were nominated to the legislative councils. The appointments or nominations were made purely on grounds of merits. None the less they indicated two things: first, the Congress was not treated as a seditious body, and, secondly, its membership was not a bar to one's promotion. In fact Congress leaders emphasised that by joining the Congress one could secure greater recognition from the Government. Generally speaking, Congressmen were appointed or nominated to certain offices because they were able men and could not be ignored. The Government's policy was not to show special favour to them nor was it one of penalising them. The appointment of N.G.Chandavarkar as a Judge of the High Court in 1901 is a case in point. He presided over the Congress session of 1900 and was appointed a few weeks later. His nomination to the Bench was known before he presided over the Congress. Hamilton felt like cancelling the appointment on the ground that it would be wrong in principle to appoint a man to one of the highest posts immediately after he had attacked the Government.² Curzon's view was that such a decision would infuriate Chandavarkar and make the moderate party in the Congress hostile whereas the appointment would disarm him in the future and get him on the British side.³

1 K.T. Telang, Badruddin Tyabji and S. Subramania Iyer-Tyabji was the President of the Third Congress, and became a High Court Judge in 1895.

2 Hamilton to Curzon, 24 Jan. 1901, Pr. Cor. Ind., VI, 26.

3 Curzon to Hamilton, 21 Feb. 1901, Pr. Cor. Ind., XIX, 161.

Between 1885 and 1900 a large number of Congressmen were nominated to the Central and Provincial Councils.¹ Even before the passing of the Councils Act of 1892 a number of them had been nominated to some of the Provincial Councils, but with the coming of that Act into force, many more became members. In the Bengal Council of 1894 there were as many as five out of the six recommended members. The success of Congressmen was mainly due to their popularity and ability. It appears that the Local Governments, on the whole, were favourable to the idea of having a few Congressmen on the Councils. In 1897, while recommending the nomination of one Madan Gopal to the newly established Punjab Council, the Government of the Punjab also emphasised his association with the Congress party.²

Congressmen were also selected as members of certain commissions. In 1895 Wedderburn, Naoroji and Caine, who were members of the British Committee of the Congress, were appointed members of the Welby Commission. The Indian witnesses, namely, Surendranath Banerjea, Gokhale, Wacha, G. Subramania Iyer and K.N. Bahadurji, were all associated with the Congress. This was indeed a great achievement for the Congress. Though the Government sneered at the Congress claim to represent Indian opinion, it did realise that the Congress was the only body which, with all its

1 Some of the important Congressmen who were nominated to the Central or Local legislatures were Pherozechah Mehta, Telang, Naoroji, Tyabji, Tilak, R.M. Sayani, Gokhale, W.C. Bonnerjee, Surendranath Banerjea, A.M. Bose, Rampal Singh, Ananda Charlu, C. Sankaran Nair, and C. Vijayaraghavachariar.

2 Punjab Govt. to Govt. of India, 18 Sept. 1897, Pub. Progs., No. 414, Oct. 1897.

imperfections, gave expression to the views of the educated classes. In 1896, while suggesting that Pherozeshah Mehta should be selected as a witness before the Welby Commission, Elgin said that "it might be a good thing if we sent home some one to represent the Native, or shall I say the Congress view?"¹ In 1898 R.C. Dutt, who had retired from the Indian Civil Service in 1897, was selected as a witness before the Currency Commission. Though in his evidence he made it clear that he did not represent the Congress view, his selection as president in the following year leaves no doubt as to where his sympathies lay. In 1900 Lord Curzon recommended the name of Ananda Charlu, who was an eminent Congress leader, for membership of the Famine Commission, because the Government wanted some representative of 'native' opinion.²

We arrive at the conclusion that whenever the Government felt the necessity of giving representation to Indian opinion, it could not, despite its indifference and coolness, ignore the Congress. Elgin's view was that the nomination of Congressmen to the Councils would make them more responsible in their criticism and their exclusion would make them less.³ He maintained that the representatives of the advanced section of Indian opinion were men of ability and applied themselves to the work of legislation with assiduity and in a spirit of loyalty and thus were distinctly useful members of the Councils.⁴ J. Woodburn, a member of the Governor-General's Council remarked that since they became members of the Councils, the leaders of the Congress had been learning

1 Elgin to Hamilton, 31 March 1896, Pr. Cor. Ind., ii, 579c.

2 Curzon to Hamilton, 28 Nov. 1900, Pr. Cor. Ind., XVIII, 327.

Charlu was, however, not appointed. One Shyam Sundar Lal took the place of K.C. Mukharji, on the latter's death.

3 Elgin to Hamilton, 25 Aug. 1896, Pr. Cor. Ind., ii, 828.

4 Elgin's Minute, 24 Aug. 1896, Pub. Progs., No. 182, Aug. 1896.

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moderation and sobriety.

It is clear from the above that since 1888 the Government's attitude towards the Congress had been either one of indifference or hostility. Nevertheless during 1888-1900 a number of Congressmen were appointed as judges or members of Commissions, because they were able men and were regarded as better representatives of Indian opinion. It is true that the Government spoke contemptuously of their representative character, but it could not point to a better representative body. Indeed, it disliked the Congress, sneered at it, and yet feared it. Perhaps nothing could have pleased the Government more than the disappearance of the Congress. Curzon derived much satisfaction from his imaginary picture of the Congress tottering to its fall. Hamilton, too, expressed delight at his prophecy.

The question with the Government was how to weaken the national movement. So long as the Congress adhered to the constitutional method, its suppression by force was out of the question. But there were other methods by which the Government sought to weaken the Congress.

First, the Muslims were persuaded in a Province like the N.W.P. to keep aloof from the Congress. The anti-Congress movement derived much strength therefrom the hostile attitude of Sir Auckland Colvin. However, it is very difficult to say how and to what extent the Central Government widened the gulf between Hindus and Muslims. In 1893, when riots took place at Bombay, Rangoon, Azamgarh and Ballia, many Indian papers expressed the view that the Government had instigated them so that the Muslims might not join the Congress. There is little evidence to

1 Minute of 15 Aug. 1896, Pub. Progs. No. 180, Aug. 1896.

support the view. Indeed, in 1897 Elgin said: "We have fortunately escaped lately the religious riots of 1893 ..."¹ The attitude of the Indian Government was that the Muslims should not associate themselves with the Congress. But it does not appear that the Government pursued during this period a policy intended to intensify Hindu-Muslim tension. Nor was attempt made to win the support of the Muslims by granting them special privileges. When the Muslim organisations demanded more places in the public services they were asked to equip themselves. Neither in the services nor in the Councils seats were reserved for them. The wishes and prayers of leading Muslims were ignored on the question of election to the Councils. Nevertheless the Government was quite sympathetic towards the Muslims,² largely because their opposition to the Congress strengthened its own position in denouncing the representative basis of that body.

The second important class which could be set against the Congress was the aristocracy. It has already been pointed out that owing to Government pressure many members of the upper classes seceded from the Congress. The Amrita Bazar Patrika wrote that a good many Indians belonging to this class broke their connection solely due to the hostile attitude of the officials, and added that many of the zamindars of Bengal, but for their hostility, would have attended the Madras session of 1898.³ Some of the Princes and landlords continued

1 Elgin to Hamilton, 30 Dec. 1897, Pr. Cor. Ind., viii, 365.

2 Queen Victoria had great faith in the loyalty of the Muslims. On 20 Sept. 1894 she wrote to Elgin: "But she cannot help feeling that the Brahmins are those who irritate the people against us, and that the Mohammedans are the real supporters of the British rule." G.E. Buckle, Letters, 3rd ser., ii, 426.

3 See India, 6 Jan. 1899, 4.

to give financial support to the movement secretly, but the pressure was too great to be resisted. In June 1899, in the course of his interview with the Maharaja of Baroda, Curzon told him that he had given both his name and money to a movement hostile to the Government. The Maharaja, says Curzon, advanced a number of inconsistent arguments, saying that the Congress was a social and not political movement, that the Government had given no indication of its disapproval, that the bulk of educated opinion was in its favour, that his contribution was small, that other Chiefs did the same, and that subscription did not mean agreement with the principles of the movement. Curzon remarks that the Maharaja was taken aback by his challenge.¹ Suffice it to say that the fear of the Government prevented many Princes and zamindars from giving support to the Congress.

A third method by which the movement could have been weakened was dividing the educated Hindus, who for the most part formed the Congress, into two sections. Hamilton was of opinion that the real danger to British rule was the gradual adoption of western ideas of agitation. He pointed out the need of laying greater emphasis on the religious and moral training of students with the object of creating a new class having little sympathy with the Congress agitation. It is interesting to note that the educational scheme of Annie Besant,² the well-known Theosophist, appealed to him as one likely to be a

1 Encl. to Curzon's letter to Hamilton, 12 July 1899, Pr. Cor. Ind., XIV, 172-73.

2 Besant started the Central Hindu College, which is the nucleus of the present Banaras Hindu University, in 1898. She laid emphasis on the religious and moral training of students, and thus her scheme was believed to introduce an important change in the existing system which was too much dominated by western ideals.

"useful antidote" to the existing system. Hamilton was in favour of encouraging her movement,¹ but it may be remarked that he was attaching too much importance to Besant's experiment. The later history of the movement shows that with greater awareness of and pride in the culture and history of their country Indians became more assertive and more fearless than the early nationalists whose outlook was almost entirely western. In 1916-17 Besant herself took the lead in starting the Home Rule agitation which marked a departure from the old method. An important reason why Hamilton was enamoured of Besant's movement was that in 1899 she had come in conflict with the Congress leaders in Madras.

A fourth method by which a portion of the supporters of the movement could have been weaned away was acceptance of some of the demands. Dufferin's minute of 1888, which denounced the Congress movement so strongly, also contained a plan of Council reform designed to give "full play to the legitimate and praiseworthy ambition of the loyal, patriotic, and educated classes." He maintained that the advantage of such a reform would be to shift the centre of gravity of Indian political activity from "the self-constituted associations and the little knot of politicians and newspaper writers" to "the really responsibly classes."² Indeed, the Act of 1892 was regarded by the opponents of the Congress as a concession to political agitation though, as we have seen above, it fell far short of its demands.

1 Hamilton to Curzon, 9 Aug. 1899, Pr. Cor. Ind., IV, 262; 20 Sept. 1899, Pr. Cor. Ind., IV, 325.

2 Dufferin's Minute, Encl. to Pub. Des. from India., No. 67, 6 Nov. 1888.

It would be wrong to say that the grant of concessions, even in large measure, would have meant the end of Congress demands. But there is no doubt that the Congress of 1885-1905 could have been conciliated without the Government being required to make very large concessions.

In 1899 Hamilton suggested three methods for counteracting the Congress movement: first, to ascertain who subscribed among Princes and noblemen to the Congress and to let them know that the Government was aware of the fact; secondly, to prefer for honours and distinctions those who were not Congressmen, and thirdly, to exercise a greater control over the educational system.¹ We have already discussed the first and seen why the aristocracy kept aloof. As to the second, Government honours were no doubt coveted by a very large number of early Congressmen because they were loyal and sought to achieve their objects within the framework of the British Empire. But distinctions ceased to have any attraction for those who took to an entirely different method of agitation. As regards the system of education, Curzon made certain changes but his arbitrary measures, far from solving the question, made the solution far more difficult. The methods suggested by Hamilton were put into effect but were powerless to check later the emergence of an enormously mighty Congress under Mahatma Gandhi; in fact, they assisted this development.

During the first twenty years the Congress movement met with little success. Its principal demands, such as, simultaneous examinations, the reduction of military expenditure, the abolition or reform of the India Council, the repeal of the Arms Act, the establishment of military

1 Hamilton to Curzon, 18 May 1899, Pr. Cor. Ind., IV, 135-8.

colleges in India, a system of Indian volunteering, the separation of the judiciary from the executive, and the extension of the Permanent Settlement were not conceded, and the Government's attitude remained most unsympathetic. The only important reform for which Congressmen could take credit was the Indian Councils Act of 1892. Some of the opponents of the Congress like A.C. Trevor, a member of the Governor-General's Council characterised it as a "concession to political agitation,"¹ but in view of the extremely limited character of the reform, this view deserves little attention. Thirty years of progress demanded a much greater advance than the Act provided. Congressmen also claimed credit for the establishment of a Council in the N.W.P., but, as it has been shown above, praise is due to Alfred Lyall, then Lieutenant Governor, who had taken up the question even before the formation of the Congress.² The supporters of the movement in England also failed in their efforts to convince the British nation and Parliament of the justice of their stand. Perhaps their most important achievements were Paul's resolution in favour of simultaneous examinations and the appointment of the Indian Expenditure Commission, but the first was not accepted by the Government and as regards the second, the Commission's recommendation provided for a small contribution of £2,57,000 by the British to the Indian Exchequer. The Congress, as Nevinson rightly observes, failed in its two avowed objects. First, it did not succeed in exerting influence upon the action of the Indian Government;³ secondly, it had no influence on English opinion at home.

1 Trevor's Minute, 21 Aug. 1896, Pub. Progs., No. 181, Aug. 1896.

2 See above, 151.

3 H.W. Nevinson, The New Spirit In India, 326-27.

But, in spite of its failures, the Congress played a very important role in Indian political life. It brought together men of various castes and communities on a common platform and focussed their attention on important common problems. In a word, it marks the rise and growth of national life in India. Its approach to politics was intellectual and had justification in the beginning, but it emerged discredited because of the Government's unsympathetic attitude.

It has to be remembered that during these twenty years the Liberals were less than four years in office. Congressmen had, however, come to believe that nothing could be expected from the Conservatives. Between 1895 and 1905 one finds a marked stiffness in the Government's attitude though the Congress programme and method remained unaltered. In 1903 such eminent leaders as Hume, Wedderburn, Naoroji, and W.C. Bonnerjee felt the necessity of exhorting Congressmen not to lose heart, and they held out the prospect of a Liberal victory at the next elections. "With a fresh Parliament, and an awakened national conscience," said ¹ Wedderburn, "the Court of Appeal will be open."

It need not be supposed that if the Liberals had been in office the Congress would have achieved much. On important matters of Indian policy both parties were in complete agreement. In 1895 Fowler, then Secretary of State, told the House that there would be no greater calamity to the Indian Empire than that it should become one of the ² "shuttlecocks with which the Party game of battledore is played."

1 "A Call to Arms" by Wedderburn, Naoroji, Bonnerjee and Hume, The Hindustan Review, Dec. 1903.

2 Indian Parl. Debates, 13 Feb. 1895, 11.

Between 1892 and 1895, when the Liberals were in office, some very unpopular measures relating to India were passed. The closing of the Mints and the grant of Exchange Compensation Allowance in 1893, outright refusal to implement the Commons' resolution in regard to simultaneous examinations, and the imposition of counter-veiling duties on Indian cotton goods were strongly criticised by Congressmen and yet their entire sympathies were with the Liberal party because they did not regard it as reactionary. Explaining the reasons why the Congress supported the Liberals, Surendranath Benerjee said, in his presidential address, that the bulk of its friends belonged to the Liberal side and that with the exception of Pincott and Garth it had no supporters among the Conservatives.¹

We have numerous references which at least indicate that the Congress did not gain in strength during 1896-1901. Critics like Chesney had already started thinking in terms of its early end. Writing in June 1894 he said that the Congress of 1893 lacked enthusiasm and vitality and that it might come to an end of itself before long.² From 1896 even the highest authorities began to think along these lines. Hamilton remarked that the Congress as a political power had steadily gone down during the last two years. This was, in his opinion, largely due to the indifference and unconcern shown by the Government to its proceedings.³ In July 1899 the Bengal Government observed that since the expansion of the Councils on an elective basis - which was a very

1 Report of the Eleventh I.N.C. (1895), 48.

2 "The Political Outlook," The Nineteenth Century, June 1894, 901.

3 Hamilton to Elgin, 11 Dec. 1896, Pr. Cor. Ind., 1, 447.

important demand of the Congress - it had been exciting much less enthusiasm than it did some years before.¹ In 1900 Curzon wrote:

"My own belief is that the Congress is tottering to its fall, and one of my greatest ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise ... My belief is that the best men in the Congress are more and more seeing the hopelessness of their cause ..."² Three months later

he re-emphasised that the Congress was sinking into insignificance.

Hamilton told Curzon that the loss of its popularity was due to the latter's sympathy with the Indian communities. A few weeks later he remarked that pouring ridicule on the fantastical parts of the Congress creed did a lot of good and added that if the Congress collapsed within a year or two the credit for its destruction would go to Curzon.³

Hamilton's letters contain some important observations on the situation with which the British Government was confronted though they also reveal a lack of clear thinking as to how it could have been dealt with in a statesmanlike manner. He refers to the difficulty of combining the working of a free Press with an autocratic rule, remarking that under such a system the Press attacks not the Government of a particular political stamp but the very foundations of Government.⁴ Referring to the educated classes, he observed that it was regrettable that the Government spent 'large' sums which only turned out the element of discontent.⁵

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- 1 Encl. to Curzon's letter to Hamilton, 2 Aug. 1899, Pr. Cor. Ind., XIV, 227.
 - 2 Curzon to Hamilton, 18 November 1900, Pr. Cor. Ind., XVIII, 293-94.
 - 3 Hamilton to Curzon, 13 Dec. 1900, Pr. Cor. Ind., V, 446, 24 Jan. 1901, VI, 26.
 - 4 Hamilton to Curzon, 3 Aug. 1899, Pr. Cor. Ind., IV, 252.
 - 5 Hamilton to Elgin, 25 Feb. 1898, Pr. Cor. Ind., iii, 118.

Earlier he had said: "I do not see the end of the present system. Every year we turn out more and more educated natives; every year the Press will increase, and become more powerful ... a generation hence the position will be worse, and how it is to end I cannot see, though during our lifetime the evil will be one of inconvenience rather than of danger."¹ He was of opinion that a free Press and the prevailing condition of education were bound to widen the gulf between the ruler and the ruled.² He regarded the Congress movement as "an uprising of Indian native opinion against, not British rule, but Anglo-Indian bureaucracy" and added that the relations between the civil servants and Indians had not improved.³ As to the situation confronting the Government, he observed that the troubles that lay ahead were not in what the British had inherited but in what they themselves had created.⁴ As regards the principle of equality laid down in the Queen's Proclamation, to which Congressmen used to refer invariably, he remarked that it was not consistent with the conditions necessary for the maintenance of a foreign government. He declared that the British Government could not accept the Congress demands for representative institutions and the diminution of the European establishment.⁵ He expressed concern at the constant reference to the party affiliations of the Indian authorities as contrasted with none in 1874 when he was Under-Secretary of State for India.⁶

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- 1 Hamilton to Elgin, 30 Oct. 1896, Pr. Cor. Ind., i, 411-12.
 - 2 Hamilton to Elgin, 21 Jan. 1898, Pr. Cor. Ind., iii, 57.
 - 3 Hamilton to Curzon, 20 Oct. 1899, Pr. Cor. Ind., IV, 362.
 - 4 Indian Parl. Debates, 5 Aug. 1897, 332; 11 Aug. 1898, 862.
 - 5 Hamilton to Curzon, 17 May, 1900, Pr. Cor. Ind., V, 169; 14 April, 1899, Pr. Cor. Ind., IV, 91.
 - 6 Hamilton to Elgin, 17 July 1896, Pr. Cor. Ind., i, 320.

The above observations, which refer to the difficulty of reconciling the principles of a foreign autocracy with a free Press, uncontrolled education, the principle of equality, and the establishment of elected councils with very large powers, have a great deal of truth. The acceptance of the Congress demands, in entirety, would have no doubt considerably narrowed the area of British authority and privileges. In 1900 Hamilton told Naoroji: "You announce yourself as a sincere supporter of British rule: you vehemently denounce the conditions and consequences which are inseparable from the maintenance of that rule."¹ The above statement contains much exaggeration but it indicates that concessions to the Congress involved diminution in the power and privileges of the ruling nation. The Congress leaders maintained that such a policy would make the Government popular and therefore more stable. But the British Government was not disposed to disturb the autocratic system. To it the price of popularity appeared prohibitive.

The Government's attitude was friendly in the beginning, in 1888 it became hostile, between 1889 and 1895, broadly speaking, it was neither friendly nor hostile, and thereafter it became hostile. However, during the first twenty years, official opposition was not carried to the length of preventing the Congress from holding its annual sessions.

The Government's dislike of the Congress was due to its active propaganda in the Press, on the Platform, and in Parliament. Constant and strong criticism of its policy was not something which could be

1 Encl. to Hamilton's letter to Curzon, 13 Dec. 1900, Pr. Cor. Ind., V, 44.

palatable to an autocratic government. The British Government was not prepared to grant concessions and resented criticism. It is difficult to see how the Congress could ask for changes from an unsympathetic Government and at the same time continue to enjoy its sympathy. The Congress was told that it represented a small minority, that its demands could not be accepted and that it was not friendly to the Government. In 1899 Curzon remarked that the whole of the British case against the Congress was that it was in no sense a national body, as it claimed to be, and that if it was not actively disloyal it was far from friendly.¹ The likelihood is that the British Government found it convenient to reject the Congress demands by attacking its representative base.

The Congress represented a movement which for the first time brought the British Government into contact with developing Indian political opinion. But even a partial acceptance of its demands called for a change in the British outlook, and so long as the principle of efficiency was retained intact not much could be expected in this respect. It is therefore not surprising that the Congress achieved so little. Curzon, the greatest exponent of efficiency, believed that the movement itself could be brought to an end by a scheme of economic reforms designed to improve the condition of the masses. He perfected the practice of treating the movement in a contemptuous

1 Curzon to Hamilton, 27 Sept. 1899, Pr. Cor. Ind., XV, 27.

manner and succeeded, to some extent, in arresting its progress, but little did he know that the failure of the moderates would be followed by the rise of an extremist party in the Congress. It was unfortunate from the British point of view that early Congress leaders, who could have been conciliated without the British Government being required to introduce much modification in its character, were not trusted and as a consequence, emerged discredited. In 1900 Hamilton remarked that the Congress had effected nothing since it came into existence. It is true that the Congress method had failed, but it is equally true that the British approach to the movement lacked clarity of mind and direction. The picture that one forms of the British mind, in relation to the national movement, is an involved one, marked by fear and suspicion, irritation and resentment, derision and contempt. Though the British Government expressed much concern at the manner of its criticism by Congressmen it is extremely doubtful that a more moderate method would have evoked a sympathetic response.

1 Hamilton to Curzon, 22 Feb. 1900, Pr. Cor. Ind., V, 55.

2 The following assessment of British policy by a recent historian deserves attention.

"Thus down to 1909, lacking clarity of mind and directness in approach, the British Government in India followed a confused, uncertain policy towards Indian nationalism, most of the time assuming an attitude of coolness and inflexibility - which really concealed its perplexity - varied on occasion by a retreat from position to position, each move being made a little too late to satisfy the bulk of educated Indian opinion." O.H. Philips, India (1948) 109.

Chapter V

The Currency Question

Between 1885 and 1898 the Government of India was confronted with a serious financial difficulty caused mainly by the steady decline in the value of the rupee. A considerable proportion of Indian revenues was remitted to England in discharge of the gold obligations which consisted of interest on debt and the stock of the guaranteed railway companies, expenses on account of the British troops maintained in India, pensions and non-effective charges payable in England, the cost of the Home administration, and stores purchased in England for use or consumption in India. Since the Indian revenues were raised in rupees, the burden of the Home charges increased simultaneously with the fall in the value of the rupee. As a consequence the Government of India was required to find more rupees to meet its gold obligations. The problem of payment became still more difficult because the Home charges were not a fixed quantity and had a tendency to rise.

Only a passing reference will be made here to the history of Indian currency before 1885. In 1835 a uniform silver currency was introduced for the whole of India. Gold coins no longer remained legal tender and passed at their market value as compared with silver coins. The Act of

1835, however, authorised the coinage of the gold mohur or fifteen-rupee piece and correlated coins. In 1864 Sir Charles Trevelyan, then Finance Member, proposed a gold currency for India by declaring sovereigns and half-sovereigns to be legal tender at the rate of ten rupees to the sovereign. Sir Charles Wood, then Secretary of State, practically turned down the proposal. The only concession that he made was to permit the acceptance of gold coin at public treasuries at a rate to be fixed by the Government. In November 1864 the Government of India issued a notification which proclaimed that sovereigns and half-sovereigns "shall until further notice be received in all the Treasuries of British India and its dependencies in payment of sums due to Government; as the equivalent of 10 and 5 Rs. respectively; and that such sovereigns and half-sovereigns shall, whenever available at any Government Treasury, be paid at the same rates to any person willing to receive them in payment of claims against the Government." The notification remained inoperative and the currency situation did not improve¹

In 1866 the Government of India appointed a commission to inquire into the operation of the paper currency. The Commission reported that the evidence it had taken unanimously proved a demand for a gold currency. The objection

¹ Amedkar, The Problem of the Rupee, 46.

to the note currency was based on the popularity of gold. The Commission's general report was that the Indian currency should consist of gold, silver and paper. By another notification the Government of India altered the rate of the sovereign to Rs. 10-8, but even this change in the rate failed to bring gold into circulation. In 1870 the Act of 1835 was repealed. The new Act, however, made no substantial change in the system then in force. Its "juridicial provisions were designed to perfect the monetary law of the country as had never been done before."¹

Under the Acts of 1835 and 1870 silver was received without limit when tendered for coinage at the mints and the gold value of the rupee depended on the gold price of its silver bullion. Before 1873 the currency problem was not of any serious embarrassment to the Indian Government, but from then onwards the trouble began,² and may be said to have lasted until 1898. The period of acute trouble was, however, between 1885 and 1895. The fall has been attributed to two causes: first, the substitution of gold for silver by a number

1 Ibid., 49.

2 For 40 years before 1873 the price of silver in London was never less than 59d. per ounce. Between 1873 and 1875 the price fell to nearly 56d.

of countries, such as Germany, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Holland; secondly the increased production of silver in the United States.

In 1876 the Government of India drew the attention of the Secretary of State to the likelihood of a further decline in the exchange, emphasising that for every one penny by which the sterling equivalent of a rupee might fall below 1s. 8½d. one crore of rupees would be required to meet the expenditure. Two alternatives were suggested to meet the situation: ~~either~~, an addition to the weight of fine silver in the rupee or a change to a gold standard and currency. The former, in its opinion, was a cheaper method but did not possess the element of finality, while the latter was a more complete remedy, but its disadvantages lay in raising the weight of India's net foreign obligations. It was pointed out that any rise in the value of gold would necessitate a corresponding addition to the quantity of commodities which India would be required to supply for this purpose. The Government of India preferred for the time being to adopt remedies such as the curtailment of all avoidable expenditure and the development of its existing resources.¹

In 1878 the Government of India put forward new proposals

1 Fin. Des. from India, No. 368, 13 Oct. 1876.

which provided for the introduction of a gold standard and facilities for the introduction of gold coins without giving them immediate recognition as legal tender. It was suggested that the Government should accept British or Indian gold coins in payment for its demands till the exchange had settled at 2s. Simultaneously with this, the seigniorage on the coining of silver was to be raised to such an extent as virtually to make the cost of a rupee equal in amount to the above rate. The aim was the "eventual adoption of the British standard, and the extension to India of the use of British gold coins." The Government of India remarked that the improvement of the exchange, which would enable it to reduce taxation, would be of great political advantage. It also emphasised that the time was extremely favourable for such a change because the import of silver was very small. It further suggested that it should be invested with power to end the operation of the law by executive order if the system did not work well.¹

In April 1879 the above proposals were unanimously rejected by a committee which the Secretary of State had appointed to consider them.²

1 Govt. of India's des. of 9 Nov. 1878, paras. 14, 50, 51, 58, 74, C. 4868 (1886).

2 The Committee consisted of Louis Mallet, Edward Stanhope, T.L. Seccombe, R.E. Welby, T.H. Farrer, R. Giffen and A.J. Balfour.

The Treasury also rejected the Government of India's proposals, emphasising that, though they would give relief to the Government, the Civil Servants, and Englishmen who had invested their money in India, such a "relief will be given at the expense of the Indian taxpayer, and with the effect of increasing every debt or fixed payment in India, including debt due by ryots to money-lenders ... Then the measure would result in drawing into circulation hoards of silver coin, so would prevent or retard the operation of the proposed remedy and lead to temptations to forging." The Treasury emphasised that the Government of India had indulged in too hasty a generalisation and that it was "no light matter to accept innovations which must sap and undermine that system." ¹

During Ripon's viceroyalty the exchange position was on the whole satisfactory, so much so that large remissions of taxation were made. ²

The estimates of 1885-86 showed that the financial situation was quite sound, but on 12 January 1886 the Government of India strongly urged that the silver question should

1 Treasury to India Office, 24 Nov. 1879, C. 4868 (1886).

2. In 1881-82 there was a surplus of £2582000. Govt. of India's Fin. Des., No. 45, 2 Feb. 1886.

be settled by international agreement, and added that a fall by one penny would involve the absorption of the famine grant and any considerable fall would entail an increase in the salt tax.¹ Early in 1886 the exchange rate had fallen from 1s. 7d. to 1s. 6d. The Government's financial difficulties were further aggravated by additional expenditure incurred on the increase of the army and the construction of frontier and coastal defence works. It was estimated that the additional cost would exceed in a few years £2000000. In a despatch of 2 February the Government of India re-emphasised the necessity of fixing the exchange by international agreement. In its opinion the fall was mainly due to speculation regarding the repeal or modification of the Bland Act² by America. It remarked: "The soundness of our estimates for 1886-87 depends not on the existing state of our finances, nor on the probable revenue of the coming year, nor on expenditure which we can control, but on the balance of political parties in regard to currency of a foreign and distant country."³ The Government of India expressed the view that it was not advisable to secure temporary relief by borrowing in England, as an addition to the

1 Tel. to Secretary of State, 12 Jan. 1886.

2 The Bland Act required the Secretary of the Treasury to purchase and coin each month not less than \$ 2000000 and not more than \$ 4000000 worth of silver bullion into standard silver dollars.

3 Fin. Des. from India, No. 45, 2 Feb. 1886.

gold debt of India would create further embarrassments. It urged the Home Government to take the initiative in promoting an international conference for the consideration of remedial measures.

Lord Randolph Churchill, then Secretary of State, concurred fully in the Government of India's proposals of 12 January, which was elaborated in its February despatch. In his letter to the Treasury, he remarked that a further taxation, which would be necessitated by the fall in exchange, would constitute a danger more political than financial. He pointed out that the financial difficulties of India had been caused by her position in relation to England inasmuch as all principal administrative offices and a large part of the army were in the hands of foreigners. Recommending the Government of India's proposals for the Treasury's consideration, he remarked: "The impatience of new taxation which would have to be borne wholly as a consequence of the foreign rule imposed on the country and virtually to meet additions to charges arising outside of the country, would constitute a political danger, the real magnitude of which it is to be feared is not at all appreciated by persons who have no knowledge of, or concern in, the Government of India, but which those responsible for that Government have long regarded as of the most serious order." ¹

¹ India Office to Treasury, 26. Jan. 1886.

The Government of India's letter of 2 February was also forwarded. The Treasury re-emphasised the arguments which it had advanced as far back as 1879. It argued that the loss sustained by the Government was more than counter-balanced by the increased wealth derived from the Indian export trade and that it was "impossible to regard this question exclusively from the point of view either of the Indian Exchequer or of the Anglo-Indian official without a corresponding regard to the general effect of the fall in the gold price of silver upon the trade and prosperity of the great mass of the population." As to the proposal for promoting an international agreement the Treasury stuck to the stand taken by the British Government at the International Monetary Conference of 1881 at Paris.¹ It remarked that the fixing of the relative value of gold and silver by such a method would involve departure from the "natural

1 "It has been the policy of this country to emancipate commercial transactions as far as possible from legal control, and to impose no unnecessary restrictions upon the interchange of commodities. To fix the relative value of gold and silver by law would be to enter upon a course directly at variance with this principle, and would be regarded as an arbitrary interference with a natural law, not justified by any pressing necessity...England would not herself take the initiative in making changes which would have the effect of disturbing a monetary system under which she has enjoyed much prosperity..." Report of C.W. Fremantle, 2 Dec. 1881, Parl. Papers, LIII (1882), 803. Fremantle was the British Government's delegate at the Paris Conference.

operation of economic laws". It impressed on the Government of India, as it had done in 1879, the necessity of curtailing expenditure.¹

In April 1886 the Secretary of State forwarded a scheme proposed by General Strachey, which provided for establishing a constant rate of exchange between the rupee and the sovereign by limiting the coinage of rupees.² In the Government of India's opinion the proposal meant the circulation of the rupee above its intrinsic value and would result in the substitution of a gold for the silver standard. It was not in favour of a scheme of currency under which the rupee would cease to be the representative of a definite quantity of silver. ^{Secondly,} It was doubtful whether a fixed rate of exchange could be maintained for some years. ^{Thirdly,} the closing of the mints to the free coinage of silver, it observed, would have an injurious effect on the silver market and might bring about a wide difference in the ratio between silver and gold as compared with the accepted ratio between the rupee and gold. ^{Fourthly,} owing to an upward tendency in the price of gold - and as the Government of India was inclined to believe that gold

1 Treasury to India Office, 31 May 1886.

2 Financial Des. to India, No. 115, 22 April 1886.

was appreciating - Indian trade would be seriously affected.¹

In a letter of September 1886 the Government of India replied to a number of points raised by the Treasury in opposition to its proposals. The Treasury's main arguments were: (1) whether it was possible to secure a stable ratio between gold and silver; (2) it was not proved that rise in the gold value of silver would be on the whole a gain to India; (3) the points raised in 1879 had not been adequately answered; (4) the difficulty could be met in great measure by the reduction of expenditure; (5) the Government of India had not stated the nature of the remedy it sought to apply. In its reply the Government of India dealt with these points in an effective manner.

The Government of India maintained that in 1881 it was within the power of the British Government to secure the adoption of a fixed ratio and that it was still within its power to secure the result. "It appears to us", the Government of India observed, "that if Her Majesty's Government abandoned the attitude of absolute reserve ... there would remain no obstacle to the establishment of international

1 Fin. Des. from India, No.222, 24 July 1886

agreement which could not be surmounted." It was of the opinion that the active and sympathetic intervention of Britain would "at any rate have the effect of mitigating existing evils, and removing grave grounds of apprehension as regards the future." With regard to the question of India's gains from the fall in exchange, the Government of India admitted that the decline had coincided with a large development of trade, but it remarked that instability in exchange had discouraged the investment of capital in India and introduced great uncertainty in such commercial transactions as involved the element of time. Referring to its proposals of 1878 to which the Treasury had objected in 1879, the Government of India observed that there was no analogy between them and those which had recently been suggested. While the proposals of 1878 aimed at a gold standard and sought to restrict the circulation of silver coin by means of a seigniorage so as to raise the ratio to 2s., and could have been effected by legislation in India, its recent proposals provided for the establishment of a stable ratio between gold and silver by an international agreement. Further, the scheme of 1878 would have the effect of raising the gold value of silver whereas the new proposals aimed at stability. So far as reduction in expenditure was concerned, it was of the opinion that considerations of India's security did not leave much scope for economy in expenditure and that further reduction was "unlikely to give us financial relief in any

degree commensurate with the magnitude of our difficulties; and that the contention that the alarming growth of expenditure in late years is that principal element in the unfavourable condition of Indian finances will not stand the test of examination." As to the Treasury's observation that the nature of international agreement had not been definitely indicated, the Government of India said that the end to be aimed at was a stable ratio and that the means for its attainment was a settlement between the countries interested in the question. "For the attainment of these ends", it observed, "we propose generally the utilisation of silver as currency to a greater extent than is the case at present, as well as an international agreement for the free coinage of silver and the making of both gold and silver coin a legal tender at a fixed ratio by a group of nations possessed of a metallic currency of sufficient extent to maintain that ratio permanently." According to these proposals the ratio was to be fixed by the nations which would undertake to coin both gold and silver freely at a ratio not lower than the average market rate of recent years and not higher than that of 1 to 15 $\frac{1}{2}$. In its own turn it was willing to undertake either to maintain the existing silver standard or to coin both silver and gold at the fixed ratio. It emphasised that the financial situation of India had become intolerable.¹

1 Fin. Des. from India, No. 277, 4 Sept. 1886.

It is clear from the above that the Government of India had abandoned its proposals of 1878 and was now strongly in favour of a bimetallic system. It is also clear that the British Government, enjoying as it did supremacy in international finance, was not willing to support the new proposals. In seeking to strengthen its case the Government of India, however, raised an argument with which one cannot agree. Its contention was that the difficulty was solely due to the fall in exchange. But we know that in 1885-86 and subsequent years an additional burden was placed on the Indian revenues on account of the enlargement of the army, the construction of defence works, the conquest of Burma and its pacification and later in the 'nineties' the expeditions on the north-west. These measures could not conceivably keep the expenditure at the old level. We conclude therefore that the difficulty caused by the fall in exchange was no doubt great but its severity would have been considerably less if the increase of expenditure had not taken place.

Meanwhile the Government of India adopted several measures to meet the increased expenditure. In 1886 an income-tax was levied on all non-agricultural incomes above Rs. 500, and in 1887 the salt-tax was raised from Rs. 2 to Rs. $2\frac{1}{2}$ per maund. In 1887-88 the Famine Insurance Fund was suspended; in 1889 it was reduced from $1\frac{1}{2}$ crores of rupees to one crore but was restored in the following year and again in 1895-96

it was reduced to one crore. The diversion of the Famine Fund to purposes for which originally it was not intended was strongly criticised by Indian leaders. The Local Governments were also required to make contributions to the Supreme Government and indeed the financial difficulty obliged the latter to interfere with the Provincial financial arrangements. All the above expedients adopted by the Government of India came in for strong criticism in Indian political circles.

The Gold and Silver Commission of 1886, which submitted its final report in 1888, too, was unable to suggest any definite solution for the currency question. Half the members expressed their opinion against the proposal that England should negotiate with other countries a treaty embodying a bi-metallic agreement. They said that departure from mono-metallism by her would be "a leap in the dark."¹ The other six were strongly in favour of a bi-metallic system to be established by international agreement, the essential features of which lay in the free coinage of metal into legal tender money, and the fixing of a ratio at which the coins of either metal were made available for the payment of all costs at the option of the debtor.²

1 Final Report of the Gold and Silver Commission (1888), Part II

2 Ibid., Part III.

A very important question relating to bi-metallism was the settlement of the ratio between gold and silver. In 1890 in a debate on bi-metallism W.H. Smith, First Lord of the Treasury, referred to this difficulty. Expressing his individual opinion, he said that a bi-metallic change would be dangerous.¹ Sir William Harcourt, a distinguished Liberal leader, observed that there would be difficulty in maintaining an agreement even if it was secured. He added that England, who had her own financial and commercial system, should not make it dependent upon an international settlement.²

From 1885 the decline in the gold value of the rupee was rapid, and except for a brief period in 1890-91 when the exchange rose to ls. 6d., the downward tendency continued until 1895. At the beginning of 1892 the Bengal Chamber of Commerce called the attention of the Government to the fluctuations in exchange and inquired what steps it would take in the event of the failure of the conference of Powers, which the United States had invited, and of her decision to abandon the purchase of silver.³ The Government of India asked the

1 Hansard's Indian Debates, 18 April 1890, 194, 198.

2 Ibid., 199-201.

3 Bengal Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of India (Fin. Dept.), 4 Feb. 1892, Report of the Indian Currency Committee (1893), 145.

Bengal chamber to make suggestions with these possibilities in view. The Chamber suggested that the ratio should be fixed by international agreement, but it also emphasised that if success was not likely to be secured the Government of India should take steps to introduce a gold standard.¹ In these views the Government of India concurred.

The Government of India called the Secretary of State's attention to the possibility of the cessation of the purchases of silver by the United States and urged him to consider the subject in all its bearings beforehand, lest they might be left with no time and silver might depress further.² Meanwhile, the Indian Currency Association, which was established in May 1892 under the presidency of James Mackay, President of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, carried on a vigorous agitation in favour of a gold standard at the rate of 1s.6d. to the rupee. Several meetings were held for this purpose. In its memorials the Association emphasised that since an international conference was not likely to succeed owing to England's indifference, the adoption of a gold standard remained the only alternative. Lord Lansdowne acknowledged the importance of the work done by the Association in a telegram of 3 February 1893 and in his speech of 26 January

1 Letter of 18 Feb. 1892.

2 Fin. Des. from India, No.68, 23 March 1892.

1893.¹ There is no doubt that its agitation strengthened the Government of India's case for closing the mints.

In June 1892 the Government of India urged that if it became evident that an International conference was not likely to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion and if a direct agreement between India and the U.S.A. was found to be unattainable, it should be allowed to close the mints at once and make arrangements for the introduction of a gold standard. In arriving at this decision it was influenced by the possibility that the United States might abandon silver, in which case its gold value might fall to any lower level. In support of its proposals the Government of India said: "We believe that public opinion in India is ripe for the adoption of decisive measures, that the stoppage of the free coinage of silver would be generally approved, and that we might safely count on receiving every reasonable assistance from the commercial and banking classes in the attempt to introduce a gold standard."² David Barbour, then Finance Member, was of the opinion that a final settlement of the question lay in the adoption of the system of double legal tender and suggested that the mints should not be closed until it became evident that the U.S.A. would not adopt the free coinage of silver.³

1 Progs. of the Leg. Council of India (1893), XXXII, 281.

2 Fin. Des. from India, No. 160, 21 June 1892.

3 Minute, 21 June 1892.

In August 1892 the Government of India again emphasised that a gold standard was the only remedy in default of a bi-metallic system which it had been demanding for about ten years, and remarked that "inaction involves at least as great risk and as much responsibility as would the undertaking of an enterprise even more hazardous than the introduction of a gold standard into India." It maintained that the existence of a common monetary standard in England and in India would facilitate both the import and export trade and encourage the flow of capital to India. Referring to the criticism that the change would appreciate gold, it argued that much force could not be attached to it unless it could be shown that there had already been an injurious appreciation of gold in Western countries, and added that India would be placed at a disadvantage if she was not allowed to introduce change until every country had supplied itself with the gold it required for that purpose. As a remedy against the chances of any disturbing effect on contracts and financial obligations, the Government of India was in favour of proposing a rate for the transfer from silver to gold which was not to be greatly different from the market value. So far as its proposals concerned deferred payments, it did express some doubt as to their expediency,

but added that if gold had proved a satisfactory standard of value in Europe, there was no reason why it should not be so in India. Finally, even if gold appreciated, India, with its proposed ratio of about 1 to 20, would, in its opinion, be in a better position to meet the situation than those countries which had adopted a gold standard at the old ratio of 1 to $15\frac{1}{2}$ or 16.¹

In a letter of 31 August 1892 Kimberley, the Secretary of State, expressed the view that the Government of India should be allowed a free hand in this question, but the freedom which he was willing to concede ruled out a bi-metallic settlement. His own predisposition was against tampering with the silver currency. He, however, confessed that in a question of such complication much weight could not be attached to his individual opinion. He added that the evils resulting from the fall in exchange were mainly three, namely, the loss sustained by Civil Servants in remitting money home, the loss of the Indian Government on its remittances, and inconvenience to trade.²

In November 1892 the Secretary of State sought the Government of India's opinion on Sir John Lubbock's proposal

1 Fin. Des. From India, No. 205, 2 Aug. 1892.

2 Kimberley to Gladstone, 31 Aug. 1892, Add.MSS., 44229, 34-36.

which provided for a high seigniorage on the coinage of silver or the imposition of an import duty on all silver imported into India. The Government of India expressed the view that the above measure would alleviate the financial difficulties for a time, but would afford no guarantee against depreciation in the future; and moreover they would indefinitely defer the complete solution.¹

The Government of India's proposals, as submitted in January 1893, were, first, to close the mints to the free coinage of silver, secondly, to retain the power of coining silver rupees on Government account, thirdly, to make English gold coins legal tender in India at a rate of not less than 13 1/3 rupees for one sovereign, that is, 1s.6d. per rupee, fourthly, to allow an interval of time to pass between the closure of the mints and any attempt being made to coin gold in India. The power to admit sovereigns, however, was to be put into force only in the case of necessity.²

1 Fin. Des. from India, No. 328, 7 Dec. 1892.

2 Tel. to Secretary of State, 22 Jan. 1893.

On receiving Landsdowne's telegram which contained his as well as Barbour's acceptance of the proposals of the Indian Currency Committee, Kimberley impressed upon Gladstone the necessity of taking an immediate decision. He pointed out that three courses were open. First, to do nothing, which, he said, was not possible in view of financial embarrassments. He remarked that the increase of taxation would be politically most dangerous, and the raising of the salt tax, besides being a "hateful expedient", would deprive the Indian Government of its only resource in emergency. Borrowing, he said, would give only momentary relief. The second course was, as Bertram Currie had advised,¹ to close the mints without fixing any ratio. Kimberley himself preferred this plan, saying that it was hazardous to fix 1s. 4d. in the uncertainty of the effect of closure. He further remarked that under Currie's plan things might settle themselves and no Government action might be required. The third plan, namely, the Herschell Committee's, he said, would reassure the

¹ Betram Currie, who was a member of the Currency Committee of 1893, said that he should have preferred to approve the proposals "without imposing the condition that the closing of the mints should be accompanied by an announcement that rupees will be coined in exchange for gold at the ratio of 1. 4d." Report (1893), 42.

minds of those who feared the effect on the Indian population of a great rise in exchange. He expressed the view that while Currie's plan was preferable on economic grounds, policy and convenience lent their support to the Committee's proposals. He, however, did not support Lord Herschell's proposal that the Home Government should wait until it had more certainty as to the policy of the United States. Kimberley emphasised that the public both at home and in India would be anxious to know the Government's opinion. Moreover, prolonged uncertainty, he said, would produce great disturbance in the money market and interfere with British trade. He therefore urged prompt action.¹

The Government of India accepted the modifications of the Herschell Committee as making some improvement on its original proposals. It also concurred in the opinion that the closing of the mints should be resorted to with the object of preventing a further fall rather than of raising the gold value of the rupee.² Lord Lansdowne observed that the Committee's scheme "is our scheme with the addition of safeguards and precautions" wisely conceived.³ The main proposals of the Committee

¹ Kimberley to Gladstone, 11 and 13 June 1893, Add. Mss., 44229, 92-94, 110.

² Tel. from Viceroy, 15 June 1893.

³ Progs. of the Leg. Council of India (1893), XXXII, 283.

provided, first, that the Indian mints were to be closed to the free coinage of silver with a view to the adoption of a gold standard, and, secondly, that the mints, though closed to the public, were to be used by the Government for the coinage of rupees in exchange for gold at a ratio to be then fixed. The Government treasuries were also to receive gold in satisfaction of public dues at the same ratio. The Committee was in favour of fixing the ratio at 1s. 4d. per rupee.¹

The act by which the Committee's proposals were put into effect was passed at a meeting of the Legislative Council at Simla on 26 June 1893. No Indian members were present, and among non-officials only James Mackay, who had been agitating for these changes, was present. The standing rules were suspended and the proceedings were finished at a single meeting. The entire procedure was such as to rule out any amendment of the proposals. Lord Lansdowne justified it on grounds of urgency, emphasising that prolonged discussion would be inadvisable. He supported the change by saying that "to leave matters as they were meant for the Government of India hopeless financial confusion; for the commerce of India a constant and ruinous impediment; for the

¹ Report of the Currency Committee (1893), paras., 155-56.

taxpayers of India the prospect of heavy and unpopular burdens; for the consumers of commodities a rise in the prices of the principal necessities of life; and for the country as a whole a fatal and stunting arrestation of its development". He further remarked that the Government had offered "this solution not as one which is ideally perfect, but as the best which can be devised".¹

The object of the Government in introducing this change was to establish a gold standard. It was also made clear that the Government did not seek to raise the value of the rupee but to prevent a further fall. For the "present" no attempt was to be made to fix the legal tender price for gold. The ratio, it was emphasised, was not permanent and was well within the limits of recent variations. The risks of the change were, however, recognised by the Herschell Committee. The fear of false coining, an injurious effect on Indian trade with silver-using countries and loss on hoarded uncoined silver were no doubt strong objections. Perhaps the most important interest that was bound to be adversely affected was the producing class which had been getting more money for its produce. David Barbour,

¹ Progs. of the Leg. Council of India (1893), XXXII,
279, 283, 286.

however, argued that the question "must be decided not with reference to any one consideration, or to a limited number of considerations, but after a careful examination of all the circumstances of the case, and that we must decide where the balance of advantage lies and act accordingly."¹

The principal reason for the closing of the mints was undoubtedly the serious financial situation with which the Government was confronted. Between 1891 and 1893 the condition was grave, and there was still greater apprehension as to what would follow might be worse.² The fluctuations were so rapid that they defied all forecasts. In a letter of May 1892 the Under-Secretary of State for India said that within a few weeks the Indian Government was liable to find itself exposed to the necessity of providing a sum greater

¹ Ibid., 275.

² The average rate per rupee at which Council Bills and Telegraphic Transfers were sold in London was 22.351 d. (1873-74), 21.626 d. (1875-76), 19.956 d. (1880-81), 19.536 d. (1883-84), 18.254 d. (1885-86), 16.898 d. (1887-88), 16.379 d. (1888-89), 18.089 d. (1890-91), 16.733 d. (1891-92), 14.985 d. (1892-93), 14.547 d. (1893-94), 13.101 d. (1894-95), 13.638 d. (1895-96), 14.451 d. (1896-97), 15.354 d. (1897-98). Report (1899), para. 63.

than the whole of its receipts from either of the various taxes including the increased duty on salt.¹ The fall in exchange compelled the Government in 1892-93 to find about eighty millions of more rupees than would have been required at the 1873 exchange rate.²

Besides the Government, the other important interest which was adversely affected by the decline in exchange was the powerful class of European Civil servants. Their pressure on the Government was very great and indeed it was believed that the decision of 1893 was considerably influenced by them. In a letter of August 1892 Lansdowne referred to the difficulty of civil servants, emphasising that as time went on men of that class might not like to enter the service and the incumbents might be tempted to take their pensions as soon as they could.³

The Act of 1893 was strongly criticised by Congress

¹ Letters to the Treasury, 13 May 1892.

² In 1892-93 India remitted a sum of Rx. 26, 478, 415 which at the exchange rate of 1873-74 (1s. 10.351 d.) would have been Rx. 17, 751, 920. Report (1893), para. 3.

³ Lansdowne to Kimberley, 23 Aug. 1892, quoted in Newton, op. cit., 103-4.

leaders. They maintained that the producing class had benefited from the fall. The Congress resolution of 1893 said that the Act had subjected the people to a further indirect taxation and disorganised some of the most important trades and industries.¹ In his evidence before the Herschell Committee Naoroji said that rise in exchange would compel the cultivator to part with more produce.² A number of other witnesses also expressed similar views. Sir Frank Forbes, former President of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce, said that on balance the fall had been "most beneficial" to the people of India. He suggested that it was desirable to develop Indian industries with Indian capital.³ Another witness William Fowler remarked that from the Indian point of view no other standard was needed.⁴

In order to appreciate the Government's standpoint certain things have to be borne in mind. First, the exchange position was serious and could not be left to the chances of an automatic adjustment. Secondly, in

¹ Resolution XIV of 1893.

² Minutes of Evidence. Q. 2418.

³ Ibid., Q. 1908.

⁴ Ibid., Q. 1594

view of the Home and Government's decided opinion against bimetallism, the Government of India had to fall back upon the adoption of a gold standard. Thirdly, the reduction of the Home charges, though an ideal solution, was hardly practicable since it involved major issues of policy in the determination of which power lay with the Home Government. If the currency system was not to be disturbed, further taxation was the only remedy. Among taxes, the imposition of duty on imports would have been, as the Herschell Committee pointed out, very popular but Lancashire's opposition presented an insurmountable obstacle¹, and indeed the entire proceedings of import duties during 1894-96 justified its apprehension. As regards the salt tax, even the Government was not inclined to raise it further. The Committee was not in favour of an increase in the income-tax on the grounds that it would produce political discontent among those who were capable of appreciating and criticising the Government.² Thus the Indian Government found itself

¹ Report, para. 39.

² Ibid., para. 41.

compelled to interfere with the currency system.

The approach of British politicians to this question was determined by the principles to which they adhered. In Parliament the Conservatives for the most part criticised the measure while the Liberals supported it. In some cases, however, belief in one or the other principle cut across party boundaries. The banking interests were in favour of monometallism and the industrialists supported bimetallism.

In Parliament A.J. Balfour denounced the decision of 26 June 1893 as a "financial crime".¹ Salisbury expressed the view that England should resume negotiations with the other nations of Europe.² Goschen, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Conservative Government, supported the proposal for the re-assembly of the Monetary Conference though, it must be noted, that in April 1890 he had not encouraged the holding of such a conference. Sir William Harcourt, Chancellor of the Exchequer, remarked with truth that the Conservatives, who were advocating the settlement of the question by international agreement, did not promote their scheme

¹ Indian Parl. Debates, 8 Aug. 1893, 563.

² Ibid., 19 Dec. 1893, 953.

when they were in office although the financial situation was quite serious.¹ Gladstone, the Prime Minister, was against a bimetallic system. In February 1893 he had said that an international agreement would involve great sacrifice on the part of England, which was the great creditor of the countries of the world and had created an unparalleled commercial fabric.²

In August 1893 the Government of India asked Lord Kimberley to settle certain preliminary matters relating to the coinage of gold, which, of course, was not to be undertaken for some time. It was in favour of striking a coin, specially Indian in character, and limited in circulation to India. It proposed that by a Proclamation issued under Section 11 (8) of the Act of 1870 the Indian mints should be declared branches of the Royal Mint only in respect of the coinage of sovereigns. The Government of India said that a separate act of Parliament would have been more convenient but it pointed to the difficulty of getting it passed.³ The Secretary of State observed that an

¹ Ibid., 18 Dec. 1893, 915.

² Ibid., 28 Feb. 1893, 94-95.

³ Fin. Des. from India, No. 270, 15 Aug. 1893.

act of Parliament would be essential if the gold coin of India was to be made sovereign and that there would be great opposition to the proposal unless the Indian Government had accumulated a reserve of gold. He added that it was premature to make an application to the Royal Mint for the tools and apparatus needed to undertake the coinage of gold.¹

It was not until 1896 that signs of recovery became evident. In November the Government of India proposed the alteration of the rate from 1s. 4d. to 1s. 3d. It remarked that the former rate was selected for two reasons: first, as the Herschell Committee pointed out, it was not much above that which was then prevailing, and, secondly, the object was to give substantial relief to the Government. The Government of India emphasised that the time was opportune for making the change because no sovereigns had been received. It intended to keep the gold, if received, either as part of its treasury balance, or preferably as part of the currency reserve. It expressed the view that the rate of 1s. 3d. would not cause inconvenience to it or to commerce. It was also

¹ Fin. Des. to India, No. 204, 12 Oct. 1893.

emphasised that the revised rate was not intended to be final.¹ In a telegram of 27 October the Government of India had stressed that the importation of gold in supplement of Council Bills seemed the only way of preventing a money famine.

The Secretary of State refused to accept the proposal. He remarked that it would be a mistake lightly to depart from the policy of 1893 and that it was not advisable to fix the rate at a lower figure when the public had been looking forward for nearly three and a half years to an exchange rate of 1s. 4d.²

In February 1897 the Government of India suggested certain changes in the notifications of 1893 relating to the reception of gold in the mints and treasuries. It remarked: "Our policy should therefore be to do everything we can, consistently with safety to ourselves, to encourage the importation of gold into India the moment that the rate of exchange makes it pay to import it". It recommended the removal of limitations under which gold coins could be received at the treasuries only in payment of sums due to the Government, and gold at the mints only "until further orders".

¹ Fin. Des. from India, No. 328, 4 Nov. 1896.

² Fin. Des. to India, No. 226, 17 Dec. 1896.

It was proposed that merchants and bankers who made arrangements to import gold should have an assurance that it would not be refused on arrival. Secondly, the Government should offer to receive gold coin in exchange for rupees without the qualification "until further orders". The removal of these limitations, the Government of India remarked, would be an important step towards the establishment of a gold standard.¹ The Secretary of State was not disposed to make any alterations unless some real necessity arose and some clear advantage was to be gained. In view of the uncertainty of the future action of America and other nations, and the serious disorganisation of Indian trade owing to the famine and plague he declined to make change.²

In a letter of 16 July 1897 Hamilton told Elgin that France and America were prepared to go very far towards adopting a bimetallic currency at the ratio of $15\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 and added that it would be a great relief if the intrinsic value of the rupee would rise to 1s. 6d.³ In a telegram of 19 July he expressed

¹ Fin. Des. from India, No. 49, 17 Feb. 1897.

² Fin. Des. to India, No. 96, 13 May 1897.

³ Hamilton to Elgin, 16 July 1897, Pr. Cor. Ind. ii, 341.

his willingness to accept their proposals if the offer was to hold good for a fixed term.¹ Lord Elgin, who mentioned them to Westland and Finlay², observed that a sudden rise in exchange would cause "unprecedented disaster" to Indian exports. Westland was of opinion that any direct advantage to Government finance would be more than counter-balanced by indirect injury resulting from trade depression, and that the combination of France and U.S.A. alone would not give adequate security for a stable agreement.³ On 23 July Hamilton asked Elgin whether he adhered to the opinions expressed by the Government of India in its despatch of 20 June 1892⁴. In reply to this Elgin said that the despatch did not propose any great advance in exchange and that the opinions then expressed were subject to modification resulting from the policy of 1893. He further remarked: "We do not admit that rise in the exchange is beneficial to India. ~~What~~ we aimed at both in 1892 and now is stability".⁵

¹ Tel. to Viceroy, 19 July 1897.

² James Westland was Finance Member and James Finlay was Finance Secretary.

³ Tel. from Viceroy, 21 July 1896.

⁴ Tel. to Viceroy, 23 July 1897.

⁵ Tel. from Viceroy, 26 July 1897.

Two members of the India Council, Crosthwaite and Mackay, were strongly in favour of accepting these proposals. Lord Lansdowne, former Viceroy of India, was also attracted by them. They said that if such proposals had been made in 1892-93 they would have been welcomed. Hamilton remarked that it was worth incurring the risk when compared with the enormous benefits likely to result from their adoption. He emphasised: "It is a great step - securing the cooperation of these two rich countries - towards the attainment of a general international bimetallic system".¹ A week later he endorsed the Government of India's view that a sudden rise in exchange might cause a great disturbance in the money market.² In a despatch of 5 August he referred to the Government of India's demand for an international settlement which it abandoned only when it failed to secure it.³ On 12 August he said that even if India reopened her mints she should reopen them to silver alone so that

¹ Hamilton to Elgin, 23 July 1897, Pr. Cor. Ind., ii, 348.

² Hamilton to Elgin, 30 July 1897, Pr. Cor. Ind., ii, 359.

³ Fin. Des. to India, No. 129, 5 Aug. 1897.

if the experiment failed she should be free to adopt any course.¹

The above correspondence took place in response to the inquiry made by France and the U.S.A. as to whether India would open her mints if they opened their mints to the free coinage of silver and gold at a ratio of $15\frac{1}{2}$ to 1. The Government of India advanced a number of arguments against the reopening of mints. It was not prepared to support a settlement which Great Britain refused to join. It argued that a settlement between three countries would have too narrow a basis and was different from its earlier proposals for an international agreement. It emphasised that the frequent changes of ministry in France and the dependence for their continuance of fiscal arrangements on the chances of a party triumph in the U.S.A. would make the settlement uncertain. It indicated that the break-down of the agreement would be extremely injurious, and added that the difficulties of Indian exchange were nearly over and a stable rate of 1s. 4d. was well within sight. It also emphasised, as it had done in its telegram of 21 July, that a sudden rise in exchange would paralyse Indian trade and industry. It concluded by saying:

¹ Hamilton Elgin, 12 Aug. 1897, Pr. Cor. Ind., ii, 391.

"Our unanimous and decided opinion is that, it would be most unwise to reopen the mints as part of the proposed arrangements, especially at a time when we are to all appearances approaching the attainment of stability in exchange by the operation of our own isolated and independent action".¹

The Secretary of State agreed with the views of the Government of India. The Treasury also concurred in them. As a result the proposals of France and the U.S.A. fell through.²

In November 1897 Elgin said that there were only two ^{ways} alternatives ~~of the establishment~~ of a gold standard, one was to wait till sufficient gold had accumulated in the treasuries at 1s. 4d. to the rupee, the other was to hasten the process by a direct purchase of gold. The objection to the first proposal that the date of accumulation was most indefinite. As regards the second, Finlay, then Finance Secretary, was of opinion that the purchase of gold, except on the condition that the Imperial Government was

¹Fin. Des. from India, No. 261, 16 Sept. 1897.

²India Office to Treasury, 13 Oct. 1897; Treasury to Foreign Office, 16 Oct. 1897, Encls. to Fin. Des. to India, No. 218, 23 Dec. 1897.

to assist the operation, would spell ruin to India.¹ Hamilton preferred to postpone the enunciation of any definite scheme, remarking that the knowledge that such a measure was in immediate contemplation would make the bimetallists more virulent in their attacks in Parliament.² In March 1898 he emphasised that the Government of India should not publicly commit itself to any one definite scheme and content itself with general argument on the advisability of a gold standard for India.³

In 1893, when the mints were closed, the rupee stock was abundant, but in a few years superfluity gave place to stringency. In 1898 to afford a means of relief to the severe stringency then prevailing in the Indian money market, an act was passed, empowering the Government of India to direct by order the issue of currency notes on the security of gold received in England by the Secretary of State. A notification of 21 January announced that notes would be issued in exchange for gold held by the Secretary

¹ Elgin to Hamilton, 11 Nov. 1897, Pr. Cor. Ind., VII, 249.

² Hamilton to Elgin, 3 Dec. 1897, Pr. Cor. Ind., iii, 28A.

³ Tel. to Viceroy, 14 March 1898.

of State at the rate of one rupee for 7.53344 grains of fine gold. Under this notification, the Secretary of State in Council gave notice of his readiness "to sell until further notice, telegraphic transfers on Calcutta, Madras and Bombay at a rate not exceeding 1s. $4\frac{5}{32}$ d. for the rupee".¹

In March 1898 the Government of India strongly urged the Secretary of State to terminate the period of transition by taking active steps to secure the early establishment of a gold standard. Its main proposals were, first, to reduce the rupee circulation, and, secondly, to obtain a reserve of actual gold coin by borrowing in England. The Government of India suggested that the Secretary of State should be empowered by legislation to borrow **up** to a maximum of £20,000,000 for the purpose of establishing a gold standard and that, as soon as the statute was passed, £5,000,000 in gold should be shipped to India. Thus its plan provided for facilitating the flow of gold into India by creating scarcity in the amount of silver coin. The Government of India, however, made it clear that it did not contemplate the actual issue of gold coins, either

¹ Report of the Indian Currency Committee (1899),
para. 15.

for treasury purposes or in payment of currency notes, until the measures resulted in the establishment of the value of the rupee at 1s. 4d. and the use of sovereigns, however small, as a permanent part of the circulation.¹

To the Government of India the principles of its currency policy were no longer at issue. Remarking on the suggestion of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce that the whole subject of the Gold Standard versus the Silver Standard should be reopened, it emphasised that the question of principle had been settled.² A week earlier, referring to the protest of the United Planters' Association of Southern India, which had suggested that the mints should be reopened, it had remarked that the adoption of its policy should not be prevented by the fact of the previous system being advantageous in certain exceptional cases.³

Evidently the Government of India's proposals were intended to bring to completion the policy which was initiated in 1893. Hamilton said that since

¹ Fin. Des. from India, No. 70, 3 March 1898.

² Fin. Des. from India, No. 92, 24 March 1898.

³ Fin. Des. from India, No. 79, 17 March 1898.

the proposals involved important issues, a final decision could only be arrived at after a thorough investigation. The question was referred to a committee presided over by Sir Henry Fowler.¹

¹ Hamilton experienced some difficulty in forming the Committee. He said that a number of interests, namely, the exporter for India, the bimetallicists, and Lombard Street were arrayed against the Indian proposals. In May 1898 he wrote that pressure was being brought to bear on him by certain prominent bankers and directors of the Bank of England, who urged him to enlarge the Committee by including their representatives. He also remarked that Lombard Street would resolutely oppose any proposals likely to cause a further demand for gold.

David Barbour was included in the Committee though he had bimetallic proclivities. Hamilton argued that the Government might get his support if he was a member, whereas it would get his criticisms if he was excluded.

As regards the appointment of Indian witnesses, Hamilton was against the selection of Congressmen. He said that this would give them an opportunity to repeat before a public tribunal the "trash about India being bled to death". He further remarked that the "witnesses are required more for show than for the value or novelty of their opinions". In September 1898 Elgin said there would be difficulty in finding any other than a Congress politician to undertake a journey. He also observed that those who had the knowledge of currency could not speak well, and those who had no knowledge could express themselves well.*

* Hamilton to Elgin, 20 May 1898, Pr. Cor. Ind., iii, 337; 30 Aug. 1898, iii, 425; 22 Sept. 1898, iii, 442, Elgin to Hamilton, 13 Oct. 1898, Pr. Cor. Ind., XII, 174; 8 Sept. 1898, XII, 109.

Elgin suggested that the Currency Committees should be asked solely to consider the best means of establishing a gold standard. Hamilton remarked that in view of the diversity of interests to be reconciled, it would be unwise to restrict the limits of inquiry. He, however, agreed to make it clear that neither the Home nor the Indian Government had any intention of reopening the mints.¹

The position in 1898 was that the exchange rate was nearly the same as that fixed in 1893. Secondly, gold was not a legal tender though the Government was prepared to receive it in the payment of public dues. Thirdly, the rupee remained by law the only coin in which payments other than small ones could be made. Fourthly, there was no legal relation between rupees and gold.²

The Fowler Committee concurred with the Government of India in the decision not to revert to the silver standard and recommended the establishment of a gold standard without delay at 16d. to the rupee. However, it did not accept the Government of India's proposals for reducing the volume of the currency,

¹ Tel. from Viceroy, 26 March 1898; Tel. from Secretary of State, 28 March 1898.

² Report of the Indian Currency Committee (1899), para. 16.

being of opinion that such a step might aggravate stringency in the Indian money market. Replying to those who favoured the unrestricted coinage of silver on the grounds that a low exchange encouraged the export trade, the Committee observed that "as regards the ultimate levels of beneficial fall, we have failed to discover at which precise point, if at all, the advocates of this view would hold that the alleged advantages of a falling exchange cease".¹ It expressed its opinion in favour of making the British sovereign a legal tender and a current coin in India, and also suggested that the Indian mints should be thrown open to the unrestricted coinage of gold. Further, the exclusive right to coin fresh rupees was to remain vested in the Government of India.² In short, the Committee recommended "the effective establishment in India of a gold standard and currency based on the free inflow and outflow of gold".³

So far as the rate of exchange was concerned, the majority of the members supported the 16d. rate of the Herschell Committee. Two members of the Committee, Robert Campbell and John Muir criticised the above

¹ Ibid., para. 28.

² Ibid., para. 60.

³ Ibid., para. 54.

rate as "an excessive, arbitrary enhancement." They remarked: "It can never be sound policy to handicap native industry while giving a bounty to foreign exports, and in the case of India with large foreign obligations, which can only be met by surplus exports of produce, it would be fatal course to pursue".¹ W.H. Holland, a member of the Committee, was of opinion that the permanent rate should be fixed in the light of further experience.²

The Committee argued that if the rate of 15d. was to be fixed in order to benefit the Indian exporters, the same argument would justify a further reduction to a lower figure. In reply to the argument that the rate of 15d. would have been in conformity with the rate prevailing in 1893, it observed that if the mints had been closed a few years earlier the permanent rate would have been fixed at a considerably higher point and if they had been closed a few years later it would have been lower than 15d. The Committee remarked: "The experience gained since the mints were closed in 1893, and particularly that of the last eighteen months, appear to us to justify

1 Ibid., 23-26.

2 Ibid., 22.

the anticipation that the existing rate of 1s. 4d. will, with possible temporary fluctuations, due to the course of trade, be maintained in the future".¹

The currency policy of the Government of India since 1893 had been a subject of strong criticism by the Congress. Its Resolution IV of 1899 said that "The decision accepted by the Government will in effect add to the indebtedness of the poorer classes in India, depreciate the value of their savings in the shape of silver ornaments, and virtually add to their rents and taxes". In a letter of July 1898 submitted to the Currency Committee, Dadabhai Naoroji asked for the free coinage of silver. He was of opinion that the reduction of high salaries, a large proportion of Indians in the administration, and the contribution by England of a fair share of military expenditure would solve the problem of India's gold payments.² Suffice it to say that the Government was not prepared to accept these suggestions.

The recommendations of the Fowler Committee were intended to place the arrangements of 1893 on a permanent basis. The Committee found its hands

¹ Ibid., paras. 68-69.

² Ibid., App. I, 51.

strengthened by favourable circumstances. Soon after its appointment the rupee had reached the rate of 16d. In 1898-99 the Government of India had been able to accumulate a gold reserve of £2,378,609. Under its proposals, which were accepted by the Secretary of State, gold coins and rupees were made unlimited legal tender. The Committee envisaged the ultimate establishment not merely of a gold standard but also of a gold currency in active circulation. The rate of 16d., except for one temporary fall during 1907-8, was maintained.

The Indian Currency Act of 1899 made the sovereign and half-sovereign legal tender at Rs. 15 and Rs. 7½ respectively, but, as the Chamberlain Commission pointed out in 1914, it did nothing to prevent the rupee from falling below 16d.¹ As regards the opening of the mint for the coinage of gold in India, the scheme was dropped after nearing completion in 1902. Though gold coins were made legal tender, the public continued to demand rupees.² The Government of India made an active

¹ Report of the Royal Commission on Indian Finance and Currency, para. 21, Cd. 7236 (1914).

² On 11 April 1900 the Calcutta Currency Office refused to give rupees in the encashment of currency notes of three lakhs of rupees and was closed before the proper time because it had no rupees in hand to meet the current requirements of the general public. This failure was accompanied by the failure of the Treasuries at Cawnpore and elsewhere in the N.W.P. Fin. Des. from India, No. 302, 6 Sept. 1900.

effort to induce the people to use sovereigns. The Currency Offices, the Post Offices and other institutions under Government control were instructed to offer sovereigns, but the results were unsatisfactory. Many of the gold coins soon made their way back into Government hands. In these circumstances the Government of India resumed the coinage of silver on a considerable scale. The Chamberlain Commission remarked that the "difficulties of the Government since 1899 had been, not in the direction of keeping exchange up to 1s. 4d., but in providing sufficient rupees to meet the demands of the public, which continued to demand rupees rather than gold".¹ Thus the currency system did not develop on the lines proposed by the Fowler Committee.²

Viewed from the Government of India's standpoint - and this is a very important aspect of the currency question - the arrangements of 1893 worked on the whole well. They proved effectual in preventing the fall of the rupee. For ten years (1885-95) the Indian Government had been in the grip of serious financial difficulty. The choice before it was between

¹ Report of the Royal Commission (1914), para. 29.

² Ibid., para. 50.

further taxation and the adoption of a gold standard and it chose the latter. It is interesting to note that it was so much concerned to arrest the fall in exchange that in framing the currency system ~~that~~ it took no account of the contingency of preventing a great rise in the value of silver.¹

Thus the currency question was one of the most important problems with which the Government of India was confronted in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The trouble began in 1873 and became acute between 1885 and 1895. The Government of India proposed first a gold standard in 1875 but, after its rejection by the Home Government, it pressed for the establishment of a bimetallic system by international agreement and continued to do so until 1892. In 1893 the mints were closed but the closure did not bring about an immediate recovery. In 1896 the situation improved and at the time of the Fowler Committee's inquiry the rate reached the point fixed by the Herschell Committee. In 1899 steps were taken to establish a gold standard with a gold currency. When it was found that there was no demand for gold coins the experiment of forcing a gold currency was abandoned in 1902.

¹ Report of Committee on Indian Exchange and Currency (1919), para. 33.

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I. Unpublished Documents

(Centre Commonwealth-Relations Office, India Home Dept.)

The unpublished documents consist of despatches from and to India, proceedings of the Government of India, selections from the Secretary of State's despatches which also include enclosures, and the minutes of dissent by members of the India Council. In the preparation of this work despatches and proceedings (1885-1898) relating to the Public, Military, and Finance and Commerce Departments have been used. A number of confidential military letters from the Government of India, which were then retained in the Political and Secret Department, could not be traced. It is difficult to say whether or not they deal with the topics discussed in the chapter on Military Policy.

A very valuable source of information is the private correspondence between Lord Hamilton and Lord Elgin and his successor Lord Curzon. There are in all 35 volumes, of which one volume contains telegrams exchanged between the two authorities during 1895-99, 8 volumes are from Hamilton to Elgin and Curzon, of which 3 are addressed to Elgin, and 12 volumes are from Elgin to Hamilton, and 14 volumes from Curzon to Hamilton. Being of a semi-official character, the letters throw a good deal of light on many aspects of policy which could not have been discussed so freely in purely official papers. The documents were presented to the India Office two years ago. The pagination is defective at places.

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Abbreviations

App.	Appendix
Des.	Despatch
Dict.	Dictionary
Ed.	Educational
Fin.	Financial
H.D.	Home Department
I.N.C.	Indian National Congress
Jud.	Judicial
Leg. Memo	Legislative Memorandum
Mil.	Military
M/C Report	Montagu-Chelmsford Report
N.W.P.	North-Western Provinces
Parl.	Parliamentary
Pr. Cor. Ind.	Private Correspondence India
Progs.	Proceedings
Pub.	Public
P.S.C.	Public Service Commission