

THE GROWTH OF PUBLIC OPINION
IN THE
MADRAS PRESIDENCY
(1858 - 1909)

D. SADASIVAN



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By

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Thesis approved for M. Litt Degree, 1964.

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PRINTED AT

The Manorama Press, Madras-600014.

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P R E F A C E

This thesis, "The Growth of Public Opinion in the Madras Presidency from 1858 to 1909" is the outcome of research carried on under the supervision of Prof. T. K. Venkataraman, M.A., L.T., (Professor and Head of the Department of History, Pachaiyappa's College, Madras, now retired). The Period 1858 - 1909 marks a significant stage in the evolution of Public Opinion which later was to serve as an effective weapon of strength in the struggle for freedom. But a study of this stage had not been properly undertaken till now and this has prompted the author of this thesis to explore what had been practically untrodden ground.

The subject matter presented in this thesis has been classified and presented under different heads like political, economic and social. But this division has been only for purposes of convenient study. The writer is fully aware that History is one and indivisible and that all facets of historical material are intermingled in one pattern.

Source materials for the study of Public Opinion in this period are necessarily not so abundant as they are for later periods. The writer had recourse to such materials as were available to him from the Tamil Nadu Archives like despatches sent by the Madras Government to Home Authorities, correspondence between the Government of Madras and higher authorities, memoranda and petitions submitted to the Government of Madras and other higher authorities by individuals and associations as well as press reports. He has also studied literature concerning political developments of this period as contained in periodicals and proceedings of public organisations like the Indian National Congress. He has also profited by a study made by other writers of the evolution and working of

public opinion in other countries. A detailed bibliography is given at the end of the thesis.

I express my profound gratitude to the Vice-Chancellor, Padma Sri N. D. Sundaravadivelu and the Syndicate of the University of Madras for permitting the publication of the work in the University Historical Series. I trust that it would be found useful by all those interested in the subject and students of Sociology, Journalism & History, etc.

I would like to express my deep sense of thanks to Professor T. K. Venkataraman, Professor and Head of the Department of History, Pachaiyappa's College, Madras (Retd.) for his valuable suggestions. I am grateful to Dr. V. Shanmugasundaram, Professor and Head of the Department of Economics, University of Madras and to Thiru C. E. Ramachandran, Reader-in-charge, of Indian History Department, University of Madras, for the great encouragement given to me in bringing out this publication expeditiously particularly to Dr. V. Shanmugasundaram who took special interest in my endeavour. I also acknowledge my indebtedness to the officials of the Tamil Nadu Archives for their kind co-operation in the collection of materials for the book.

Finally I must not fail to acknowledge with thanks the assistance rendered by Thiru Siruvai Mohanasundaram in proof corrections and indexing, to Messrs. Manorama Press for printing this work expeditiously.

D. SADASIVAN

15th July, 74,
Madras.

INTRODUCTION

THIS period is an epoch-making period in the history of India, because the demand for self-government began during this period. Though public opinion has been in existence in India from early times, an organised form of expressing public opinion was conspicuously absent until recent times. It began only between 1858 and 1909, the period under study.

It may be useful to set forth in this introduction the meaning and scope of public opinion.

What is conveyed by the expression "Public Opinion" is fairly understood. But the term "Public Opinion," itself, is somewhat nebulous and may lend itself to a variety of interpretations. Many authors have tried to define the expression "Public Opinion."

Walter Lippmann defines it thus: "Those features of the world outside which have to do with the behaviour of other human beings, in so far as that behaviour crosses ours, is dependent upon us, or is interesting to us, we call roughly public affairs. The pictures inside the heads of these human beings, the pictures of themselves, of others, of their needs, purposes and relationship are their public opinions. Those pictures which are acted upon by groups of people, or by individuals acting in the name of groups, are Public Opinion with capital letters."¹

A more elaborate and detailed definition is given by Lord Bryce. "The term—Public Opinion—is commonly used to denote the aggregate of the views men hold regarding matters that affect or interest the community. Thus understood, it is a congeries of all sorts of discrepant notions, beliefs, fancies, prejudices, aspirations. It is confused, incoherent, amorphous, varying from day to day and week to week. But, in the midst of this diversity and confusion every question as it rises into importance is subjected to a process of consolidation and clarification, until there emerge and

1. Public Opinion—P. 29.

take definite shape certain views, each held and advocated in common by bodies of citizens. It is to the power exerted by any such view, or set of views, when held by an apparent majority of citizens, that we refer when we talk of public opinion as approving or disapproving a certain doctrine or proposal, and thereby becoming a guiding or ruling power. Or we may think of the opinion of a whole nation as made up of different currents of sentiment, each embodying or supporting a view or a doctrine or a practical proposal. Some currents develop more strength than others, because they have behind them larger numbers or more intensity of conviction; and when one is evidently the strongest, it begins to be called public opinion "*par excellence*", being taken to embody the views supposed to be held by the bulk of the people."²

This long quotation brings out in clear language the essentials of what we term "Public Opinion."

There are two types of public opinion-static and dynamic. The static type, which need not necessarily convey the idea of rigidity, manifests itself in the form of traditional customs, and usages and bears the same relation to the dynamic as costume does to fashion or customary laws to parliamentary enactments. Public opinion, in its modern dynamic form, on the other hand, being predominantly rational in character, is built upon the cultivated arts of persuasion and systematic publicity and draws upon definite historical events or contemporary happenings as the material for its propaganda and agitation. The preponderance of the one or the other of these two types of public opinion is determined by the larger social and economic relationships prevailing at a particular period. Generally speaking, the static form is found in most agrarian societies and those based on barter economy. Whereas the dynamic type of public opinion flourishes in the crowded streets and squares of the city, where the life of the masses unfolds under the pressure of common intercourse and exchange of opinion during the daily routine of association.

W. Phillips Davison illustrates the process of the development of the dynamic type of public opinion in the modern sophisticated society. His imaginary town is a community of some 30,000 persons, situated in a predominantly agricultural region. It serves as the market place for a wide area and has a relatively large population of small business men and white collar workers. It also has a few small factories and a junior college. The city is governed by a Mayor who was returned at the last election,

2. Lord Bryce-Modern Democracies-Volume II-Chapter XV. P. 173.

in which the principal issue was a proposed sales tax. The Mayor successfully opposed this tax, and the issue is now less controversial.

But, one day a new factor is injected into the political life of the town. Mr. Jones, who runs a dry goods store on Main Street, receives a notice that the value of his residence has been re-assessed. From now on, he will have to pay almost half as much again in real estate tax as he has paid in previous years. He hurries down to the assessor's office to protest, but receives no satisfaction. He complains loud and long to his wife, his brother-in-law, his neighbours and his friends on Main Street. The valuation of his property, he says, is way out of line with that of similar properties in the neighbourhood.

As it happens, Mr. Jones is a popular man. He has many friends and is not known as one who constantly complains or makes hasty judgement. When he discusses his grievance against the city government with others, some of them remember grievances of their own: one has been treated inconsiderably by municipal employees, another has had difficulties with trash collection, a third dislikes the Mayor personally because of a family squabble several years ago. The mental processes of all these inter-act in these discussions and a generalised picture of mal-administration is build up. Soon, one cannot mention the city government in the circle frequented by Mr. Jones without eliciting the opinion that it is time for a change in the city hall. A political issue has arisen.³

It is common knowledge that every one is labouring under some grievances or is entertaining some ideas for improving his society, but, most of these feelings die away after expression in mutterings or casual conversations. "An issue begins to take root only when it is communicated from one person to a second, who then carries it further in his own conversation. Most potential issues disappear from attention before this human chain grows to an appreciable length; but, the few that survive from the basis for public opinions."⁴

An issue which eventually looms large in public opinion, invariably, fails to attract the attention of historians or journalists in its formative stage and therefore the process of the development of public opinion is usually buried in obscurity. Students of Public Opinion ordinarily give attention to issues only after they have fully developed into definite expressions of public opinion. Impor-

3. Phillips Davison-The Public Opinion Process-The American Review. January 1961 PP.S. 7-8

4. Ibid—Page 7.

tant ideas, often appear independently at various times and places and this also explains why the students of public opinion are at a loss to assess properly its growth. But, whatever might be the basis for its origin, it is clear that, in order to survive and spread, it must find one or more human groups that are hospitable to its receipt and transmission.

It is profitable, at this stage, to trace the historical evolution of the term "Public Opinion." This term came to be coined only in the late eighteenth century.⁵ Still, a number of approximate equivalents may be traced to much earlier periods. The Greek Terms "ossa, PHEME or NOMOS" were used to represent Public Opinion. The Romans similarly had the terms "fama, fama Popularis, rumore and vox populi." At the beginning of the modern period, Machiavelli called attention to the force of "Publica Voce, efama and Shakespeare's Henry IV in apostrophizing "Opinion," if not the temper, of the eighteenth century revolutionists."⁶

The civil struggle in 17th century England saw the first step in clarifying the nature and function of public opinion in its modern meaning. From England, the concept spread during the eighteenth century to France. On the eve of the French Revolution, the term "Opinion Publique" began to gain currency when it gradually found its way not only throughout France but into the most treasured rhetoric of virtually all Western nations.⁷

Can we say that we witness a similar development in India? It seems to be manifest that this general dictum may not be wholly applicable as far as India is concerned. In the growth of public opinion, either in India as a whole or in any part thereof, one important aspect that has got to be borne in mind was the peculiar political condition of India. India was under foreign administrators who were totally strange to her soil and society. This fact in no small measure influenced the very nature of public opinion. Customs and conventions played an equally important role in moulding public opinion, especially when the foreign missionaries attempted to tamper with the age-long faiths and customs of India. This important factor had differentiated conditions in India from those in Western countries and this vital difference has been consciously stressed throughout this narration.

5. Ibid—Edwin R. A. Seligman, Ed.—Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences Volumes XI and XII — Page 671.

6. Ibid,

7. Ibid.

Public opinion can be expressed through a number of channels. Those channels can broadly be distinguished into organised and unorganised ones. The organised channels may be sub-divided as constitutional and unconstitutional. Where the organised stream of public opinion flows along channels permitted by law, such expression may be called constitutional. But, it is conceivable that public opinion may flow in a direction not recognised by law and sometimes in open or indirect opposition to the law as it stands. In such cases, such expression of public opinion may be deemed unconstitutional. When using these terms – “Constitutional” and “Unconstitutional” — no attempt is made here to commend or disapprove of such expressions of public opinion. These terms are used only in their strict literal meaning.

The chief constitutional media for expression of public opinion constitute personal representation to authorities, public meetings, associations, processions, the press, books and pamphlets, petitions, legislatures and local-bodies and trade unions.

It is conceivable that in a society which is practically immature and authority is vested in a monarch as was the case in many of the Indian states ruled by Indian princes in the past as well as under the period of British ascendancy, a particular individual may assume unto himself the role of interpreter of the opinion of the people on a particular issue. Such personal representation particularly by distinguished religious leaders or poets⁸ played a useful part in the past. In modern days, when methods of political or social agitation have become familiar, groups of people holding an identical view on a particular matter may form an organisation, with its own office bearers. Such association will discuss current issues, pass resolutions and convey them to the higher authorities in the form of resolutions or embodied in a memorandum or petition. The association may also depute some of its members to present its viewpoint before the higher authorities.

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8. An example is found in the poem of Pisiranthiar who was a poet of the Pandian Kingdom. Arivudainanibi, the ruler was a contemporary of Kopperun Chola. This ruler oppressed the people by collecting heavy taxes. Even his officials feared to call attention to the evil effects of his action, and simply followed the lead of the king. To use the figure of speech employed by the poet, they acted like the grass abutting a water course which bows and bends according to the course of the current. The elders of the community sought the services of the poet, Pisiranthiar, to bring the ruler to an understanding of what his people felt. The poet was himself satisfied that the king was wrong and fully realised that he should take up the role of the mouthpiece of the aggrieved people.

A public meeting is not so organised as a public association. It is summoned when a number of people keenly feel the urgency of expressing their views on a particular matter so as to force the Government or the community to consider their stand point. Such a public meeting can also pass resolutions or send deputations. When the leader of a particular group wants a greater advertisement for the views of his group and wants to enlist popular support, a procession is arranged with the shouting of slogans, and an extreme example of this was the parades held by the Facists and Nazis in Europe. The growth of newspapers has been relatively a modern phenomenon, but in point of importance, the role of the press has been one of greater significance. It is possible that a particular newspaper may be owned by a particular individual or group and may serve to air a particular point of view held by an individual or group. But, in the long run, any newspaper, which runs counter to the general trend of public opinion, is bound to have a short life. A particular example in our own country is *New India* — a newspaper edited by Mrs. Annie Besant, which enjoyed phenomenal popularity when Mrs. Annie Besant was leading the Home Rule agitation, but which died a natural death when her "views" fell out of tune with those of the general public. The importance of books and pamphlets also cannot be underrated. The French Revolution would not have run the course it did, had it not been for the impact of Rousseau's *Social Contract*. A study of 18th century England is bound to reveal the important part played in politics by writers of pamphlets like Swift, Addison and Steel.

The part played by legislature and local-bodies in the expression of public opinion is quite familiar to us. A group of labourers forming a trade union may express opinions held by labourers on a particular issue and, in most modern countries, the activities of trade unions are legalised by law.

He met the ruler and the ruler who had heard of the fame of the poet, welcomed him. The poet, in a verse, drew the king's attention to the grievances of the people and ultimately succeeded in removing them. The idea expressed by him in this verse may be summed up thus: "An elephant can be fed for a longer period if it is fed with the harvested crop, than by allowing it to graze in the field itself because the loss of crop caused by its movements in the field would be greater than what actually had been consumed by it. Likewise, if a ruler collects the taxes with proper care and justice, his revenue would last long and this method of collection also would be beneficial to both the rule and the ruled. If he collects the taxes without any sense of justice by oppressing the people, it would be like allowing the elephant to roam in the field itself. Neither could he have enough of revenue collected nor could his country be prosperous."

Terrorism like political murders, passing on secret messages including rumours, sabotage, satyagraha, may be considered as unconstitutional channels of expression of public opinion as also mob-violence. The reprehensible method of political assassination was practised in countries like Ireland and Tsarist Russia, because normal and constitutional methods for the expression of public opinion were not available. An example of a rumour spreading among the masses of the population and influencing action was the rumour of cartridges being greased with the fat of cows and pigs which had a great deal to do with the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny of 1857. Passing of secret messages could equally influence the people as could be seen from the following example. Prior to the outbreak of the Mutiny of 1857, the lotus, the ancient symbol of India, was carried from hand to hand amongst the sepoys and it was the duty of the sepoy who received it last to convey it to the nearest battalion where this process was repeated. This symbol was used to call on the sepoys to revolt. In the same way, the *chapati* was used to convey a similar message among the civilian population. The Chaukidar of one village carried it to the chaukidar of neighbouring village who circulated it amongst the inhabitants of the village and, then, this village, in its turn, sent the *chapati* to the neighbouring village. While the choice of the lotus is understandable, why the *chapati* was used is still shrouded in mystery. It may have been used as symbolising that, unless they revolted, they were in danger of being deprived of their food. Satyagraha, as a moral weapon to resist authority, was known even in ancient India. A puranic reference to this passive method of resistance is the familiar story of Prahalada. But, it was Mahatma Gandhi who employed it for the first time in the history of the world as an organised "non-violent resistance" to what was regarded by him as an evil. This "Passive resistance" or "Satyagraha" implies, as observed by Prof. T. K. Venkataraman, "that the resister disobeys what he considers as an unjust law and is prepared to undergo any penalty for his action. He refrains from violence in speech and action and even in thought, for he bears no malice against those who punish him, but tries to move their mind and convert them by his willingness to endure any suffering for his cause."⁹

A rigid and clear cut demarcation is, however, impossible between these various channels of expression of public opinion. An organised method of expressing public opinion may, sometimes, include unorganised methods like mob-violence. In the same way, an unorganised method of expressing public opinion may, some times, include an organised form like submitting petitions to the

9. T. K. Venkataraman—The Manual of Indian History -- Volume II, P. 272.

authorities. Likewise, underground propaganda, instead of being inarticulate and nebulous, may be directed by a master mind into an organised underground form of secret societies.

Before we trace the growth of public opinion in the Madras Presidency" from 1858 to 1909, it is necessary to define the features of the Madras Presidency of this period. The term "Madras Presidency" was applied to certain areas in South India which passed to the British through historical causes, in course of time and its basic formation was completed by the beginning of the 19th century. Before that, the East India Company's possessions were confined to the Northern Sarkars, the Jagir of Chingleput District and a number of isolated "factories" along the coast. At the close of the war with Tipu in 1792, the Company obtained a large portion of his kingdom including Malabar, Salem and parts of Dindigul. By the close of the Mysore wars in 1799, there was another considerable accession of territory, comprising Coimbatore, Canara and Wynad, while the administration of Tanjore was taken over from the Raja. In 1800, the Nizam of Haidarabad relinquished to the British the districts of Cuddapah, Bellary and Kurnool generally known as the Ceded Districts. Next year the Nawab of Karnatak was relieved of his territories and Nellore, North Arcot, South Arcot, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai and Tirunelveli were added to the company's possessions. These areas constituted the Madras Presidency. Except North Canara which was transferred to the Bombay Presidency, the area continued as it was when India became Independent in 1947.

The area which formed the Madras Presidency was inhabited by people who spoke different languages and followed different religions. The northern-most district of Ganjam included a portion of the Oriya speaking population. The Telugu language was commonly spoken by the people of the Northern sarkars and, in a portion of the Nizam's Dominions, Kurnool, Cuddapah, part of North Arcot, Nellore and some parts of Bellary. Tamil was the common language of the districts from a few miles north of Madras to the extreme south of the eastern division of the peninsula. Malayalam was the language of the Indian states of Travancore, Cochin and the Malabar district. Tulu was spoken in a limited portion of the South Canara district and Kannada, in certain portions of the Bellary, Coimbatore, Salem and South Canara districts. Besides these six Dravidian languages, the hill tribes of certain districts had dialects of their own, also of a Dravidian type. In addition to these languages, a section of the Muslims spoke Urdu. There was also a settled Mahratta population at Tanjore.

As in other parts of India, an Anglo-Indian population sprung up as a result of marriages between Europeans and Indians and this spoke English.

From the religious point of view, many religions were represented in the Madras Presidency. The majority of the population were Hindus. But, there were also sizable minorities of Muslims scattered in many parts. Christianity of the Roman Catholic or Protestant persuasion was professed by the Anglo-Indians and Indian converts, while many of the Christians of Malabar, followed the tenets of the Syrian Orthodox Faith. There were small numbers of Jainas, some of whom had come from North India.

It is undoubted that the impact of these differences in languages and religions had their own profound influence on the development of public opinion because, in many areas, this public opinion was coloured by environmental factors.

This period of our study forms an important stage in the political and constitutional history of India. How important this period was in the annals of India can be understood, if one remembers the circumstances and events which eventually converted the East India Company which was a commercial body into a sovereign governmental organisation. India was not brought under the English by colonisation, nor was it conquered by an army deliberately sent out for the purpose of conquest by the government of Great Britain. The Parliament of Great Britain allowed a Corporate body to trade in the East. "Commercial had been the origin of the East India Company, for it owed its existence to a charter granted by Queen Elizabeth on the 31st of December, 1600, to about 220 gentlemen and merchants enabling them, "as one body corporate and politic by the name of the Governor and Company of the merchants of London trading to the East Indies".¹⁰

When that corporate body acquired territories and began to perform administrative functions, a great agitation began against such activities by men of liberal views. The Government of Britain was actually in a dilemma as to what to do, for there was no precedent or example in Europe of a commercial organisation exercising governmental authority over vast territories. It was, therefore, thought prudent to leave things as they were, except for, now and then, regulating the administration of the Company through occasional legislation. Control over the Indian administration by the British Government was, thus, only indirect. This

10 M. Ruthnaswamy — *Some influences that Made the British Administrative system in India.* P. 2.

type of administration, approximating roughly to dyarchy, continued upto the year 1858, when the Crown was forced to assume the reins of the administration of India directly. Marshman remarked, "it was created by the Crown, two hundred and fifty years before, for the purpose of extending British commerce to the East; and it transferred to the Crown on relinquishing its functions an empire more magnificent than that of Rome".¹¹

Likewise, the year 1909 marks the end of that stage of Indian political agitation which eventually resulted in the passing of the Act of 1909, embodying the Morley-Minto Reforms. Unlike the period after 1918, constitutional channels of expression of public opinion were the most dominant during this period.

Associations, as explained earlier, formed an important channel for the expression of public opinion. They were organised by enlightened men to serve as a forum for ventilation of the grievances of the public and for moulding public opinion. There were many social and political associations in this period. The Madras Native Association, later the Mahajana Sabha, played a significant service in drawing the attention of the authorities to the feelings of the public on the measures introduced by them or to be introduced by them.

The birth of the Indian National Congress ushered in an important stage in the political history of India and there arose now an agency for presenting public opinion in an effective form throughout the whole of India.

The Brahma Samaj, the Prarthna Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society and the Ramakrishna Mission were formed during the second half of the 19th century. The 20th century also saw a continuation of these efforts for focussing popular opinion. Gokhale founded in 1905 the Servants of India Society. It was not a society founded for any specific activity, political, educational, economic or social, but merely an organisation consisting of men who were trained and equipped for some form of useful service to the motherland. An account of all these associations and their role in moulding public opinion in the Presidency has been dealt with in the following pages.

Moulding Public Opinion and conveying popular sentiment to the authorities concerned cannot be performed by all the people collectively.

It could be done only by a few public-spirited men. Naturally, public opinion, as stated earlier, is largely influence

11 J. C. Marshman—*The History of India*—Vol. III, P. 457.

by the personalities who formed the leaders of the associations conducted public meetings and drafted memorials and petitions. Such views may not be agreeable to all sections of society. For example, officials dependent on employment under the government would hesitate to support openly an agitation that opposes the government or which the government frown upon. People with vested interests like the landed aristocracy or rulers of the Indian states also would not have subscribed substantially to the feelings and aspirations of the leaders of public opinion which may in any way challenge their special interests. But, the majority of the people definitely stood solidly behind those leaders and followed their advice and direction. Such a development is neither uncommon nor unhealthy, as we see in the experience of other countries, whether in the past or the present. In any time and in any country, the task of presenting the feeling of the people on any matter of public importance was performed only by an *elite* — a few spokesmen of the area or of the community. In ancient Tamilnad, poets played the role of the spokesmen of the community. They conveyed the feelings of the people to the ruler, and brought to their attention their grievances. We have ample evidences of this in the *sangam* literature. One such striking example is found in verse No. 184 of the *Purananuru* which has been already mentioned in the preceding pages. Considering the fact that leaders played a predominant role in the birth and the growth of public opinion, it was thought advisable to give a biographical account of those giants who guided the people of the Presidency in the period of our study.

A contribution no less significant was made by Western education to the formation of public opinion in India, in general, and in this Presidency, in particular. It is true that the study of Western education in India was not altogether an unmixed boon to the Indians. It produced some disastrous results among a few young Indians who became utterly denationalised and demoralised and began to ape even the worst habits of Europeans. These evils were, however, of small importance, considering the magnitude of the benefits derived by Indians. Ideas of liberty, nationalism and self-government, off-spring of Western education, made a lasting impression on the minds of the people and created a healthy discontent with things as they were.

Besides inculcating these ideas, Western learning conferred on Indians another very important benefit. It gave them — what they had never before — the valuable gift of a common language — a *Lingua Franca* — which made it possible for them to come together, to commune with one another, and to plan a common

programme of action. English became the common medium of communication of the educated classes throughout India.

It is not profitable to speculate whether, even without the influence of Western education, there would have developed a passion for freedom among Indians. The fact is that the study of English literature and English history went a long way in kindling national feeling and moulding public opinion among Indians.

No study of the development of public opinion in the period of our survey would be complete without a preliminary investigation of the circumstances that fostered the growth of Western education in the Presidency.

The Governorship of Lord Munro (1820-1827) marks an important milestone in the progress of education in this Presidency. He ordered an enquiry into the state of indigenous education in the Presidency. This was the first time the Government started any kind of educational enquiry in the Presidency. In a minute issued by him on the 25th June of 1822 he says, "much has been written, both in England and in this Country, about the ignorance of the people of India, and the means of disseminating knowledge among them. But, the opinions upon this subject are the more conjectures of individuals, unsupported by any authentic documents, and differing so widely from each other as to be entitled to very little attention. Our power in this Country, and the nature of its own municipal institutions, have certainly rendered it practicable to collect materials from which a judgement might be formed of the state of the mental cultivation of the people. We have made geographical and agricultural surveys of our provinces. We have investigated their resources and endeavoured to ascertain their population, but little or nothing has been done to learn the state of education".¹² Munro called upon the several collectors to furnish lists of schools in their respective districts, the nature of education given in them, the number of schools in each and other matters of interest.¹³

12 Revenue Consultations Vol. 277 — No. 1, dated 2nd July, 1822.

13 Munro applied to the Court of Directors for an annual grant of Rs. 50,000/- for establishing a school at the Presidency for the purpose of training teachers. He observed "whatever expense government might incur in the education of the people would be amply repaid by the improvement of the country, for the general diffusion of knowledge is inseparably followed by more orderly habits by increasing industry by a taste for the comforts of life, by exertion to acquire them and by a growing prosperity of the people" — *Rev. Consultations*, Vol. 314, No. 5, dated 10th March, 1826.

The Government of India had under consideration a very important question affecting the educational policy of India. Whether English or Indian languages should be adopted in the system of Indian education was decided in the famous minute of Lord Macaulay dated the 2nd February of 1835 and the equally famous Resolution of Lord William Bentinck, Governor-General (1828-1836), dated the 7th March of 1835. Historically speaking, the idea of setting up network of schools for teaching English was first mooted by Charles, Grant, a civil servant of the East India Company (1773-1790).¹⁴

The Charter Act of 1813, must be regarded as having sowed the seed of English education. Section 43 of the Charter Act of 1813 provided: "It shall be lawful for the Governor-General in Council to direct that out of any surplus which may remain of the rents, revenues and profits, arising from the said territorial acquisitions, after defraying the expenses of the military, Civil and Commercial establishments, and paying the interest of the debt, in manner hereinafter provided, a sum of not less than one lakh of rupees in each year shall be set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature, and encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India".¹⁵

Lord Macaulay arrived in India as Law Member of the Governor-General's Council. Macaulay, from the beginning, placed himself on the side of the Anglicists. His minutes were masterpieces of literary style but they exhibited a colossal ignorance of Oriental culture or learning. He wrote thus: "I have no knowledge of either Sanskrit or Arabic. But I have done what I could to form a correct estimate of their value. I have read translations of the most celebrated Arabic and Sanskrit works. I have conversed, both here and at home, with men distinguished by their proficiency in the eastern tongues. I am quite ready to take the Oriental learning at the valuation of the Orientalists themselves. I have never found

14 Charles Grant, on his return to England had come into contact with Wilberforce and, when in 1793, the Company's charter came before Parliament for renewal, Wilberforce, the leader of the Evangelical Party, sponsored a resolution that, with a view to the advancement of useful knowledge of the inhabitants of British India, the Court of Directors should be commissioned to send out school masters from time to time. Wilberforce's move was vigorously opposed and one of the Directors is reported to have observed that "they had just lost America from the folly of having allowed the establishment of schools and colleges and it would not do for them to repeat the same act of folly in regard to India"—a truly prophetic statement which has happily been realised" — A. L. Mudaliar — *Education in India*, pp. 21-22.

15 C. L. Anand — *Government of India* — Chap. II, P. 25.

one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. The intrinsic superiority of the Western literature is, indeed, fully admitted by those members of the committee who support the Oriental plan of education".¹⁶

By his vehement denunciation of classical Indian learning and eloquent pleadings in favour of Western education he carried Lord William Bentinck with him and, on the 7th March, 1835, by a resolution, Lord William Bentinck declared, "that the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone".¹⁷

The decision of Lord William Bentinck, though it had direct reference to education in Bengal, was not without its effects on education in Madras as well. The Madras Government was advised by the Government of India to expend Government funds almost exclusively on English education and chiefly on higher English education.¹⁸

An important land-mark in the growth of education in the Presidency was the establishment of the University of Madras. The Court of Directors felt that the time had arrived for the establishment of Universities in India which might encourage a regular and liberal course of education by conferring academic degrees as evidence of attainment in the different branches.

Thus were established in the year 1857, the three Universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras based on the model of the London University, with a Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and Senate.

Next important stage in the growth of education was the appointment in 1882 of an Education Commission by Lord Ripon, generally known the Hunter Commission.

16 H. Sharp — *Selections from Educational Records* — Part I (1781-1839). P. 109.

17 Ibid P. 130.

18 It was in 1853 that Government started its first schools for instruction in English at Zillah or provincial stations. This step was due to the parliamentary enquiry into the educational condition of India in 1853 at the time of the renewal of the East India Company's Charter. As a result of this enquiry there was constituted a separate Department for the administration of education with adequate system of inspection in each Presidency. Kumbakonam, Rajamundry, Calicut and Cuddalore were among the earliest centres chosen for the experiment.

The Government Resolution of 1884 approved almost all the recommendations of the Commission with the result that education received further stimulus through the local bodies grants-in-aids and private enterprise.

An account of the growth of education would be incomplete without the mention of the *role* of missionaries, because the spread of English education among the masses was largely the work of Missionary Societies. In 1854, the Society for the propagation of the Gospel in Foreign parts supported no less than 186 schools, the majority of which were in the Districts of Tirunelveli, Madurai, Tiruchirappalli and Tanjore.¹⁹

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- 19 The Rev. John Anderson, the earliest missionary of the Church of Scotland who arrived in Madras in 1837 started what was known as the General Assembly's school immediately after his arrival. The school soon proved a great success and Mr. Anderson was so encouraged by the results that he opened branch schools at Kancheepuram in 1839 at Nellore and Chingleput in 1840 and at Triplicane, in 1841. In 1847 the school was removed to a building on the Esplanade and later came to be called the Madras Christian College.

The London Mission had an English school at Visakapatnam. It also had a school for female education in the same time. It maintained an English school at Chicacole in the Ganjam District.

The Church Missionary Society had two schools — one for boys and the other for girls — at Masulipatam and one for boys at Ellore.

The American Missionary Society was at work at Guntur and at Goorzul in the Palnad. The Nellore District was occupied by the Free Church Mission. In the districts of Cuddapah, Kurnool and Bellary, the London Missionary Society was at work. Elementary English Schools started by the Free Church Mission were at work in Chingleput District, at Chingleput and Kancheepuram. A good English School was started by the Society for the propagation of the Gospel at Tanjore. The same mission had a seminary for native Christians at Vedar - pooram. The Wesleyan Mission was also at work in the Tanjore District and had elementary English schools at Nagapattinam and Mannargudi.

An English school was started by the Society for the propagation of the Gospel at Trichinopoly. The operations of the Church Missionary Society and the Society for the propagation of the Gospel were on a very considerable scale in Tirunelveli. The former had English schools at Palamkottai and at Srivilliputtur and maintained 317 elementary vernacular schools. The society had also a training institution at Palamkottai.

The Society for the propagation of the Gospel maintained a considerable number of elementary schools both in Tirunelveli and Madurai. The same society had an elementary English school at Ramnad. The German missionaries were at work in Malabar.

In Madras, four Missionaries were engaged in educational work, The Wesleyan Mission, the London Mission, the Free Church and the Church of Scotland.

Even as far back as the years 1854-55, the Province was covered over with a network of mission schools, English and vernacular. We are bound to recognise the service rendered to the cause of Indian education by European Missionary bodies. They should justly be regarded as the pioneers of modern educational system in India. But what they did was from interested motives. As Basu observes, "it ought to be frankly acknowledged that though the missionaries were foremost in the field and foremost in labour and zeal and love for the natives of this land, they do not seem to have entertained any scheme for national education or any idea of introducing on a large scale the science and literature of Europe, as helps to Christianisation or means of social improvement".²⁰

"The founding of Pachaiyappa's schools marks indeed an era in the history of Madras education as it was the first example of intelligent natives of various castes combining to aid the cause of popular instruction".²¹

The introduction of Western Education and the use of English as the medium of instruction have been described at great length because, as stated earlier, the consequences were momentous in history of the growth of public opinion. Besides those results, an important consequence of Western education was the development of the press, the formations of associations and growth of public meetings.

20 B. D. Basu — *Education in India under East India Company*, P. 134.

21 *Madras Manual of Administration*, Vol. I, P. 570. A school in Black Town was established in January 1842 for affording gratuitous education to the poorer classes of the native community in the elementary branches of English literature and science, coupled with instruction in Tameel and Telegoo... in the same year (1846) the Patcheappah Trustees took over the charities of another rich native named Govindoo Naidoo. In 1856 scholarships were given in this benefactor's name at Patcheappah's schools and later on a separate primary school was opened from the same funds. The new institution was called "Govindoo Naidoo's Primary School" and was opened in 1864. *Ibid* P. 570.

CHAPTER I

PUBLIC OPINION AND POLITICAL REFORM

a. *Political Institutions and Associations :*

Legislatures and local bodies which are the chief agencies of popular government were in the formative stage during the period of our study and, as such, their role as the mouthpiece of public opinion did not have such a decisive influence as now. It was only later on that they developed into effective weapons of democracy. There was an incessant demand for the reform of these institutions so as to make them really serve as the forum of public opinion.

The origin of the legislative powers of the provinces goes back to the year 1807. The Act of 1807 gave to the governors in council in Madras and Bombay the power of making regulations, a power similar to that which had been granted to the Governor-General in Council by the Regulating Act of 1773.²²

This power was enjoyed by the Governments of Madras and Bombay until the passing of the Act of 1833. The Act of 1833 took away from the governments of Madras and Bombay the power of making laws, leaving them the simple right of submitting "drafts or projects of any laws or regulations which they may think expedient."²³

The Governor-General in Council was declared to be the sole repository of legislative authority. This sort of centralisation was not favoured by the governments of Madras and Bombay. They constantly complained that their claims and needs were not properly considered. The people of these presidencies also began to plead for reforms.

The Act of 1853 tried to remove the grievance of the provinces to a certain extent. It allowed representatives of the provinces to hold

22 The Governor-General in Council was given power to issue rules, ordinances and regulations for the Government of the Company's dominions. This is the beginning of the law making power of the Government of India — Vide — Section VII of the Regulating Act of 1773.

23 Clause 66 of the Act — Vide — Mukherjee — *Indian Constitutional Documents*, Vol. I, p. 96.

seats in the Governor-General's Council which was specially enlarged for the transaction of legislative business by the nomination of additional members. It was thus that provincial representation was introduced at first in the Indian legislature.

This change, however, could not satisfy the people. To understand this feeling of the people, we must now take up the story of the development of political consciousness amongst the people as seen in the activities of the individuals and associations. The spread of Western education and familiarity with democratic ideas made the educated classes of the Indian public particularly dissatisfied with the position.

Political activity in the Madras Presidency began long before the birth of the Indian National Congress. It was heralded by a few intellectuals like Gazulu Lakshminarasu Chetty, B. Rungiah Naidu, P. Anandacharlu, G. Subramania Iyer and M. Vijayaraghavachariar who organised bodies like the Madras Native Association and whose ardent desire for administrative and political reform gradually won them the support of the people of the presidency.

Gazulu Lakshminarasu Chetty was the earliest popular leader in Madras. He was born in the year 1806, in Periamet, Madras. He devoted himself heart and soul to the task of achieving political liberty for his countrymen. He became the chief guiding element in the earliest political association of Madras, the Madras Native Association, which was the forerunner and parent of the Madras Maha Jana Sabha.

This association was formed on the 26th of February, 1852 for the avowed purpose of ventilating the grievances of the people, from time to time, on perfectly constitutional lines. Originally, it was started as a Madras branch of "The British Indian Association", a similar association established at Calcutta, with which G. Lakshminarasu Chetty and others entered into correspondence, intending as a branch society, to place themselves under the guidance of that body, to whose superintendence the work of petitioning the Imperial Parliament, on points involving the joint interests of both presidencies, should be committed.

But, as the correspondence disclosed that the British Indian Association's object "related almost wholly to plans and recommendations of change in the government of this country, for the exaltation of the highest classes of the Hindus, while it left almost untouched the pitiable condition of the middling and lower classes, and was in various respects unsuitable to the circumstances of this

presidency; the Madras branch, perceiving that there were many important points in which a joint interest could not be taken, and others in which there could not be joint concurrence, deemed it expedient to withdraw from its status as a branch association, subordinate to that of Calcutta, and constituted from among themselves an independent society, under the denomination of the Madras Native Association, with a view of bringing before Parliament the immediate grievances of their own presidency."²⁴

Lakshminarasu Chetty also started a paper called the *Crescent* to ventilate his view. He never instigated the people either to what were considered acts of disloyalty or insubordination to the paramount power. He only adopted constitutional methods like convening public meetings and submitting memorials and petitions. He declared "we believe that by a mild and firm representation of our grievances to the superior authorities we shall obtain justice and redress."²⁵ Yet, it shows the outlook of the government then that it suspected him and, by the year 1854, he came to be considered as a seditious person, and a police watch was set over him. His speeches were closely scrutinised, and his movements were watched by the police.

After the Mutiny of 1857, he, as the President of the Madras Native Association, drew up a memorial to the government, praying for the continuance of its policy of religious neutrality. Meanwhile, a change in the personnel of the Madras Government, the rising popularity of Lakshminarasu Chetty and the admiration of the European and the Native communities for the self-sacrifice he had made on behalf of his country led the Madras Government to change its attitude towards him. The Government of Madras recognised the meritorious services he had rendered to his countrymen, and made him a C.S.I. (Companion of Star of India) in 1861. In 1863, he was appointed as a member of the Madras Legislative Council. John Bruce Norton, alluding to this appointment in his address in the Pachaiyappa's hall, 1864, said that "the government had selected the man who would have been called to the post by the unanimous suffrage of his fellow countrymen."²⁶ He died in 1868 leaving a name for genuine patriotism and self-sacrifice rare in the annals of India at that time.

24 Appendix to Minutes of Evidence taken before Select Committee on the Government of Indian Territories, dated the 11th of October, 1852, p. 187.

25 G. Parameswaran Pillai — *Representative Indians*, p. 198.

26 *Ibid*, p. 198.

Amongst the European supporters of the demands of the Indian people was John Bruce Norton. John Bruce Norton was born on the 8th of July, 1815, to Sir John David Norton, puisne judge of the Madras Supreme Court. He had his education at Harrow and Morton College, Oxford. He was called to the bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1841. He came to India in 1842 and served as the Sheriff of Madras during the years 1843 — 1845. He was appointed as the Clerk of the Crown in 1845 in which capacity he remained till he became the Government Pleader in 1863 and then Advocate-General, a post which he held till the year 1871. No public business of South India was conducted without his presence. He was an ardent advocate and supporter of Indian interests and education, was a patron of the Pachaiyappa's charities, and was appointed as the first Lecturer in Law to Indian students at the Temple, London, 1873. He died on the 13th of July, 1883.²⁷

It is interesting to note that the Mutiny of 1857, produced hardly any repercussions in Madras. Some people even sent loyal addresses to the government deploring and denouncing the acts of violence committed in the north. Some of them even sent subscriptions in aid of the relief of sufferers. But, this loyalty to constituted authority did not affect the demand for political concessions and for a greater share in administration. Thus, in 1860, when Sir Charles Trevelyan, the most popular governor of Madras (1859-1860) since Sir Thomas Munro, was recalled by the Secretary of State for India on account of his differences with the Government of India the educated classes reiterated, in the farewell address presented to him (signed by more than 8,500 men) their, insistent demand for reforms. Sir Charles Trevelyan, while admonishing them to "qualify yourselves for representative institutions" declared, "that they will be sure to come in good time. You are united under the common protection of the British Crown with a free people who have never grudged to others a participation in the political advantages which they themselves enjoy."²⁸

A searching analysis of the causes of the Mutiny convinced the authorities that the outbreak of the Mutiny was due to some extent to the absence of any machinery through which people could express their views on any matter or measure to the government. Sir Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control, pointed out the grave blunder of taking away the legislative power of the provinces by the Act of 1833. His observation while moving the bill later enacted as the Indian Council Act of 1861, in the House of Commons on the 6th

²⁷ *Dictionary of Indian Biography*, pp. 318-319.

²⁸ S. Baliga — *Studies in Madras Administration*, Vol. 1, p. 380.

of June 1861, deserves our consideration. "It is notoriously difficult for any European to make himself intimately acquainted with either the feelings or opinions of the native population and I was struck the other day by a passage in a letter from one of the oldest servants, Sir Mark Cubbon. He had administered the affairs of Mysore for nearly 30 years, he had been living in the most intimate intercourse with the natives, possessing their love and confidence to an extent seldom obtained by an English officer and yet he said, "that he was astonished that he had never been able to acquire a sufficient acquaintance with the opinions and feelings of the natives with whom he was in daily communication."²⁹ Charles Wood, therefore, exhorted the admission of an Indian element in the legislature. "I believe greater advantages will result from admitting the native chiefs to co-operate 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. I have no intention of doing anything to make this council a debating society. The Council of the Governor-General with these additional members will have power to pass laws and regulations affecting the whole of India, and will have a supreme and concurrent power with the minor legislative bodies which I propose to establish in the presidencies and in other parts of India. I come now to the power of making laws which I propose to give the Governors and Councils of other Presidencies. Lord Canning strongly feels that, although great benefits have resulted from the introduction of members into his council who possess a knowledge of localities — the interests of which differ widely in different parts of the country — the change has not been sufficient in the first place, to overcome the feeling which the other presidencies entertain against being overridden, as they call it, by the Bengal Council, or on the other hand, to overcome the disadvantages of having a body legislating for these presidencies without acquaintance with local wants and necessities. This must obviously be possessed to a much greater extent by those residing on or nearer the spot. And, therefore, I proposed to restore, I may say, to the presidencies of Madras and Bombay, the power of passing laws and enactments on local subjects within their own territories; and that the Governor of the Presidency, in the same manner as the Governor-General when his Council meets to make laws, shall summon a certain number of additional members, to be as before either European or native and one half of whom at least shall not be office-bearers."³⁰

29 A. B. Keith — *Speeches and Documents on Indian Policy*, Vol. II, p. 5.

30 *Ibid*, pp. 17-18.

This Act of 1861 marks an important forward step in the constitutional history of India. The Act restored³¹ to the Governments of Madras and Bombay the power of making "laws and regulations for the peace and good government of such presidency and for that purpose to repeal and amend any laws and regulations made prior to the coming into operation of this Act by any authority in India, so far as they affect such presidency: Provided always, that such Governor in Council shall not have the power of making any laws or regulations which shall in any way affect any of the provisions of this Act, or of any other Act of Parliament in force, or hereafter to be in force, in such Presidency."³²

The strength of the Council of the Governor was increased. The Governor was empowered to "nominate as additional members the advocate-general of the presidency, or officer acting in that capacity, and such other persons, not less than four and not more than eight in numbers, as to him may seem expedient, to be members of the council, for the purpose of making laws and regulations only; and such members shall not be entitled to sit or vote at any meeting of the council, except at meetings held for such purposes."³³

Thus, for the first time, what is called a legislative council as different from the executive council, came to be introduced by the Act of 1861.

At the same time the right of legislating for the whole of India by the Governor-General in Council was still retained. For, the Act of 1861 expressly declared "The Governor-General in Council shall have power at meetings for the purpose of making laws and regulations and to make laws and regulations for all persons, whether British or Native, foreigners or others, and for all Courts of Justice whatever, and for all servants of the Government of India within the dominions of princes and states in alliance with her Majesty; and the laws and regulations so to be made by the Governor-General in Council shall control and supersede any laws and regulations in any wise repugnant there to which shall have been made prior there to by the Governors of the Presidencies of Fort St. George and Bombay respectively in Council."³⁴

However, in actual practice the governor in council was competent to enact laws for the peace and good administration of the

31 Taken away by the Act of 1833.

32 Clause 42 of the Act, *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 40.

33 Clause 29 of the Act — A. C. Banerjee — *Op. cit*, Vol. II, p. 14,

34 Clause 22 of the Act — *Ibid*, p. 9.

province, subject, of course, to the restrictions imposed upon it and also subject to the general supervising authority exercised by the governor-general in council.

The Legislature introduced by the Act of 1861 was neither composed of popular representatives nor based on democratic principles. It is, no wonder, that it failed to satisfy public opinion and therefore could not enlist popular support.

The period following this act saw the reconstruction of the organisation of local self-government. A brief retrospect of this matter is now necessary.

The institution of local self-government is not new to India. Every village in ancient India was an autonomous political unit having its own immemorial panchayat. It was the proud privilege of every villager to enjoy an autonomous village administration under the Cholas. A detailed knowledge of its working is happily available to us from an inscription at Utramerur, about 40 miles from the city of Madras.³⁵ From this inscription, we gather that representatives were popularly elected and exercised considerable powers.

The attempt of the English to centralise the whole of administration and entrust the tasks of dispensing justice to the district courts and the introduction of ryotwari system led to the decline of village autonomy.

Soon after the assumption of sovereign rights, the Company decided that a new judicial organisation based on the British model should be introduced. Judges were appointed in all the districts, and provincial courts of appeal and circuit were instituted. The Governor in council formed the final court but appeal was allowed to the king.

The working of this system, however, was vitiated by several defects. The new procedure following as it did on the lines of the British was overstocked with "Cumbersome formalities" that rather embarrassed than aided litigants. The unfamiliar mode of administering justice besides, necessitated the employment by the parties of vakils. The remuneration of these vakils as well as the high fees imposed on litigants by the courts, debarred many from applying to the courts. Again, the villager had to travel for miles and wait for months and years before his suit was decided.

35 K. A. Nilakanta Sastri — *Studies in Chola History And Administration* — Chap. III, pp. 73-84.

On account of this policy of centralisation, the village ceased to be a little republic but became a unit of a vast centralised system.

As A. P. Patro wrote, "The growth of individualism and the introduction of ryotwari settlement tended to destroy rapidly the village community."³⁶ One great difficulty which the British themselves faced was that very often their officers were not conversant with local public opinion.

The British introduced a system of local Government modelled in Western lines. As early as 1767 a corporation composed of Europeans and Indians was established in Madras for the purposes of local taxation.³⁷ The Charter Act of 1853 empowered the Governor-General to appoint justices of the peace for the presidency towns to meet the cost of scavenging police and maintenance of roads. A series of legislative enactments was passed between the years 1842 and 1862 providing for the setting up of municipal institutions in other towns.³⁸ The acts provided for the appointment of commissioners to manage municipal affairs and authorised them to levy various taxes.

By an act of 1865, local self-government was extended to the rural areas also. While the urban unit was called a municipality, the rural unit was called a district board. This act authorised the imposition of cess on land and a tax on houses for local purposes.

Lord Mayo's Resolution on Provincial Finance in 1870 marked another step towards the inauguration of local self-government. This resolution emphasised the necessity of taking steps to bring local interest, supervision and care to bear on the management of funds devoted to education, sanitation, medical relief and local public works. Mayo hoped that "the operation of this Resolution in its full meaning and integrity would afford opportunities for the development of self-government for strengthening municipal institutions, and for the association of natives and Europeans to a greater extent than heretofore in the administration of affairs."³⁹ The Madras Act divided the presidency into local fund circles, and constituted, for their administration, consultative boards nominated by the Government under the presidency of the collector. However, it is to be remembered that Mayo's scheme

36 *Studies in Local Self-Government, Education and Sanitation* — Chapter XII, p. 84.

37 *Indian Statutory Commission Report* — Vol. I, p. 298.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 298.

39 H. H. Dodwell (Ed.) — *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. VI — p. 517.

of local self-government was essentially a measure of finance by which a machinery was set up through which money was collected for local objects without the odium that attached to an imperial tax. At the same time the government was relieved of the responsibility of maintaining and developing local objects.

With Lord Ripon, a new chapter opens in the history of local self-government. To him belongs the credit of conceiving local institutions as instruments of political education. The resolution issued during his viceroyalty (1882 and 1884) greatly altered the constitution, powers and functions of local bodies. "It gave a definite lead and laid down a clear cut path for all provincial governments really interested in the advance of local self-government."⁴⁰

The Resolution of Lord Ripon on local self-government of 1882 is a document well worth quotation. "In advocating the extension of local self-government and the adoption of this principle in the management of many branches of local affairs, the Governor-General in Council does not suppose that the work will be in the first instance better done than if it remained in the same hands of Government District Officers. It is not, primarily, with a view improvement in administration that this measure is put forward and supported. It is chiefly desirable as an instrument of political and popular education. His Excellency in Council has himself no doubt that in course of time as local knowledge and local interest are brought to bear more freely upon local administration, improved efficiency will in fact follow. But, as starting, there will doubtless be many failures, calculated to discourage exaggerated hopes, and even in some cases to cast apparent discredit upon the practice of self government itself. If, however, the officers of Government only set themselves, as the Governor-General in Council believes they will, to foster sedulously the small beginnings of the independent political life, if they accept loyally and as their own the policy of the Government, and if they come to realise that the system really opens to them a fairer field for the exercise of administrative tact and directive energy than the more autocratic system which it supersedes, then it may be hoped that the period of failures will be short and that real and substantial progress will very soon become manifest.

It is not uncommonly asserted that the people of this country are themselves entirely indifferent to the principle of self-government, that they take but little interest in public matters; and that they prefer to have such affairs managed for them Government officers. The Gover-

40 Prof. M. Venkatarangaiya — *Development of Local Boards in the Madras Presidency*, p. 47.

nor-General in Council does not attach such value to this theory. It represents no doubt the point of view which commands itself to many active and well-intentioned District Officers; and the people of India are, there can be equally no doubt, remarkably tolerant of existing facts. But as education advances, there is rapidly growing up all over the country an intelligent class of public spirited men whom it is not only bad policy, but, sheer waste of power, to fail to utilise. The task of administration is yearly becoming more onerous as the country progresses in civilisation and material prosperity. The annual reports of every Government tell of an ever-increasing burden laid upon the shoulders of the local officers. The cry is everywhere for increased establishments. The universal complaint in all departments is that of over-work. Under these circumstances it becomes imperatively necessary to look around for some means of relief; and the Governor-General in Council has no hesitation in stating his conviction that the only reasonable plan open to the Government is to induce the people themselves to undertake, as far as may be the management of their own affairs; and to develop, or create if need be a capacity for self-help in respect of all matters that have not, for imperial reasons, to be retained in the hands of the representative Government."⁴¹

Whatever may be the importance of Ripon's Resolution, it cannot be denied that both the provincial government and the Government of India did not carry out the policy in the spirit conveyed in the resolution. The result was that, even after the lapse of 36 years when another Resolution was passed in 1918 no substantial progress had been made in the field of local self-government. Viceroys like Lord Curzon did not show much sympathy for extension of local self-government. Thus it was that, inspite of the good intentions of Lord Ripon, there was no improvement in the progress of local self-government. So public opinion was not satisfied about the measure of local autonomy.

By now the national awakening had taken further stride forward and found organised embodiment in the establishment of the Madras Maha Jana Sabha in 1884 followed by the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885.

With the lamented demise of Sri G. Lakshminarasu Chetty in 1868, the Madras Native Association of which he was the guiding spirit languished and at last became defunct. But Messrs. G. Subramania Iyer and Viraraghavachariar revived the Madras Native

⁴¹ *Report of the Indian Statutory Commission* Vol. I, pp. 299-300.

Association to serve as a forum from which to ventilate the grievances of the public and to mould public opinion was keenly felt. Grievances of the people could naturally be more effectively and forcibly dealt with, if handled by an association rather than by individuals, however, highly gifted. It is a matter of importance to state that in those days there was no rule prohibiting the participation in public activities by officers in government service. This enabled the enlistment of the guidance of some eminent administrators as will be seen.

G. Subramania Iyer, who started his career as a school teacher, later started *The Hindu* as a weekly paper along with M. Viraraghavachariar in 1878 and was connected with it till 1898. He went on a lecturing tour in the Madras Presidency for the purpose of popularising the principles of local self-government. He was a member from Madras in the deputation formed to bid farewell to Lord Ripon in 1884. He had the unique honour of moving the first resolution at the First Indian National Congress in 1885. He proceeded to England to give evidence on behalf of the Madras Maha Jana Sabha before the Welby Commission on Indian expenditure in 1897. He also began a Tamil newspaper *Swadesamitran* along with the *Hindu* and made it a daily from the year 1898. He was also a great social reformer.⁴² Surendranath Banerjea called him "one of the makers of modern Madras."⁴³

Regarding the impression created by G. Subramania Iyer on those who came into contact with him, we have the interesting observations of W. S. Blunt. "My first visitors at Madras were a couple of Hindu gentlemen, editors of the local newspaper, *The Hindu*, their names — Subramania Iyer and Viraraghavachariar; intelligent clear-headed men, contrasting by no means unfavourably with men of their profession in London. Their manners were good, and their conversation brilliant. The matters principally discussed between us were the heavy pressure of the land revenue on the Madras peasantry, the burden of the salt tax, the abuses connected with the civil courts, the ruin of the cotton manufacture and industry by the enforced free trade with England, the unreality of the so-called "productive works," especially as to roads, and the conservative opposition of the conventioned civil service to all reform — neither viceroys nor governors were able to oppose them."⁴⁴

The Madras Native Association could not, however, function as vigorously as it did under the inspiring guidance of G. Lakshmi-

42 *Dictionary of Indian Biography* — pp. 420-21.

43 *A Nation in Making* — Appendix 'B' — p. 410.

44 *India under Ripon* — Private Diary — p. 36.

narasu Chetty. It ultimately merged with the Madras Maha Jana Sabha which was started in 1884. The first president was D. Rungiah Naidu whose patriotism was intense. Though conservative in social reform, "he was an excellent specimen of the times he lived in, and he was always ready to bear cheerfully and courageously his share of heavy sacrifice for the national cause."⁴⁵

P. Anandacharlu was another of the founder members of the Madras Maha Jana Sabha. He was born in 1841, in Chittcor, in North Arcot District. He passed his F.A. examination in 1867, and took up teachership in the Pachaiyappa's High School, Madras. He passed B.L. examination in 1869. He enrolled himself as a vakil in 1870. He entered public life about 1875. No field of public activity of the presidency went on without him. He was honoured by the government with the title of Rao Bahadur and C.I.E.⁴⁶

Through incessant struggles and personal merits of a high order, this gentleman had worked his way up almost to the front ranks of the Madras bar and had acquired lasting name for robust political independence. Those were the days of memorials and petitions. Mr. Anandacharlu was the one unfailing source of inspiration of all drafts of memorials and representations. He was also one of the founders and patriarchs of the Congress. He presided over the Seventh Congress held at Nagpur in 1871. His presidential address is one which will never be forgotten. "We, he observed "as the pioneers of the movement, may attain little more than the satisfaction of upholding what is right and protesting against what is wrong but, succeeding generations will reap the fruit of our labours and will cherish with fond remembrance the names of those who had the courage and the humanity, the singleness of purpose and the self-sacrificing devotion to duty, to work for the benefit of posterity, in spite of columny and persecution and great personal loss. Men, such as these, may attain no titles of distinction from government but they are "nobles by the right of an earlier creation." They may fail to win honour from their contemporaries as the truest apostles; but, they are "priests by the imposition of mightier hand;" and, when their life's work is done, they will have that highest of all earthly rewards — the sense of having left their country better than they had found it; — the glory of having built up into a united and compact nation the diverse races and classes of the Indian population, and the satisfaction of having led a people, sunk in political and social torpor, to think and act for themselves, and strive to work out

45 *Madras Maha Jana Sabha Diamond Jubilee Souvenir*, 1946, p. 6.

46 V. C. Gopalaratnam — *A century completed* — pp. 261-63.

their own well-being by constitutional and righteous methods."⁴⁷ He was also an ardent advocate of social reform. He tried to carry out social reform through legislation also as a member of the Viceregal Council as will be seen later on.

It will be remembered that in 1884, when the Madras Maha Jana Sabha was started, the Indian National Congress had not yet come into existence. "One cannot be sure whether it is the oldest political institution in the whole of India which is still in existence and flourishing; but there cannot be any manner of doubt as to its being the oldest existing political institution in South India."⁴⁸

The birth of the Indian National Congress marks a significant stage in the growth of public opinion all over India. So a brief account of the development of the Congress and its policies is essential.

It may also be added here that popular agitation against specific grievances about unpopular measures concerning the Civil Service, the Vernacular Press Act and the Arms Act shaped the political life of India including the Madras Presidency and profoundly influenced public opinion. Agitation once roused increased and merged itself in the demand for the freedom of the country. A definite demand for the establishment of representative institutions dates to the period following the controversy over the Ilbert Bill to which we shall now turn.

According to the Criminal Procedure Code of 1873 except in the Presidency Towns, no magistrate or sessions judge could try an European British subject unless he himself was an European by birth. By this time, many Indian members of the covenanted civil service were occupying posts of dignity and responsibility. Justice demanded that the Indian magistrates should be given the same authority as their European counterparts. The Government of India under Lord Ripon made up its mind to abolish this judicial disqualifications based on race distinctions. Ilbert, a member of the Viceregal Council, prepared a bill in 1883 to place the Indian and European magistrates on the same footing.

The whole of the British community joined in a vigorous denunciation of the bill. A monster public meeting was held in the Calcutta Town Hall where speeches were delivered violently criticis-

47 G. A. Natesan (Ed.) — *Indian Politics* — Part II, p. 61.

48 *Madras Maha Jana Sabha Diamond Jubilee Souvenir*, 1956—p. 7.

ing the Bill. Similar meetings were held all over the Bengal Presidency. This agitation by the European community formed an example for the Indian community to imitate such methods of expression of public opinion. An Anglo-Indian and European Defence Association was formed which also formed an example to the Indian community. The non-official European community boycotted Ripon's levees. On his return to Calcutta from Simla, Ripon was openly insulted in the streets by planters who had come from the mofussil. A ladies committee was also formed by the Europeans to oppose the Bill.

The Government of Lord Ripon had to bow to some extent before the agitation of the Europeans and the Bill was ultimately modified by extending the power to try European offenders only to Indian sessions judges and district magistrates and giving such European offenders the right to be tried by a jury, half of whom were to be Europeans or Americans. As Indians could not claim a similar right, the privileged position of the Europeans was still maintained and the endeavour of the government to remove race distinctions was thus foiled.

The attitude of the European public on the Ilbert Bill created a stir among the Indians. Indians all over the country counteracted to the agitation of the Europeans. The Madras Presidency, as usual, did not lag behind the other parts of India. A contributor to the *Swadesamitran* observed — "The Europeans say that the natives are not in a position to know the manners and usages of the Europeans. But, do they know our manners and usages? Do we not know that the European magistrates punish the natives wrongly in some cases through ignorance? They further say that native magistrates will be led away by national prejudices. Now, we ask — are the Europeans to be considered as an exception to this? We find, on the contrary, that many Europeans are let off scot free by magistrates of their own nationality. Some Europeans give out that in the presidency towns, as there are many Europeans, residing there, and as the press can be availed of for ventilating their grievances the chances are against native magistrate going wrong. This is true, but, cannot the same procedure be adopted also in the mofussil?"⁴⁹

All sections of the people including Muslims were aggrieved at the failure of the Bill. *Shams-ul-Akbhar*, dated, the 31st of December, 1883 observed, "the long discussed question of European offenders being tried by native magistrates has at last been decided

in favour of the Europeans. Mr. Ilbert placed his draft act before the Council of the Viceroy and the Governor-General who espoused the cause of the natives, and evinced his determination to carry it out; but he, finally, gave in through fear of being badly treated by his countrymen at Calcutta."⁵⁰

The withdrawal of the Ilbert Bill proved to be a blessing in disguise to the people of India. "No educated Indian ever forgotten the lesson of the Ilbert Bill. They were accustomed to rulers who could be influenced by cajolery, entreaty, bribery or threats of revolt, but, it was an entirely new experience to see a government and especially the aloof and the powerful British Government deflected from its purpose by newspaper abuse and an exhibition of bad manners. In later days, Indian nationalism was to acquire some of its technique from the suffrage movement in England and more from the Irish Home Rulers; but it was the successful agitation against the Ilbert Bill which decided the general lines upon which the Indian politician was to run his campaigns. It is significant that the two years which followed this agitation saw the foundation of the Indian National Congress and the European Association."⁵¹

Madras seems to have been the place where the final decision was taken about the formation of the Indian National Congress. As Annie Besant states, "In December, 1884, seventeen good and true, that had assembled for the annual convention of the "Theosophical Society at Adyar in Madras resolved to form themselves into a group of provincial committees, and to meet later for further consultation."⁵²

These seventeen men later met in the house of Diwan Bahadur Raghunath Rao. Raghunath Rao was one of those officials who evinced great interest in the uplift of his countrymen. He equally evinced keen interest in social matters and he was largely responsible for convening the first Indian Social Conference at Madras in 1887.

The gathering included the most prominent public figures of the Madras Presidency like P. Rungiah Naidu, P. Anandacharlu and S. Subramania Iyer. S. Subramania Iyer who was destined to become the most important of all these, was born in 1841 and qualified for law in 1868. He practised in Madurai until he set up his practice in

50 *Ibid* — p. 3.

51 E. Thompson and G. T. Carratt—*Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India* — p. 498.

52 *How India Wrought for Freedom* — p. 1.

1887. He was appointed government pleader and public prosecutor between 1888 and 1892 and 1894. He was the first Indian to hold that place. He was puisne judge from 1895 to 1907. He thrice officiated as Chief Justice. In 1908, the Madras University conferred on him a Doctorate in Law. He was its first recipient in Madras. He played a prominent part in later politics. When Lord Pentland's government arrested and interned Mrs. Annie Besant, he felt deeply the injustice of it and, as a protest, gave up all the honours conferred on him by the British Government — a certificate of Merit in 1877, C.I.E. in 1889, Dewan Bahadur in 1891 and K.C.I.E. in 1900. He wrote the famous and much discussed letter to Woodrow Wilson, President of the U.S.A. asking U.S.A. to interfere and get home rule for India. He died in 1924.⁵³

Regarding the origin of the Congress Pattabi Sitaramayya, popularly called the chronicler of the Congress, observes, "whatever the origin, and whoever the originator of the idea, we come to the conclusion that the idea was in the air that the need of such an organisation was being felt, that, Mr. Allan Octavian Hume took the initiative and that it was in March 1885, when the first notice was issued convening the first Indian National Union to meet at Poona in the following December, that what had been a vague idea floating generally in the air and influencing simultaneously the thought of thoughtful Indians, in the north and the south, the east and the west, assumed a definite shape and became a programme of action."⁵⁴

Mr. Hume was one of those benevolent, English men who troubled and toiled for the welfare of the Indians.

Hume was a member of the Indian Civil Service and served in India in several capacities. He laboured for India's good both as an official and non-official for over 60 years. He richly deserves a conspicuous place among the galaxy of those eminent English men who played a notable part in the evolution of Indian politics.⁵⁵

The debt of Indians to him cannot be better expressed than in the words of P. Anandacharlu. "At the sacrifice of health, money, well-earned ease, and peace of mind, he (Hume) has steadily and earnestly adhered to his labour of love in the progressive interests of the people of this country and he has thus earned not only our love

⁵³ *The Madras High Court Centenary Volume* — pp. 44-45.

⁵⁴ *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, p. 11.

⁵⁵ For a detailed account of his life, Vide Wedderburn — A. O. Hume.

and gratitude but I hope also the love and gratitude of our children and children's children." ⁵⁶

In a soul-stirring letter addressed to the graduates of the Calcutta University on the 1st of March, 1883, Hume observed "Every nation secures precisely as good a government as it merits. If you, the picked men, the most highly educated of the nation, cannot, scorning personal ease and selfish objects, make a resolute struggle to secure greater freedom for yourselves and your country, a more impartial administration a larger share in the management of your own affairs, then we your friends, are wrong and our adversaries right; then are Lord Ripon's noble aspirations for your good fruitless and visionary; then at present, at any rate all hopes of progress are at an end; and India truly neither lacks nor deserves any better government than she now enjoys. Only, if this be so let us hear no more factious, peevish complaints that you are kept in leading strings, and treated like children for you will have proved yourselves such Men know how to act. Let there be no more complaints of Englishmen being preferred to you in all important offices for if you lack that public spirit, that highest form of altruistic devotion that leads men to subordinate private ease to the public weal, that true patriotism that has made Englishmen what they are — then rightly are these preferred to you, and rightly and inevitably have they become your rulers. And rulers and task masters they must continue, let the yoke gall your shoulders never so sorely until you realised and stand prepared to act upon the eternal truth that whether in the case of individuals or nations, self-sacrifice and unselfishness are the only unfailing guides to freedom and happiness." ⁵⁷

The First Session of the Indian National Congress met at Poona on the 27th of December, 1885. The delegates from Madras were S. Subramania Iyer, P. Anandacharlu, P. Rungiah Naidu, G. Subramania Iyer and M. Viraraghavachariar.

The First Congress made a definite claim for substantial popular representation on the Indian Legislative Councils. It will be quite appropriate to quote in full this epoch-making resolution. This resolution was moved by the Hon. K. T. Telang, C.I.E., seconded by the Hon. S. Subramania Iyer and supported by Dadabhai Naoroji.

"Resolve — That this Congress considers the reform and expansion of the Supreme and existing local legislative councils, by

56 G. A. Natesan (Ed.) — *op. cit.*, Part II, p. 54.

57 W. Wedderburn — *op. cit.*, pp. 52-53.

the admission of a considerable proportion of elected members (and the creation of similar councils for the North West Provinces and Oudh, and also for the Punjab) essential; and holds that all Budgets should be referred to those Councils for consideration, their members being moreover empowered to interpellate the executive in regard to all branches of the administration; and that a Standing Committee of the House of Commons should be constituted to receive and consider any formal protest that may be recorded by majorities of such Councils against the exercise by the Executive of the power which would be vested in it, of over-ruling the decisions of such majorities."⁵⁸

A.O. Hume observed that "It (the resolution) indicated the very essence of the great task which the people of India, at last a nation one and indivisible henceforth and for ever, was soberly and deliberately girding up their loins to undertake."⁵⁹

It was decided at the first session to hold the Congress session year after year at different centres of India. Regarding the object of the Congress at this time, The *Swadesamitran* of the 17th of December, 1887, writes, "The object of the Congress is not that the English should abdicate India, or that all powers of government should be vested in the hands of the natives, for which they are totally unfit, but the government should, in the first instance, take the opinion of the representatives of the people, while enacting laws or while imposing taxes or incurring any expenditure. Government may or may not follow the suggestions of the representatives as it thinks proper but the one thing needed is that the government should always consult them in matters of administration, and, if this rule is established, it will not always be easy for government to go against the wishes of the people. The government being foreign has not the means of learning the likes and dislikes of its subjects. Or of emphasising with them in the same manner as it would sympathise with people of its own nation. This being the case, it is natural for the government to spend money in ways which promote the aggrandisement of its own nation, as witness the occupation of Burma, which but opens a new field for British talent and commerce, while the wants of the people of India are left unremedied. If the people themselves had some slight share in the government of the country there would be less facility afforded to government for expending money for the benefit of foreigners, and to obtain this amount of power is the aim of the Congress."⁶⁰

58 Annie Besant — *op. cit.*, p. 13.

59 W. Wedderburn — *op. cit.*, p. 59.

60 Newspaper Report (Confidential), 1887, p. 19.

All sections of the Indian population did not, at first however, show an equal enthusiasm for the Congress movement. The Christians and Muhammadans refused to co-operate with the Congress. The great Muslim leader of the time was Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. He first held that the Hindus and Muslims were the two eyes of India. Later, when the Congress was organised, he kept aloft from it organised rival associations and even went back on some of his earlier views, for instance he had once advocated simultaneous civil service examinations, but began opposing the idea when the Congress adopted it. He felt and said that in an Indian democracy the Muslims would be overwhelmed by the Hindus.

Jalva-I-Sakun of Madras in its issue of the 15th of September, 1888, expressed the view that "it could not advise Muhammadans to join the Hindu Congress which was trying to force government and pursuing its aims in an altogether improper way," as the paper put it but at the same time it recommended that "a Muhammadan conference should be held to inform government respectfully and constitutionally of the wants and aspirations of Muslims for the government being of a different race could not be aware," according to this paper, "of those wants unless informed of them."⁶¹

Several of the Muslim leaders considered it more profitable to side with the government than to join the congress. The Muslim delegates who attended the Congress were very small in number in the beginning.

Though the Congress was the mouthpiece of Indian public opinion throughout India, it may be useful to concentrate for our purposes on its Madras sessions, as these sessions greatly stimulated the development of public opinion in the Madras Presidency.

Madras had the privilege of being the venue for the 3rd Session of the Congress. It met on the 27th day of December, 1887 in Mackay's Garden and was presided over by Budrudin Tyabji.⁶² Budrudin Tyabji was one of the ardent Muslim supporters of the Congress from Bombay. It was at his instance that a committee was appointed to consider the many suggestions sent in for discussion and to draw up a programme for the work of the Congress. This Committee was really the precursor of the Subjects Committee of later days. He became later a judge of the Bombay High Court. He passed away in 1906.

61 Newspaper Report (Conf.), 1888, p. 218.

62 Annie Besant — *op. cit.*, p. 35.

As early as May, 1, 1887, a strong reception committee of some 120 members was formed, with Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao as Chairman and including Hindus, Muslims, Christians and other communities. Sir T. Madhava Rao was one of the most outstanding statesmen of his time. He was born in the city of Kumbakonam, in 1828. His father, R. Ranga Rao, was Dewan of Travancore. Madhava Rao spent his early years in Madras and studied in the Presidency College, then known as the High School of the Madras University." He took his Proficient's Degree in 1846.

After taking his degree, he acted as tutor of mathematics and physics at his *Alma Mater* for some time. But soon afterwards, he obtained a situation in the office of the Accountant-General, and, while employed there he was offered the place of tutor to the princes of Travancore, which he accepted. This was the first step in his long career in Indian States. Madhava Rao remained as tutor for about four years, and was then appointed to a responsible office in the revenue branch of the administration under the Dewan.

Then he became the Dewan of Travancore in 1857. As Dewan, he left no stone unturned to improve the administration of the state which was at the lowest ebb at the time of the assumption of office. The British government recognised the meritorious services of Madhava Rao and conferred on him the title of K.C.S.I. an honour rarely conferred on Indians. In the same year, Madhava Rao was made a Fellow of the University of Madras.

Madhava Rao could not continue his service as Dewan of Travancore State due to misunderstanding that developed between him and the Maharaja of the state.

Madhava Rao decided on spending the remaining years of his life in Madras. But the Government of India felt that such abilities as were possessed by Sir Madhava Rao should not be allowed to lie dormant and when the Maharaja of Indore, H. H. Tukojee Rao Holkhar required a competent officer to administer his state, they could not think of any one else except Madhava Rao who assumed charge of his duties in 1873. His administration of Indore lasted only for two years. When Mulhar Rao, Gaekwar of Baroda, was deposed for maladministration the Government of India appointed Madhava Rao as Dewan of Baroda in 1875.

The title of "Raja" was conferred on him in 1877. He continued administering the affairs of Baroda till 1882. The remaining years of his life were spent in Madras where he devoted himself to

his favourite pursuits and studies. He never ceased to take interest in politics. Home and foreign journals, reviews and newspapers formed an important portion of his reading. He also launched a paper called the *Native Public Opinion*. However, it quickly passed into undesirable hands and became defunct in 1887. He began to take a wide interest in social questions directing his attention chiefly to female education, and the evil of early marriage.

In 1885, at the request of Sir Grant Duff, Sir Madhava Rao presided over the deliberations of the Malabar Land Tenure Commission, and in 1887, at the request of Lord Connemara, delivered the annual address to the graduates at the convocation of the Madras University. In the same year, he was elected President of the Reception Committee at the third Congress.

Sir T. Madhava Rao, as the Chairman of the Reception Committee, speaking of the Congress, observed, "it was the soundest triumph of British Administration, and a Crown of Glory to the British Nation."⁶⁶ He died of paralysis on the 4th of April, 1891.

This Madras session of the Congress was organised well. Every town of over 10,000 inhabitants was asked to form a sub-committee and vigorous political propaganda was carried on. 30,000 copies of a Congress catechism in Tamil by Viraraghavachariar were distributed. A striking proof of the result of this was the fact that Rs. 5,500 were contributed by 8,000 subscribers, varying from one anna to Rs. 1-8-0 and another Rs. 8,000 varying from Rs. 1-8-0 to Rs. 30. A notable feature of the list of subscriptions was that it contained the names of the ruling princes of Mysore, Travancore and Cochin and others like the Maharaja of Vizianagaram and the Raja of Venkatagiri — a pleasant contrast to the attitude of the ruling princes later. 607 delegates were actually present, of whom 36 belonged to the state of Madras.

The prominent Madras leaders who participated in the deliberations included, Viraraghavachariar, G. Subramania Iyer P. Anandacharlu and P. Rungiah Naidu. The participation of two Englishmen is noteworthy. One was John Adam, Principal of the Pachaiyappa's College (1884-1894). The other, Eardley Norton, son of John Bruce Norton about whom mention has already been made. Eardley was born in 1852. He was called to the bar in England in 1870. He came to Madras in 1879. He had inherited from his father not only aptitude for law but also the spirit of help to the Indian. He was

63 Mrs. Annie Besant — *op. cit.*, p. 35.

associated with the Indian National Congress.⁶⁴ Another great Indian also took part in this Congress, Salem Ramaswami Mudaliar, was born to Salem Gopalaswami Mudaliar, on the September 6, 1852, in Salem. He had his higher education in the Presidency College, Madras and took his B.A. Degree in 1871. He privately studied for M.A. in History and Moral Science which he passed in 1873. In 1875, he qualified himself for the legal profession by taking his B.L. Degree. In 1876 he was enrolled as an advocate of the Madras High Court and established himself at Salem for practising there. He was appointed a District Munsiff in 1876. Being dissatisfied with the job, he gave it up in 1882 and moved to Madras to practise as advocate at Madras. He began now to play an effective part in the political activities of South India. The first time he took prominent part in a public movement was in 1882 for protesting against any public character being accorded to a memorial meeting in honour of a retiring member of the Madras Council. The Madras Maha Jana Sabha was carrying on agitation against official vagaries and as one of its members, Salem Ramaswamy Mudaliar, exercised considerable influence.

One effective way that suggested itself to political leaders in India for the redress of the grievances of the people, soon after Lord Ripon's departure, was that some of India's own sons should go to England and plead her cause before the English electorate in the General election of 1885. For this responsible and novel task, Salem Ramaswamy Mudaliar was deputed to England from Madras, with two other delegates from Bombay and Bengal. Ramaswamy Mudaliar and his brother-delegates addressed several meetings in England. The effect of these meetings on the English mind generally was the creation of a profound impression of the overwhelming responsibility borne by England towards this country.

Though he attended only two Congress sessions the one at Madras in 1887, and the other at Allahabad in the next year, his services to the Congress cause were felt to be so valuable that its presidentship was once offered to him which he declined as he thought he had not sufficiently established a claim thereto. As a trustee of the Pachiyappa's Charities, he did effectual work. On the Madras Municipal Board, his counsel was valued both by the President and the Commissioners; and if it had been given to him to witness the fruition of his political labours connected with the Indian Council's Act of 1892, he would have been returned by that body to the Legislative Council. In the meantime, death by which so many

64 V. C. Gopalaratnam — *op. cit.*, pp. 276-280.

of the promising men of this country were carried away before they attained the meridian of their power, claimed him, and he passed away on the 2nd of March, 1892.⁶⁵

It is noteworthy that the British, at first, were not unfavourable towards the Indian National Congress. W. C. Bannerjee, in his introduction to *Indian Politics* writes, "he, Lord Dufferin, said (to Hume) that there was no body or persons in this country who performed the functions which Her Majesty's Opposition did in England. The newspapers, even if they really represented the views of the people, were not reliable and as the English were necessarily ignorant of what was thought of them and their policy in native circles, it would be very desirable in the interests as well of the rulers as of the ruled that Indian politicians should meet yearly and point out to the government in what respects the administration was defective and how it could be improved."⁶⁶

But at the same time, we must note, that Lord Dufferin did not take kindly to the activities of the Congress and indeed criticised them at the St. Andrews Dinner at Calcutta, on the 30th November, 1888, shortly before he left India. He criticised the Congress as representing "a microscopic minority" and denounced its representative character on that ground. He asked, "how any reasonable man could imagine that the British Government would be content to allow this, microscopic minority to control the administration of that majestic and multiform empire for whose safety and welfare they are responsible in the eyes of God and before the face of civilisation."⁶⁷

That the government was still not completely not unfavourable to the activities of the Congress is seen in the fact that Lord Connemara, Governor of Madras (1886-1890), gave a garden party at the government guest house to the delegates of the third session of the Congress held at Madras.

Public opinion in favour of enlargement of the legislature with the elected representatives was constantly echoed both in the press and on the platform. The editor of the *Swadesamitran* of the 4th of September, 1886, pertinently asked, "was it not necessary to understand the wishes of the people when framing enactments that affected them? Could any enactment, which was considered suitable to the country by a few officials and a few lawyers, become by that adapted to the need of the people?"⁶⁸

65 G. Parameswaran Pillai — *Representative Indians* — pp. 214-216.

66 G. A. Natesan (Ed) — *Op. cit.* — Introduction — P. VI.

67 A. C. Banerjee — *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 57.

68 Newspaper Report (Confidential), 1886—p. 3.

The British government felt that some further advance was necessary. It is curious to note that Lord Dufferin, though he was condemning the Indian National Congress at the St. Andrews Dinner at Calcutta, was at the same time writing a secret despatch supporting the reform of the councils. "We have educated these people, their desire to take a larger part in the management of their own domestic work seems to be a legitimate and reasonable aspiration, and I think there should be enough statesmanship amongst us to contrive the means of permitting them to do so without unduly compromising our imperial supremacy."⁶⁹ His confidential despatch formed the basis for the ultimate birth of the Act of 1892.

This Act enlarged the size of the provincial legislatures by increasing the nominated members to "not less than eight and not more than twenty."⁷⁰ The act stated that in the case of corporations like municipalities and local boards or associations like those of university or a chamber of commerce or landholders, it would be convenient and advantageous for the governor to consult their wishes in the matter of the selection of members to represent them and to nominate only such men as might be recommended by their confidence.⁷¹

Thus, the principle of election was indirectly initiated by this act. Theoretically, members continued as before to be nominated by the Government. In practice, however, the discretion of the government in making the selection of some of the nominated candidates was limited by the recommendations of recognised bodies and associations. Such recommendations were not rejected usually.

The act also extended the powers wielded by the legislatures. For the first time, the act enable the legislative councils to discuss the annual financial statements, subject, however, to the qualification stated by Mr. Curzon, then under-secretary of state for India, who was later to become Lord Curzon, the Viceroy (1899-1904). "It is not contemplated to vote the budget in India item by item in the manner in which we do it in this house, and to subject it to all the obstacles and delays which partly ingenuity or loquacity can suggest. But, it is proposed to give opportunities to members of the councils to indulge in a full, free and fair criticism of the financial policy of the government, and I think all parties will gain by such a discussion." He continued, "The government will gain, because they will have an opportunity of explaining their financial policy, of removing misapprehension, of

69 A. C. Banerjee — *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 63.

70 Clause I — sub (i) of the Act.

71 G.O. No. 886 — Pub. (Conf.), dated 22nd Nov., 1907, pp.15-17:

answering calumny and attack, and they will also profit by the criticism delivered in a public position, and with a due sense of responsibility, by the most competent representatives of non-official India."⁷²

The second change introduced by the act was "the concession of the right of interpellation, or of asking questions."⁷³

Though the Act of 1892 marked a certain advance on the Act of 1861, it still failed to satisfy public opinion. The *Sasilekha* of the 29th of October, 1897, commented that "the expansion of the Indian Councils is merely illusory and not substantial, for the members have no rights but that of interpellation, while the government is not bound to answer the questions put."⁷⁴

"Though falling short of demands and expectations," says Prof. Nilakanta Sastri, "these changes brought Indians into active participation in the government of their country, their voice was sure to be heard on every question, though it might not prevail on all in the face of the official block which was in a majority. But, the first great step had been taken, and the rest was only a question of time."⁷⁵

The next landmark in the development of the legislature was the passing of the Act of 1909. However, the period between the Acts of 1892 and 1909 forms a memorable epoch in the history of Indian nationalism. Various events took place during this period which went a long way to stimulate the national feeling of the people. The very nature of agitation came to be drastically modified during this period. The growth of nationalism and the growth of public opinion are almost identical and therefore this period forms an important stage in the growth of public opinion.

The most notable feature of this period was the birth of a new spirit in the people, the spirit of self-reliance and manliness and the spirit of sacrifice to win freedom for the country. The first decade of the present century was particularly a period of unrest and turmoil all over India.

The tenth congress met at Madras in 1894. This was presided over by Alfred Webb, an Irish man and a member of the Parliament of Great Britain. P. Rungiah Naidu was the Chairman of the Reception Committee. Among the Madrassis that took part in the proceedings,

72 A. B. Keith — *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 56.

73 *Ibid* — P. 57.

74 Newspaper Report (Conf.), 1897 — p. 305.

75 *History of India* — Part III — Modern India — P. 314.

besides the old familiar veterans, there appeared two new figures, N. Subba Rao Pantulu and C. Sankaran Nair.

Nyapathi Subba Rao was born in 1854. After being educated in the Madras Christian College, he took his B.A. in 1876 and B.L. in 1879. Enrolling himself at the bar, he commenced his practice at Rajahmundry in 1886. He evinced keen interest in politics and was a staunch supporter of the Indian National Congress. "His connection with the congress began almost from its birth," says Pattabi Sitaramayya, "for he was present and spoke at the 4th Congress (Allahabad, 1888), and since then he figured on the Congress platform moving, seconding or supporting resolutions relating to salt-tax, separation of the judiciary and the executive, the admission of Indians into the Executive councils, trial by jury and the position of legal practioners."⁷⁶ The notable resolution of the session was moved by N. Subba Rao Pantulu complaining of the system of recruitment for the judicial service which made men judges without any sufficient training in law. He observed, "litigation has become a question of gambling, and no one can be sure, notwithstanding he has a good case, that that would be the view which would prevail in the Courts."⁷⁷

This Madras session of the Congress for the first time moved a resolution protesting against the disfranchisement of Indians in South Africa—the first of many protests. This was moved from the Chair and carried.⁷⁸

Sankaran Nair was born in 1857 as a prominent member of the Nair community of Malabar. He had his collegiate education at the Presidency College, Madras, and passed his B.A. in 1877 and B.L. in 1879. Then, he was enrolled as vakil of the Madras High Court in 1880. The Government of Madras appointed him as a member of Committee to enquire into the State of Malabar in 1884. No matter pertaining to the Malayalees was finalised without consulting him. He was nominated to the Madras legislative Council in 1890. He was later elected as the President of the Indian National Congress held at Amraoti, capital of Berar, in 1897. He was a member of the Madras Municipality. He was for long connected with the Madras Maha Jana Sabha and for some time, as its Secretary. He occupied the posts of Government Pleader, Public Prosecutor and Advocate-General of the Madras High Court during the years 1889, 1904--07 and 1907 respectively. He became a judge of the High Court in 1908 and in

⁷⁶ *The History of the Congress*, Vol. I, p. 114.

⁷⁷ Res. VII of the 10th Congress — Mrs. Annie Besant — *op. cit.*, p. 192.

⁷⁸ Vide — Res. XXI of the 10th Congress — *Ibid*, p. 204.

1915 became a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. He died in 1934.⁷⁹

In this session of the Congress at Madras, criticism was levelled against the India Council. Eardley Norton moved a resolution asking for the abolition of the India Council and observed, "at present we stand sandwiched between officials in India and officials of Europe. The Council members are swayed by the same official interest, trained in the same official career, steeped in the same official prejudices as the men out here, who, also with the best of intentions, are resolutely endeavouring to thwart and obstruct your moral, material and political reforms."⁸⁰

The 14th Congress was also held in Madras on December 29th 30th and 31st, 1898. Ananda Mohan Bose presided over the session. In his presidential remarks, he observed, that the educated classes of India are the friends and not the foes of England, her natural and necessary allies in the great work that lay before her.⁸¹ The Congress attended to a serious grievance concerning the policy of government in the North West Frontier. Moving a resolution on the Frontier policy of the government, G. Subramania Iyer observed, "All improvements at home were starved for want of the funds wasted in foolish aggression. If the wars were made for imperial purposes then let Britain pay the cost, and leave Indian money to be spent on Indian needs."⁸²

Then, five years later, in 1903, the Congress again met in Madras in its 19th session. Lal Mohan Ghose presided. His presidential address was one of the ablest addresses ever delivered from the Congress platform. He declared, "We are not a self-governing nation. We are not able, like the English people, to change one administration for another by our votes in the polling booths. We have to depend entirely upon, the justice of the British Parliament; for, unfortunately, it is only too true that, as time advances, our Indian bureaucracy, instead of coming into line with popular ideas, seems to grow more and more unsympathetic."⁸³ Representatives from Burma attended this session for the first time.

D. E. Wacha moved the oft-repeated resolution against the exclusion of Indians from the higher grades of the public services. He said,

79 *The Madras High Court Centenary Volume* — pp. 47-48.

80 Res. IV of the 10th Congress — Mrs. Annie Besant — *op. cit.*, p. 188.

81 Annie Besant — *Ibid* — P. 274.

82 Res. No. VII — *Ibid* — P. 276.

83 Pattabi Sitaramayya — *op. cit.*, Vol. I — pp. 105-106.

"We do not grumble at Europeans having a share of the loaves and fishes, but we do grumble and make it a strong grievance that the bigger and most numerous loaves are deliberately allowed, in defiance of charters, pledges and proclamations, to go to the whites, and smaller and fewer loaves to the blacks.⁸⁴ Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty marks another stage in the development of our nation. Various measures of Lord Curzon created a tremendous upheaval of popular feeling everywhere. Lord Curzon had no faith in governing through the people or with their aid. He reserved all higher posts for Englishmen "for the reason that they possess, partly by heredity, partly by upbringing, and partly by education, the knowledge of the principles of government, the habit of mind, and the vigour of character which are essential for the task." The keynote of his government was that "the bureaucracy knew what was good for the people. He had no faith in the policy of educating Indians for self-government. He had no wish to sacrifice efficiency in the present for efficiency and freedom in the future." The idea of representation, he said, "was alien to the Indian mind."⁸⁵

Lord Curzon partitioned the province of Bengal in 1905. Administrative exigency was stated as the sole cause for the partition. But, the people had reason to believe the partition was a design to drive a wedge between the Hindus and Muhammadans and to create a communal enmity and disunion. For, at a meeting in East Bengal, Lord Curzon, explained to the Muhammadans that his object in partitioning Bengal was not only to relieve the Bengal administration but also to create a Muhammadan province, where Islam could be predominant and its followers in the ascendancy.

His partition, of Bengal had however, a good result for, "in the evolution of political progress, bad rulers are often a blessing in disguise. They help to stir a community into life, a result that years of agitation would perhaps have failed to achieve. They call into being organised efforts which not only sweep away their bad measures, but create that public life and spirit which survives for all time to come, and is the surest guarantee of future and abiding progress."⁸⁶

Surendranath Banerjea, who made these observations, compared Lord Curzon with the former viceroy, Lord Lytton. He remarked, "Lord Lytton was a benefactor, without intending to be one; and more recently, Lord Curzon was a benefactor in the same sense, but perhaps on a larger scale."⁸⁷

84 Res. No. II — Vide Annie Besant — *op. cit.*, p. 380.

85 A. C. Banerjee — *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 82.

86 Surendranath Banerjea — *op. cit.*, p. 64.

87 *Ibid* — p. 64.

It is not unlikely that the movement for self-government would have advanced sooner or later even without this partition; but, the partition gave a great impetus to this movement.

External events also contributed towards stimulating agitation. Till the close of the 19th century, it was believed that European organisation and power made Europeans practically invincible. This belief began to wane when the Abyssinians won a decisive victory over the Italians in 1896. The success of Japan in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905 was considered by the people of Asia and India to herald the dawn of a new era.

In the year 1906, the Congress proclaimed the ideal of "Swaraj" for the people of India. However, the term "Swaraj", at that time did not convey anything more than the description of status of a self-governing dominion of the British Empire. The idea of complete independence was only to come later. Unfortunately, a rift developed soon in the ranks of the nationalists.

Till the year 1906, the goal of the leaders of Congress was nothing more than a greater share in the administration of their country than was conceded to by the Act of 1892, the ultimate India-nisation of the services and conducting the Civil Service Examination simultaneously, expansion of the legislative councils on an elective basis and the separation of the executive and judiciary. The means adopted for reaching this goal were strictly constitutional, consisting mainly of passing resolutions, drafting petitions and sending deputations, and the majority of the leaders still expressed their faith in India's connection with Britain. The leaders had a profound faith in the good intention of the British government and hoped that the innate liberal nature of British public opinion would induce the government to satisfy all the legitimate grievance of the Indian people. As a matter of fact, we find that every Congress session opened with a resolution expressing profound loyalty to the British throne.⁸⁸

The year 1907 forms the saddest year in the history of the Congress. The 23rd session of the Congress met at Surat. Trouble arose on the election of the president. One group wanted that Lala Lajpat Rai should be elected as the President of the Congress and the other

88 It may be noted that Lord Pentland, Governor of Madras (1912-1919), attended the session of the Congress on the first day of its meeting in its 29th Session of 1914 and remained there while Surendranath Banerjea moved the loyalty resolution. It was the first visit ever paid by a representative of the Crown at the Congress session. Such visits, however, had no influence on governmental policies. (Mrs. Anni Besant — *op. cit.*, p. 585)

group was in favour of Rash Behari Ghose who was ultimately elected president.

Bala Gangadhar Tilak then came to the platform and said he wished to move an amendment. The president ruled him out of order. Following this, trouble developed and the meeting ended in confusion. From now began the two groups called the Moderates and Extremists. "The leaders of each group", says G. N. Singh, "were men of great courage and independence of spirit and all of them had made sacrifices. They were dominated by the same aim of an India restored to its pristine glory and freedom. The difference between the two groups was one of method only."⁸⁹ The Moderates believed in the conventional method of seeking reforms through the constitutional channels which were opened to India at that time like public meetings, passing of resolutions and sending deputations. The Extremists considered that these methods had outlived their usefulness and the British government, strongly entrenched in power, would never yield to such mild methods of protest. They urged a more active policy including boycott of British goods and organised demonstrations. The British government of the day regarded these Extremists as the sympathisers and indeed positive instigators of revolutionary societies which believed in terrorism.⁹⁰

The 23rd Session of the Indian National Congress, which was thus suspended under painful circumstances constituted a convention committee which met at Allahabad on the 18th — 19th of April, 1908 and drew up a constitution for the Congress wherein Article I explained that the objects of the Congress were the attainment by the people of India of a system of government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British Empire and participation by them in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with those members. These objects were to be achieved by constitutional means by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration and by promoting national unity, fostering public spirit and developing and organising the intellectual, moral, economic and industrial resources of the country.⁹¹

The Congress which met at Madras in 1908 was the first to be held under the constitution drawn up by the Convention Committee appointed at Surat in 1907. The Congress was held in a huge *Pandal*

⁸⁹ *Land marks in Indian Constitutional and National Development*, p. 259.

⁹⁰ We may note that the great Indian publicist, N. Subba Rau, whose career we studied earlier, tried to reconcile the Moderates and the Extremists in the Madras Session of the Congress in 1914 but the Moderates and the Extremists united together only in 1916.

⁹¹ *Vide* — Mrs. Annie Besant — *op. cit.*, p. 470.

in the Elphinstone Grounds in Mount Road and the moving spirit of the Congress was V. Krishnaswami Aiyar. Krishnaswami Aiyar, having qualified in Law, enrolled himself as an advocate at Madras. But not content with his work at the bar, Krishnaswami Aiyar threw himself into politics and became a close associate and valued friend of Gokhale, Wacha and Surendranath Banerjea. "Though formally designated a Moderate", writes, Dr. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, "moderation itself suffused with so much of impassioned enthusiasm and so much of fervour that the designation appeared to be quite a misnomer in the case of Krishnaswami Aiyar."⁹² On his appointment as a member of the Executive council of the Governor. Dr. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, opined, "It was perhaps a pity that at the height of his forensic and political career, the offer came to him from the Governor."⁹³ His work in that capacity was marked by great legislative and argumentative activities and he displayed statesmanship and strength of decision of a rare type. He fell ill in Delhi during famous Durbar where he was decorated and he died before he was 50 years of age.

The period after 1907 saw the growth of the Swadeshi Movement. This had two objects. There was the economic motive of reviving Indian industries which had suffered under foreign competition. There was also the political motive of boycott of British goods as a method of bringing pressure to bear upon the government. The Congress adopted this programme and a prominent leader of the Madras presidency was V. O. Chidambaram Pillai.

V. O. Chidambaram Pillai (1872-1936) was born on the 5th September, 1872, at Ottapidaram in Tinnevely District. He qualified for law and settled at Tuticorin and continued his legal profession from 1900. He became an ardent champion of the freedom movement in the South. The climax of his political career was the starting of an Indian Steam Navigation about which more will be said later.

Subramania Siva who worked with Chidambaram Pillai came to Tuticorin in the early month of 1908. The coming of Subramania Siva strengthened the hands of Chidambaram Pillai. The criminal Investigation Department of the Madras Police refers to Subramania Siva in the following disparaging terms :—

"Subramania Siva, whose real name is B. Subramania Aiyar, is a mere non-entity. He is a native of the Madura District, he appeared twice or three times for the Matriculation Examination; but failed and then applied for a post on Rs. 10/- or less in the police, but

92 V. C. Gopalaratnam — *op. cit.*, p. 164.

93 *Ibid* — p. 165.

failed to obtain a certificate of physical fitness. He then embraced the life of a *Sanyasi*, travelling from place to place and living on charity."⁹⁴

Subramania Siva dedicated his life for the cause of freedom of our country. He and V. O. Chidambaram Pillai almost every day addressed the people of Tuticorin during the month of February and till their arrest on the 12th of March, 1908.

On the 19th of February, 1908, at a meeting held on the Tuticorin Beach, Subramania Siva enlightened the people on the "Dangers arising from a foreign government." He observed, "the government by a foreign nation could never be permanent while "Swaraj" or self-government alone could become so." Quoting the United States and the British Dominions as instances, he made a reference to the assassination of the King and the crown Prince of Portugal, justifying the same, because the people were forced to take that step on account of oppression and concluded his speech by saying that "India is for the Indians and not for foreigners."⁹⁵

In this connection, it is fair to note that in a later speech delivered in a meeting on the 4th of March, 1908, he asserted that he was against the use of force and urged people only in the path of passive resistance. He undoubtedly preached against foreign oppression, but disclaimed the charge that this could be regarded as sedition⁹⁶.

In a meeting held at Tuticorin on the 5th of March, Subramania Siva referred to the release of Bipin Chandra Pal on the 9th of March. In 1907, this distinguished patriot of Bengal toured South India and addressed several meetings, exhorting the people to boycott foreign goods and on the value of "Swaraj." The *Shams-ul-Akbhar* of the 6th of May, 1907, reported that "Baboo S. Pal has been delivering lectures in Madras before large gatherings on the seashore. In a lecture on the Swadeshi movement, the Baboo has forcibly pointed out the dark side of the British administration and the independent attitude, self-interestedness, evil intentions and oppression of the authorities. This lecture seems to have had such an effect on the hearers that many of them took their English-made hats and burnt them."⁹⁷

94 Note on the riots in Tinnevely and Tuticorin in March, 1908 — p. 3.

95 G.O. No. 1542, Judicial Dept. (Conf.), dated, 3rd October, 1911 — pp. 13-14.

96 *Ibid* — pp. 195-196.

97 Newspaper Report (Conf.), 1907 — p. 149.

The *Kistnapatrika* (a Telugu weekly published from Masulipatnam), of May 3, 1907, referring to the warm welcome accorded to Pal in the Telugu country, observed, "The respect and the hospitality with which the people entertained him and the eagerness with which the people listened to his speeches were not signs of temporary rise of feelings but they convey a special meaning underlying them. There were the indications of desire for independence and a longing for change, lurking in the hearts of the people."⁹⁸

The Government of India took action against Pal when he refused to give evidence against the editor of the *Bande Mataram* and was sentenced to six months imprisonment. Subramania Siva explained all these things to the audience and observed, "we have heard of Harischandra, who lost everything for the sake of truth in the same way as Bipin Chandra Pal. On the 9th of March, he comes out of jail. So, we must gather on that day a large crowd. We will celebrate that memorable occasion by organising a procession all round the town. In the evening, we must assemble on the beach. The "lion of Swaraj" comes out and that day will be the day when we will come out from our bonds and hoist the flag of "Swaraj."

Meetings were arranged all over the presidency to kindle the feeling of nationalism among the people. The press played an equally significant part in spreading these views in every part of the presidency.

The poet, Subramania Bharati (1882-1921) made impassionate emotional appeals to the national spirit of the people through his poems. He was born on the 11th of December, 1882, in Ettayapuram in Tinnevely District. He came to Madras in 1904 and joined the *Swadesamitran* as one of its assistant editors. He then became editor of a weekly *India* from 1906. He attended the annual congress since then and became a passionate patriot. His poems proved instantaneously popular. "His work", writes, Dr. M. Varadarajan, "reveal the deep influence of Mazzini's writings."⁹⁹ Personal freedom, national liberty and the fundamental equality of all men find reiterated expression in his verses. The government naturally found him dangerous and wanted to prosecute him in 1908. However, Bharati secretly left Madras and reached Pondicherry. Pondicherry served as a political asylum for the nationalist "exiles" of South India.

The government resorted to all sorts of repressive measures to suppress these activities. The Seditious Meeting Act of 1907 gave power to the Government of India to apply the act to any province

⁹⁸ *Ibid* — p. 157.

⁹⁹ Dr. Nagendra (ed), *Indian Literature* — Tamil — p. 43.

of India. The local authorities required three days' notice of every meeting of more than 20 persons proposed to be held for any purpose whatsoever. The clause defining public meetings was so wide that social meetings held in private houses could also be considered public meetings. The authorities were given the power of prohibiting any public meeting, to impose any restrictions that they might deem fit in the interests of public peace on the meetings that were allowed to be held and to send the police to attend all meetings.

The Explosive Substances Act of 1908 strengthened the provisions of the Indian Arms Act of 1878 and the Explosives Act of 1884 as the Government of India considered these insufficient and defective in view of the new situation. The new Act not only dealt with explosive but also with the materials and implements which could be used in their manufacture; and "any one who was found in possession or control of them in suspicious circumstances was punishable with the transportation for fourteen years or imprisonment for five years."¹⁰⁰ Even if no explosion was actually caused but an attempt to cause it was established, the offence became punishable with transportation for 20 years or imprisonment for seven years.¹⁰¹ And above all, "any person who, by supply of or solicitation for money, providing of premises, supply of materials, or in any manner whatsoever, procures, counsels, aids, abets or is accessory to the commission of any offence under this Act, shall be punished with the punishment provided for the offence."¹⁰²

Prosecutions for sedition were also launched in the Madras presidency, just as in other parts of India. V. O. Chidambaram Pillai and Subramania Siva were arrested on the 12th of March, 1908, on the charges of conspiring together to excite disaffection towards the government by the delivery of speeches in Tuticorin on the 23rd and 25th of February and the 5th of March, 1908. A serious riot in Tinnevely followed their arrest in which much government property was damaged. "Every public building in Tinnevely town except the office was attacked. The furniture and record of these buildings were set on fire as well as portions of buildings themselves; the municipal office was gutted. Twenty seven persons were convicted and sentenced for participation in the riot."¹⁰³

The proceedings against Subramania Siva and V. O. Chidambaram Pillai furnish a clue to understand the trend of the official attitude

100 Clause 5 of the Act.

101 Clause 4 of the Act.

102 Clause 6 of the Act.

103 Clause *Sedition Committee Report* 1918 — p. 163.

towards the National movement. The Additional Sessions Judge, of Tinnevely, A. F. Pinhey, who conducted the case observed that there was no ambiguity in the term "Swaraj" as the accused (Subramania Siva) had clearly stated.

The Sessions Judge cited the observations made by the accused to support his conclusion. "Nothing can be done without shedding of blood. Japan was prepared to sacrifice 20,000 men and gained a victory over Russia. If 15 crores of Indians do the same, "Swaraj" will be obtained."¹⁰⁴ The Sessions Judge convicted Subramania Siva and sentenced him to transportation for ten years.

The case for the prosecution against Chidambaram Pillai was that he "engaged with Subramania Siva in a conspiracy to make seditious speeches and that Subramania Siva's speeches were made in pursuance of such conspiracy. Chidambaram Pillai gave shelter to Subramania Siva while he was at Tuticorin; "he provided the platform and audience for Subramania Siva and organised the lectures. Further they usually attended meetings together and both frequently spoke at the same meeting."¹⁰⁵ Chidambaram Pillai "not only did not dissent from any of the view expressed by Siva but sometimes made references to the latter" speeches when speaking after him and approved and enlarged on the same speech." "It seems clear," the Sessions Judge observed, "that the offences charged against Subramania Siva were committed by him in pursuance of a single continuing conspiracy between himself and Chidambaram Pillai and that the commission of each of these offences in turn made him a co-conspirator and abettor of each offence." On February 23, Chidambaram Pillai who was present made a speech parctically showing how Siva's goal of "Swaraj's" might be attained. On February 25, he was present at another meeting, though he did not speak. The mass of evidence admitted to prove the charge of general conspiracy was admitted under section 10 of the Indian Evidence Act."¹⁰⁶ Regarding the punishment to be offered, he observed. "The maximum penalty that the law permits would not seem to be too severe for such a case. He (Chidambaram Pillai) is evidently disloyal to the core and a man of a type most dangerous to Society." He, accordingly, "sentenced Chidambaram Pillai to transportation for life."¹⁰⁷

104 S.C. No. I of 1908, dated 7th July, 1908 — Para 25.

105 *Ibid* — Para 29.

106 *Ibid* — Para 34.

107 S.C. No. I of 1908, dated 7th July, 1908—para 36.

Both the accused appealed to the High Court, Madras. The Chief Justice, Sir Charles Arnold White and Justice Miller of the High Court, who heard the appeal, observed, "It seems to us to be not unlikely that the arrest was the immediate cause of the outbreak. At the same time, we think there can be little doubt that the fact of the arrest would not have occasioned a riot had it not been for the excited state of public feeling in Tuticorin and Tinnevely - a state of things which had been brought about by the inflammatory and seditious speeches which had been delivered by the 1st accused (Subramania Siva) and others. The speeches which form the subject matter of the present charges were delivered at Tuticorin; but it does not seem reasonable to suggest that the effect which they produced, and which in our opinion, they were intended to produce, was limited to the particular audience to whom they were addressed. The facility of communication between Tuticorin and Tinnevely is shown by the evidence of the movements of the accused on March 10, 1908, referred to in paragraph 13 of the judgement of the Additional Sessions Judge."¹⁰⁸ They continued, "upon the evidence, however, we are not prepared to hold that the riot at Tinnevely on March 13, 1908, was one of the natural consequences of the seditious speeches of the 1st accused (Subramania Siva)." "We are of opinion that the first accused, Subramania Siva, was rightly convicted of offences under section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code." As regards the question of punishment, we think the law will be vindicated by the imposition of a sentence of six years' transportation and, subject to this modification, we dismiss the appeal of the 1st accused, Subramania Siva."¹⁰⁹

About Chidambaram Pillai, they observed, "he cannot be acquitted of disloyalty merely because he deprecated violence; and his exhortations not to create disturbances and his acquiescence in the request of the authorities as to closing a meeting early are in our opinion due to a natural desire that the course of the meetings should not be interrupted. He was then, as his speeches show, in accord with Subramania Siva's views. He organised the series of speeches with Subramania Siva, in which Subramania Siva's role was that of the political propagandist, while he himself followed up with his economic disquisition. Each entered from time to time on the other's

108 On the 10th morning the accused (Subramania Siva and Chidambaram Pillai) who held a secret meeting at Tinnevely in the night, "were back again in Tuticorin and the prohibited procession with B. C. Pal's photo came off in the forenoon. Catching the 12-30 train they were back in Tinnevely in time to attend the district magistrate's court the same afternoon."

109 Judgment in Criminal Appeal No. 503 of 1908—p. 16.

ground and the goal to which both pointed was the departure of all foreigners and all things foreign from the land and the resulting "Swaraj" and prosperity."¹¹⁰

In the case of Chidambaram Pillai also the sentence was reduced to six years transportation.

We now pass on to the case of Ethiraja Surendranath Arya in the same year. He was accused under sections 124-A and 153-A of the Indian Penal Code for his Telugu speeches delivered at some parts of Madras on the 9th of March, 1908, the 3rd of May, 1908, and 2nd of June, 1908. The prosecution stated that in a meeting held on the 3rd of May, 1908, he observed, "In India there were 33 crores of men and if they only spit and throw sand on the foreigners they would be drowned in the spittle." On the 2nd of June, in another meeting, according to the prosecution, he stated, "Did not Mondodari, wife of Ravana, advise him not to keep Sita in confinement? Did not Ravana disregard it with lamentable consequences; so, the English rulers, without knowing our strength, are determined not to grant any of our entreaties. So, their fate will be like that of Ravana."¹¹¹

"Ethiraja Surendranath Arya," according to the C. I. D. Report, was "a native of Madras and a son of Dhanakoti Raju Naidu of Mylapore. About 1897, he went to Calcutta and joined the Sadhu Ashrama of the Brahmo Samaj, being converted to Brahmoism. He returned to Madras about the middle of 1906 and it is said that he was paid Rs. 30/- a month by the Samaj. His Chief associate was C. Subramania Bharati."¹¹² Justice L. V. Miller convicted him and sentenced him to transportation for a total period of 11 years on all charges.¹¹³

With regard to political terrorism, it may be noted that the Madras Government passed a measure in December, 1908, to expedite the trials of cases against persons involved in terrorist crimes and anarchist conspiracies and to end the existence of certain volunteer associations by declaring them unlawful. The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1908, was divided into two parts - the first prescribed a special form of trial by a magistrate after holding an *ex parte* enquiry; and the case, instead of being committed to the sessions, was to be tried by a bench of the High Court-consisting of three judges but without a jury. Evidence of persons which had not been cross-examined before they

¹¹⁰ Judgment in Criminal Appeal No. 491 of 1908, p. 22.

¹¹¹ G.O. No. 920, dated 3rd July, 1908 - Prosecution Note.

¹¹² C.I.D. Report, Madras, dated, 21st May, 1909, p. 1.

¹¹³ No. 13 of the Third Criminal Sessions of 1908, High Court of Madras.

were killed was made admissible and the decision of the three judges was final.

But, political terrorism did not play such a prominent part in Madras as in some other parts of India. The only important instance of a political crime was the shooting of Ashe, the District Magistrate of Tinnevely, on the 17th of June, 1911, by Vanchi Aiyar in a railway carriage at Maniyachi junction in the Tinnevely District. Vanchi Aiyar, however, immediately shot himself. This may be regarded as the culmination of political unrest following the conviction of V. O. Chidambaram Pillai.¹¹⁴

Writing at this distance of time, it is reasonable to remark that this suspicion of the British Government about the Extremists was unjustified and that the Extremists in general were averse to any kind of political crime. It is possible, however, that some of the violent speeches made by the Extremists's leaders might have misled the emotional youths particularly in Bengal to acts of political crimes.

Indeed, as the Sedition Committee observed, "We do not consider that there was any indigenous revolutionary movement in Madras, and but for the influence of Bipin Chandra Pal and the revolutionaries plotting in Paris and Pondicherry, there would have been no trouble in Southern India."¹¹⁵ These repressive measures could not curb the feeling of nationalism. The government also felt that it would be a prudent policy to grant some concessions to win the favour of the Moderates, the Muhammadans, the landlords and the princes. The Act of 1909 commonly called the Morley-Minto Reforms was the fruit of this feeling.

The Act of 1909 called Morley-Minto Reforms, made important modifications in the composition and functions of the provincial legislatures. The maximum limit of members of the legislatures for the provinces like Madras was fixed at 50 including the Governor and members of the Council.¹¹⁶ The official majority was given up. Instead there was set up a non-official majority. However, it is to

114 *Sedition Committee Report*, 1918, p. 165

115 *Ibid.*, 1918, p. 166.

116 Madras Legislative Council was composed of 49 including the Head of the Government.

Elected	21.
Nominated Non-officials	7.
Officials	20.
Governor	1.

be remembered that a non-official majority did not mean an elected majority. The non-officials might be members nominated by the government from among persons who were not in the services, in view of the fact that the powers of the provincial councils were very limited and the Head of the government had the power to withhold assent to any measure passed by a council, Lord Morley had advised the Government of India to give up official majority in the case of the provincial councils except that of Bengal, where there was to be an elected majority.

No special qualifications were laid down in the case of the nominated members. The object of nomination was to give representation to certain interests which were not sufficiently organised to be represented through election.

Among the official members some were ex-officio (Governor and 4 members of his council), nominated by the Head of government (Governor).

In the case of elected members, however, elaborate rules for elections were laid down. As we have seen earlier, even by the Act of 1892, a system of election was introduced. Although technically the representatives were nominated by the Head of the Government, in reality, they were elected by the constituents.

The Reforms of 1909 tried to do away with the fiction of nomination of elected representatives and openly adopted, wherever practical, the system of election for the appointment of non-official members to the Legislative Councils. However, election was not to be direct. The constituencies for the Provincial Council were formed out of municipalities and district boards, giving their votes in groups.

These changes in the constitution and composition of the provincial councils were accompanied by an enlargement of their functions and powers. The right to hold a general discussion of the budget which had been granted by the Act of 1892 was further improved by allowing the members to move resolutions on the budget, of moving resolutions on matters of general public importance and of asking supplementary questions on replies to their interpellations.

The Morley-Minto Reforms undoubtedly marked an improvement over the earlier Acts of 1861 and 1892. To the criticism against setting up a non-official majority in the provincial legislatures Lord Morley, the Secretary of State for India, replied as follows in a despatch dated the 27th of November, 1908.

“The non-official majority may press legislations of a character disapproved by the executive government. This should be met by the

exercise of the power to withhold assent possessed by the Head of the Government. With a council, however, representing divergent interests, and realising together, with its increased powers, its greater responsibility, a combination of all the non-official members to resist a measure proposed by the government would be unlikely, and some non-officials at least would probably cast their votes on the side of the government. If, however, a combination of all the non-official members against the government were to occur, that might be a very good reason for thinking that the proposed measure was really open to objection and would not be proceeded with."¹¹⁷ The anticipation of Lord Morely became fully justified, because the non-official majority never remained a stable unit. The nominated members showed a tendency to side with the government.

The Act further did not even suggest "responsibility which is the savour of popular government."¹¹⁸ This made the elected non-official members to be indifferent towards the proceedings of the legislature as what they might say could not lead to any modifications in the fundamental policy of the government, or they resorted to responsible criticism, knowing full well that what they suggest would never be carried out. Lord Morley, while making a speech in the House of Lords on the 17th of December, 1908, distinctly disclaimed any intention on his part or on the part of His Majesty's Government to treat the reform measures as the beginning of the development of responsible government. "If it could be said that this chapter of reforms led directly or necessarily up to the establishment of a parliamentary system in India, I, for one, would have nothing at all to do with it."¹¹⁹

The newly created legislatures were, thus, "neither representative nor democratic in the wider sense, their constitution, their powers were limited, they had not any effective control over the executive and their existence and proceedings had an air of unreality in the absence of any greater power than that of vehement criticism of some government measures."¹²⁰

The elective principle was no doubt "a step in the right direction, but the proposals made by the Government of India to carry into effect the principle of election were most novel, scientifically unsound and socially vicious and mischievous."¹²¹

117 A. C. Banerjee — *op. cit.*, Vol. II. p. 145.

118 *Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms*, 1918, p. 52.

119 As quoted in A. C. Banerjee — *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 146.

120 M. R. Palande — *Indian Administration*, p. 240.

121 G. N. Singh — *op. cit.*, p. 396.

The act, for the first time, proposed to give separate representation to the Muslims. The first official expression of this policy might be noticed in Lord Minto's reply to the Aga-Khan's deputation in 1906. It was on October 1, 1906, that an influential deputation of the Muslims under the Aga Khan waited upon Lord Minto and asked for special rights and privileges and for the introduction of communal representation in the new constitution of India. The Viceroy gave not only a sympathetic reply but also accepted the principle of communal representation, though he could not commit himself to the exact manner in which it was to be carried out into effect. He had stated, "I can only say to you that the mohammadan community may rest assured that their political rights and interests as a community will be safeguarded by any administrative reorganisation with which I am concerned."¹²²

By conceding communal representation, the authors of the Act of 1909 had rendered a distinct disservice to the solidarity and strength of the people of India. This policy necessarily had to be pursued in all future reforms. Even Montagu and Lord Chelmsford who were convinced of the injurious effects of separate electorates and communal representation, felt themselves bound by Lord Minto's pledge.

"We regard any system of communal electorates, as a very serious hindrance to the development of the self-governing principle. The evils of any extension of the system are plain. Already, communal representation has been actually proposed for the benefit of a majority community in Madras. At the same time, we must face the hard facts. The Muhammadans were given special representation with separate electorates in 1909. The Hindus acquiescence is embodied in the present agreement between the political leaders of the two communities. The Muhammadans regard these as settled facts and any attempt to go back on them would rouse a storm of bitter protest and put a severe strain on the loyalty of a community which has behaved with conspicuous loyalty during a period of very great difficulty, and which we know to be feeling no small anxiety for its own welfare under a system of popular government. The Muhammadans regard separate representation and communal electorates as their only adequate safeguards. But, apart from a pledge which we must honour, until we are released from it, we are bound to see that the community secures proper representation in the new councils. How can we say to them that we regard the decision of 1909 as mistaken, that its retention is incompatible with progress towards responsible government, that its reversal will eventually be to their benefit and

¹²² A. C. Banerjee — *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 137.

that for these reasons we have decided to go back on it? Much as we regret the necessity, we are convinced that, so far as Muhammadans at all events are concerned, the present system must be maintained until conditions alter, even at the price of slower progress towards the realisation of a common citizenship."¹²³

It may be noted that this canker of communalism which first arose amongst the Muslims developed amongst other communities like the Anglo-Indians and the depressed classes and this forms a melancholy chapter in the later history of India.

The Act of 1909 fell far short of the aspirations of the public as represented by the Congress. The act was still based on the theory that the British possessed the ultimate responsibility for the Government of India and the educated class could not be considered to be the guardians of the interests of the illiterate masses. Hence, it is not surprising that popular discontent continued unabated.

Events were to force the British Government in course of time to confer greater autonomy and all predictions that the Act of 1909 was final were to be falsified in course of time. But, a narrative of this later development is beyond our scope.

There was also great popular dissatisfaction over the lack of any great development in local self-government. As the *Hindu* of the 6th of January, 1908, pointed out, "efficiency should by no means be the only aim of local bodies. Their main object, if we understand it aright, should be to serve as training grounds for popular political education. Judged from this point, the part which the local bodies have played in the fulfilling of this object is deplorably nothing."¹²⁴

According to Annie Basant "British rule has destroyed her village and council government, and has put in its place a hybrid system of boards and councils which are impotent for good, because well-informed Indian opinion is overruled by officials who come, knowing nothing of India, and seek to impose English methods on an ancient land, which has its own traditions. They then complain that their hybrid is sterile. It is the way with hybrids. India wants to rebuild and improve her own system, beginning with panchayats, and working upwards untrammelled by foreign experts."¹²⁵

As observed by "the *Wednesday Review*" (A Tamil weekly from Trichirapalli), of the 8th of December, 1909, "No system of

123 *Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms*, 1918, p. 149.

124 Newspaper Report (Confidential), 1908, p. 20.

125 Annie Basant — *op. cit.*, p. 16.

decentralisation in government would be beneficial unless it reaches the unit of social organisation which in India is the village and which does not afford to that unit some opportunity to discharge public duties. We know that time lies heavily on the hands of many villagers who have the capacity and desire to do public work and that a good deal of the time of Taluk officers is wasted in looking after petty affairs of village administration which could safely and without expense be entrusted to the villagers themselves." ¹²⁶

In 1909, Lord Morely appointed a Royal Commission to examine into the "great mischief of over-centralisation" and to enquire how "this great mischief might be alleviated."¹²⁷ The reference was admirable, and excellent results would have followed, if the commission had possessed the element of judicial impartiality. But in the composition of the Commission there was no such element. A grievous mistake was made in the selection of the Commissioners, all of whom belonged to the class directly interested in maintaining the existing system. It composed of six members, of which only one was an Indian namely Romesh Dutt, while all including the Chairman were of the official class.¹²⁸ Independent Indian opinion was therefore wholly unrepresented. As might have been anticipated, the Commission was a failure. Nothing was done to promote local self-government on a popular basis. It may thus be remarked that no serious attempt to revive the panchayat system on sound lines was taken till India became free. So, we have to conclude that, just as in the fields of Central and Provincial administrations, in the field of local administration also, Indian public opinion was not disposed to welcome the policy of the government with any degree of enthusiasm.

¹²⁶ Newspaper Report (Confidential), 1909, p. 1017.

¹²⁷ W. Wedderburn — *op. cit.*, p. 130.

¹²⁸ *Ibid* — p. 131.

(b) *The Press* :—

The attitude of the government towards the press, as towards the platform, was not one of sympathy, because it also formed an important agency for criticism of the actions of the government. In spite of restrictions, many newspapers and periodicals, dailies, weeklies, bi-weeklies, monthlies and bi-monthlies in English and Indian languages developed. "The establishment of the Press", says Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy, "was due to European settlers, not connected with the administration." ¹²⁹

The earliest newspapers in Madras were three weeklies the *Government Gazette*, the *Madras Gazette* and the *Madras Courier*—all extracting their news from the European newspapers and reporting parliamentary debates six months after date. Goldingham, the Company's astronomer, was the editor of the *Government Gazette*. The *Madras Courier* was noted for its wit, but carefully kept itself free from the attentions of the Government. It was often at odds with the *Madras Gazette*. ¹³⁰

The *Madras Gazette* inserted advertisements in the Tamil language and shared government patronage along with the *Madras Courier*. We are informed that the *Madras Courier* was the result of the enterprise of one William Urquhart who had set up a printing press in Stringer Street, Madras, where he began with an advertising half-sheet in large types known as the *Commercial Circulator*. The *Madras Courier*, born of this advertising sheet, became more prominent under the editorship of one C. H. Clay who was clerk to the Chief Justice and Court Sealer. ¹³¹

The *Crescent* was possibly the earliest Hindu periodical of Madras and was issued for the first time in October, 1844, by Gajulu Lakshminarasu Chetty, whose services towards moulding public opinion in the presidency we have already seen. The *Crescent*, however, soon became defunct, owing to financial causes. Thanks, however, to the Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao and his compeer, Diwan Bahadur Ranganatha Mudaliar, a newspaper was launched called the *Native Public Opinion*. A. Ramachandra Iyer was later became the Chief Justice of Mysore founded the *Madrasse* and the *Native Public Opinion* was amalgamated with the *Madrasse*. Another paper came to be founded was the *Peoples' Friend*. But all these papers disappeared in course of time.

129 *Some Influences that Made the British Administrative System in India*, p. 638.

130 C. Srinivasachari — *History of the City of Madras*, p. 200.

131 *The Madras Tercentenary Commemoration Volume — A History of Journalism in Madras* by K. P. Visvanatha Iyer — pp. 451-452.

The *Hindu* appeared in September, 1878, "In the south", says Pattabi Sitaramayya, "public life was really inaugurated by the *Hindu*."¹³² The *Hindu*, at first a weekly, developed in 1883 into a tri-weekly and became a daily in 1889. In 1905, the *Hindu* came into the possession of S. Kasturi Ranga Aiyangar who struggled very hard in order to build up its prosperity, strength and popularity. To-day, it is the only South Indian newspaper which has full time correspondents all over the world.

Papers like the *Spectacular*, started in 1835, the *Madras Times* started in 1860 and the *Madras Mail* started in 1867 were all papers established with the object of furthering certain particular interests. The *Madras Times*, which preceded the *Madras Mail*, had a notable, at times, stormy career. "It represented the humbler section of the European Community, the trader, planter and the smaller merchants. Its affiliations were with the traders and planters' associations, as those of the *Madras Mail* were with the Chamber of Commerce and the Madras Club. The *Madras Mail*, unlike the *Madras Times*, was aristocratic. It was the paper of the European members of the services and the "Nobobs" of the business world. It was modelled on the serious daily papers of England."¹³³

The first issue of the *Madras Mail* appeared on the 14th of December, 1868. The paper has been keeping up a continuously active life since then along with *The Hindu*. In January 1921, the management of the paper, which was hitherto vested in a partnership was transformed into a private company and the office was shifted from George Town to the present premises in Mount Road, Madras.

Swadesamitran was started by the founders of "*The Hindu*" in Tamil in 1880. There were a number of vernacular papers representing various languages like Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada and Urdu and of weeklies, monthlies and dailies which were started from the last quarter of the 19th Century in different parts of the Presidency.

At first, the government did not interfere with the newspapers. But soon, the editors began to misuse their privileges and criticised even private doings of the wives of the officials. Added to this, the political condition of India also led to a curtailment in the discretionary privilege of publishing matter not approved by the Government. When Lord Wellesley (1798-1805) assumed the reins of government, the situation was critical. The danger of a French invasion was occupying the minds of all. Further, Tipu Sultan of Mysore was negotiating with the French with a view to drive out the English from India, The Mahrattas, who had won a war with the

¹³² *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 10.

¹³³ K. P. Viswanatha Iyer — *op. cit.*, p. 454.

Nizam were entertaining ambitious dreams of extending their territories.¹³⁴ Such a political situation convinced the government that a strict supervision over the press would be necessary in the interests of its security in India. So, a censorship was established in 1799 over all the newspapers that were published in the country. Lord Wellesley issued regulations in that year "calling upon every printer of a newspaper to put his name at the bottom of the paper and every editor and proprietor of a paper to declare his name and address to the Secretary to the Government. No paper was to be published until it had been previously exempted by the Secretary to the Government or by a person authorised for the purpose, the penalty of offending any of the rules to be immediate deportation to Europe."¹³⁵

From 1801 to 1818 editors of a number of papers were either warned or censured for articles of criticisms of officials and events.

During the Governor-Generalship of Lord Hastings (1813-1823), there was a slight change. He was a believer in the value of independent criticism by the press and he encouraged pressmen to perform their legitimate functions. He abolished the post of censor in 1818. But this did not mean, as is sometimes stated by writers, that the press henceforth became free. On the other hand, fresh regulations were issued clearly defining the position. The 1818 regulations required the editors to desist from "publishing animadversions on the proceedings of the Indian authorities or those in England; disquisitions on the political transactions of the local administration, or offensive remarks on the public conduct of the members of the Council, the judges, or the Bishop of Calcutta; discussions having a tendency to create alarm or suspicion among the natives as to any intended interference with their religion; the republication from English or other newspapers of passages coming under the preceding heads, or otherwise calculated to affect the British power or reputation in India; and private scandal or personal remarks on individuals, tending to excite dissensions in society."¹³⁶

The whole question of the Press was again reviewed in 1822 and the Government of India deputed Sir Thomas Munro to examine and report on the problem of the press in India. He remarked in his

134 The Mahrattas under Nana Fadnis defeated the Nizam at Kharda in 1795 and compelled him to sign a humiliating treaty.

135 As quoted in M. Ruthnaswamy — *op. cit.*, p. 639.

136 Mill and Wilson — *The History of British India*, Vol. VIII, p. 413.

report, "A free press and the dominion of strangers are things which are quite incompatible, and which cannot long exist together. For, What is the first duty of free press: It is to deliver the country from a foreign yoke, and to sacrifice to this one great object every meaner consideration; and if we make the press really free to the natives as well as to Europeans it must inevitably lead to this result. We might wish that the press should be used to convey moral and religious instruction to the natives, and that its efforts should go no further. They might be satisfied with this for a time, but would soon learn to apply it to political purposes, to compare their own situation and ours, and to overthrow our powers. ¹³⁷

In another passage, in the same minute, expressed, "In the present state of India, the good to be expected from a free press is trifling and uncertain, but the mischief is incalculable, and as to the proprietor of newspapers, the latter is the more profitable of the two, it will generally have the preference. There is no public in India to be guided or instructed by a free press. The whole of the European society is composed of civil and military officers belonging to the King's and the Honourable Company's service, with a small proportion of a merchants and shop-keepers. There are but for among them who have no access to the newspapers and periodical publications, of Europe, or who require the aid of political information from an Indian newspaper. " ¹³⁸

He concluded his minute, "I trust that the Honourable the Court of Directors will view the question of the press in India as one of the most important that ever came before them, and the establishment of such an engine, unless under the most absolute control of their Governments, as dangerous in the highest degree to the existence of the British power in this country. ¹³⁹

The Government of India accepted the recommendation of Sir Thomas Munro and issued new regulations which provided that no press was to be established nor any newspaper or book was to be printed without obtaining a licence for that purpose from the government. These regulations were made in 1823 during the period of John Adams, the senior member of the Calcutta Council who

137 Vide — *Fort St. George*, Secret Consultation, dated, 12th April of 1822, para 3.

138 *Ibid* — 5 para.

139 *Ibid* — 15 para.

acted as Governor-General during the seven months that elapsed between the departure of Lord Hastings and the arrival of Lord Amherst in August, 1823.

These regulations remained in force upto 1835 when they were cancelled by Sir Charles Metcalfe. Sir Charles Metcalfe, inspite of the fact that he was merely acting as Governor-General¹⁴⁰ till a permanent successor to Lord William Bentinck was appointed, showed a great courage in passing, with the help of Lord Macaulay, the Act XI of 1835 which abolished for the whole of India the system of licence and censorship and replaced them by one simple registration as in England.

Thus the Indian press now became as free as its counterpart in England and Sir Charles Metcalfe rightly deserves the title, "the Liberator of the Indian Press." For this step, he incurred the wrath of the Directors who immediately recalled him from India. The Indian Press continued to be free from 1835 to 1857. At the time of the "Mutiny," free comment was naturally considered dangerous. The government found it therefore necessary to put restrictions on the press. Under the stress on the Mutiny, Lord Canning, Governor-General of India (1856-1862), passed the Licensing Act in 1857. According to the Act, licences were required to be taken for keeping printing presses. All applications were to be made to the Governor-General in Council, who might grant licences on any conditions they pleased or refuse to grant without assigning any reasons. "No observation impugning the motives or designs of the British Government, whether in England or in India, or in any way tending to bring it into contempt, weaken its authority or that of its servants, Civil or Military were to be published."¹⁴¹

The Licensing Act was withdrawn next year and, in 1867, the provisions of the Act XI of 1835 were re-enacted. But, in 1870, the well known section 124-A was inserted in the Indian Penal Code. According to that "whoever by words either spoken or intended to be read, or by signs or by visible representation or otherwise excite feelings of disaffection towards Her Majesty or the Government established by law in British India shall be punished with transportation for life or any shorter term, to which a fine may be added, or with imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which fine may be added or with fine."¹⁴²

140 In the interval between the arrival of Lord Aukland in March, 1836 and the departure of Lord William Bentinck in 1835, Sir Charles Metcalfe held the reins of office.

141 C. L. Anand — *History of Government in India*, p. 157.

142 R. Ranchhodas & D. K. Thakure — *The Indian Penal Code*, p. 276,

Lord Lytton's viceroyalty (1876-1880) saw a new attitude towards the newspapers in Indian languages. Lord Canning made no distinction between newspapers printed in English or in Indian languages. The Licensing Act was passed for the control of all newspaper under stresses of the events of 1857. Lord Lytton thought that the Indian language press was more dangerous to the security of the state than the English language press and he also felt that the powers provided by law (sec. 124 A of the Indian Penal Code) were not sufficient to arrest the flow of sedition. He, therefore, caused the passing of the Vernacular Press Act in 1878.

Lord Lytton did not heed the objection raised by three members of his Executive Council¹⁴³ who argued that the excesses of a few journalists were not sufficient ground for proceeding against all, that government was getting too sensitive to criticism and that discrimination against a section of the press would rouse resentment. Lord Lytton claimed that his Vernacular Press Act sought to prevent rather than punish offenders and offences.

Under the Act of 1878 (Vernacular Press Act) magistrates were empowered with the previous sanction of the provincial government to call upon printers and publishers to deposit cash security or enter into a bond binding themselves not to print or publish anything likely to excite feelings of disaffection towards the government or hatred between the different races. The government was given the power to warn and to confiscate the plant, deposit etc, in the event of the publication of undesirable matter.

The printer was offered the alternative to submit proofs to the Official Censor and drop all rejected matter and thus escape from the operation of the Act. There was no provision for appeal to a court of law against the decision of the magistrates.

The Act aroused a storm of opposition in India amongst the educated circles, especially in Bengal where it was more strictly enforced. Though the Act was not enforced in the Madras presidency, yet the press in Madras also vehemently opposed it. The *Swadesabhi-mani* of the 1st of April, 1878, wrote: "The liberty of the press which is the safeguard of a nation and had been so long granted to the

143 Sir Erskine Perry in his minute of dissent recorded in the proceedings of the India Council called 'it 'as a retrograde and ill-conceived measure, injurious to the future progress of India.' "No Imperial Legislator could forge a more powerful weapon for extirpating an obnoxious press." (Quoted by Mody in his biography of Sir Pheroze Shah Mehta Vol. I, pp. 96-97)

natives, has now been denied to them. The beneficial and much-to-be praised government has in a manner departed in this instance from the promise made to the natives in the Queen's Proclamation of 1858, when India was transferred to the Crown. The government imputing that some vernacular newspapers contain matter likely to excite disaffection to them and that they are read by large numbers of unintelligent persons, and are thus likely to excite rebellion, have passed an Act for curbing the liberty of the press which may be considered as a death blow to native newspapers."¹⁴⁴

Some newspapers, instead of expressing general indignation over this legislation, indeed gloated over the exclusion of the Madras Presidency from its provisions. For example *Paschima Taraka* and *Kerala Patrika* observed, "the Act applies only to the Presidencies of Bombay and Bengal. It does not at present affect us and other native printing establishments in the Madras Presidency. From this it will be clear to the public in what light our publications have been considered by the government. Whether this Act were in force or not, we should not publish anything at variance with our former opinions and we hope that our contemporaries will not give occasion for extending the provisions of the Act to the Madras Presidency also."^{144a}

This act was repealed in 1882 by Lord Ripon. He was satisfied with the provisions of the Penal Code (Sec. 124-A of 1870). This position remained unaltered upto the year 1908 when the Government of India passed the newspapers (Incitement to offence) Act. This act was passed as one of the repressive measures to arrest the spirit of nationalism among the people.

This act, empowered a district magistrate to confiscate the printing press where a newspaper which in his opinion contains incitement to acts of violence is printed or is intended to be printed by a conditional order and to call upon persons concerned to appear before him to show cause as to why the order should not be made absolute."¹⁴⁵ However, a right of appeal to the High Court was allowed "within fifteen days of the date of the order being made absolute."¹⁴⁶

This repressive legislation is characteristic of the reaction of an entrenched authority when its position is challenged and this phenomenon is not confined to India only.

144 Newspaper (Confidential) Report, 1878, p. 1.

144a *Ibid*, p. 4 (Malayali weeklies published from Calicut).

145 Clause 3, sub-sec. I of the Act.

146 Clause 5, sub-sec. I of the Act.

A number of printers and publishers were subjected to this ordeal. The government proceeded against M. Srinivasa Aiyengar, the printer and publisher of the Tamil weekly *India*, for articles of inflammatory nature published in his paper on the 2nd of May, 1908, 23rd of May, 1908 and 27th of June, 1908. Justice J.H. Munro convicted him under section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code and sentenced him to transportation for a term of five years.¹⁴⁷

Action was taken against G. Subramania Aiyer of the *Swadesamitran* also. However, the case was dropped on account of his illness and on his furnishing security under section 108 of the Criminal Procedure Code.¹⁴⁸

But, in spite of these restrictions on the freedom of the press, we must note that the growth in the number of newspapers and periodicals was not affected and their influence in the formation of public opinion was not arrested.

147 Vide — No. 5 of the Fourth Criminal Session of 1908, High Court of Madras. (Subramania Bharati who was the editor of the paper escaped to Pondicherry as seen earlier).

148 G.O. No. 1460 (Conf.), Judicial Dept, dated, 25—10—1908: (Returns of proceedings instituted for seditious writings since 1st January, 1907).

CHAPTER II

PUBLIC OPINION AND SPECIFIC GRIEVANCES

As seen earlier, public opinion was chiefly directed towards political reform. Though demand for democratic reforms was passed on a substratum of ideological considerations about self-government, it is undeniable that it was greatly stimulated by the existence of numerous grievances. It was increasingly felt that only a government of the people for the people would be able to remedy them. Some of those grievances were due to irksome restrictions which a foreign government imposed in a spirit of suspicion against activities inimical to its interests, for example, the Arms Act or restrictions on the press. Some other grievances were the offspring of a policy adopted by the foreign rulers to look after their particular interests; for example, monopoly of appointments in the higher military and civil services by foreigners and preference shown to British trade and industry. Certain other grievances were due to the belief of the British bureaucracy in its own wisdom and calculated disregard of Indian opinion, for example, high taxation and fusion of executive and judicial functions. Resentment was also caused by the feeling of racial superiority assumed by most of the British officials serving in India which was reflected in reserved European accommodation in railway stations, exclusions of Indians from European institutions like clubs and individual acts of discourtesy. It is proposed in this chapter to deal with only the most important grievances.

a) *Appointments:*

We must remember that all offices of trust and responsibility were reserved only for Europeans. The grievance regarding the monopoly of higher appointments by Europeans, rested on the fact that, foreigners, however, well qualified they might be, would not be able to understand the manners and customs and indeed the very psychology of a different race.¹⁴⁹ Such appointments not only

149 One remarkable instance of this was in 1932 when Mr. Dodwell, I.C.S., Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Tellicherry, was trying one Mrs. L. S. Prabhu in connection with the non-co-operation movement launched by the Congress. Mr. Dodwell sentenced Mrs. Prabhu to a fine, and when she refused to pay, ordered her "*Thali*" to be removed. He could not understand the significance of the "*Thali*". Later, however, under telegraphic instruction from the Government of Madras, he was ordered to restore the "*Thali*". But Mrs. Prabhu refused to take it back. (vide Publ. Dept. No. 312 (mis), 24th Feb. 1932)

shut out mature Indian talent but often resulted in positive injustice. There was also bred a dangerous feeling of superiority amongst European officers who looked down on their Indian subordinates as only fit to serve in a lower capacity. A brief historically summary of this problem is now necessary.

It was Lord Cornwallis, Governor-General (1786-1793) who began the policy of excluding Indians from all offices of trust and responsibility as he thought, of course wrongly, Indians as a whole, dishonest, lazy and undependable. But it is pleasing to note that this rational view of Lord Cornwallis was not followed by all his successors. There were many administrators like Sir Thomas Munro, Governor of Madras (1820-1827) who sincerely felt that greater share must be given to the Indians in the administration of their country. He very pertinently pointed out the impolicy of excluding Indians from offices of trust and responsibility.¹⁵⁰ The Charter Act of 1833 for the first time gave definite pledge that "no native of India by reason only of religion, place of birth, descent, colour or any of them, would be disabled from holding any office or employment under the company."¹⁵¹

150 "With what grace can we talk of our paternal government, if we exclude the natives from important office, say, as we did till very lately, that in a country containing 15 millions of inhabitants, no man but a European shall be entrusted with so much authority as to order the punishment of a single stroke of a rattan." Let Britain be subjected by a foreign power tomorrow; let the people be excluded from all share in the government from public honours, from every emolument, and let them in every situation be considered as unworthy of trust, and all their knowledge and all their literature, sacred and profane, would not save them from becoming, in another generation or two, a low-minded, deceitful and dishonest race." "Our present system of government, by excluding all natives from power and trust and emoluments, is much more efficacious in depressing than all our laws and school books can do in elevating their character. We are working against our own designs while we work at the improvement of the character of a people, keeping them at the same time in the lowest state of dependence on foreign rulers, to which they can be reduced by conquest. "(Vide A. J. Arbuthnot (ed) — *Minutes and other writings of Sir Thomas Munro* — pp. 567-575.

151 Although the Charter Act of 1833 legalised the appointment of Indians even to the highest offices of state, yet the provisions in the Charter Act of 1793, still unrepealed, laid down that "none but Covenanted servants of the Company could hold any office with a salary of more than £800/- a year." It is called Covenanted because, its members, on appointment, entered into a Covenant not to trade or receive presents originally with the East India Company and afterwards with the Secretary of State in Council.

This promise was reiterated in the Queen's Proclamation of 1858 and the Indian Civil Service Act of 1861. But these pledges remained only in letter and were more honoured in the breach than in the observance. In the meanwhile, there developed a class of English-educated Indians who proved by experience that they could acquit themselves creditably in any walk of life. But, they were denied a greater place in the administration and deprived of their legitimate promotions which were reserved only to the same class of officials who hailed from the ruling race.

Appointments to the Civil Service were made by a system of competitive examination. This system was introduced by the Company in 1853 and adopted by the Queen's Proclamation of 1858. The examination was held in London once a year and was open to all natural born subjects of Her Majesty, whether Indian or English. The maximum age for admission was at first 23. In 1860, it was lowered to 22, and the selected candidates were to remain on probation in England for a year. In 1866, the maximum age, was still further lowered to 21, and the probationers had to go through a special course of training at an approved university for two years.

It was extremely difficult for Indian students to pass the examination. The journey to England was not only expensive and unfamiliar, but, in the case of Hindus, was frowned upon by the more orthodox sections of the community.¹⁵² Further, to compete with English candidate in an examination conducted through the medium of English was indeed a formidable task. In spite of all these disadvantages, a few of the Indian students were able to come out successful. But, such students were too negligible in number to boast of.¹⁵³

The chance of Indians passing the examination was more reduced when the age limit was lowered to 19 in 1876. This lowering of age

152 Surendranath Banerjee who competed in 1869, observes in his memoirs, *A Nation in Making* thus: "I started for England on March 3, 1868 with Romesh Chandra Dutt and Bihari Lal Gupta. We were all young, in our teens, and a visit to England was a more serious affair then than it is now. It not only meant absence from home and those near and dear to one for a number of years, but there was the grim prospect of social ostracism which for all practical purposes has now passed away. We all three had to make our arrangements in secret, as if we were engaged in some nefarious plot of which the world should know nothing." (p.10)

153 Between 1866 and 1878 (both inclusive) only ten Indian students were able to come out successful in the examination.

limit was disapproved of at that time by several persons whose opinions were entitled to weight. Lord Northbrook consulted the opinions of the Civil Servants then in service in India, on this particular point, and he observed :—

“ Taking the more junior civil servants, I find that of the men who came out to India, in and after the year 1861, only eleven out of fifty-three wished the age lowered, the opinions of most of the junior men are almost unanimous. Out of 26 who came out in and after 1870 only two recommended a reduction of the age, fifteen would have the present limit (21 years) and nine would raise the maximum.” Lord Northbrook himself was of opinion that “ whatever small advantage might possibly result from men coming to India a year younger than now, would be only bought by the lowering of the standard of education which must follow from reducing the higher limit, and by great discouragement to university education, which such a change would involve.”¹⁵⁴

People all over India put out a stout opposition against this. Surendranath Banerjee who led the agitation said, “ the reduction of the maximum limit of age for the open competitive examination for the Indian Civil Service, from 21 to 19 years, by the orders of the Marquis of Salisbury, the Secretary of State for India, created a painful impression throughout India. It was regarded as a deliberate attempt to blast the prospects of Indian candidates for the Indian Civil Service.”¹⁵⁵ Surendranath Banerjee toured all over the country and ultimately a memorial on the civil service question was adopted at a meeting held in Calcutta and endorsed at other public meetings.¹⁵⁶ The people of the Madras Presidency took an active part in the matter. Public meetings were organised all over the Presidency and resolutions were passed. On the 4th of November, 1884, the Madras Maha Jana Sabha submitted an exhaustive memorial giving graphic account of the disadvantages and pointing out clearly the need for the enhancement of the age and for the examination being conducted simultaneously in England and India.

154 Vide — G.O. No. 2357 (Mis) Pub. Dept. dated, 4th November, 1884, para — 5.

155 *Op.Cit.* — p. 44.

156 Public meetings were held at Lahore, Amritsar, Meerut, Allahabad, Delhi, Cawnpur, Lucknow, Aligarh, Benares, Bombay, Surat, Ahmedabad, Poona and Madras.

"Your Memorialists beg permission to observe that, considering the comparatively large powers with which the civil servants are invested almost immediately after their arrival in the country, it is desirable that they should have, by that time, reached an age, when some mental ripeness and maturity of character, and general knowledge of men and things, will be guaranteed; but as D. C. Ibbeston, Esq., M.A.C.S., observes, "men who pass at 17 or 18 are often unfavourably distinguished by a mental rawness and immaturity of character, and by being minutely instructed rather than highly educated." Your Memorialists may also add their own impression testifying to the correctness of Mr. Ibbeston's opinion.¹⁵⁷

Your memorialists also observe that, the successive reduction in the maximum limit of age has been followed by a proportionate reduction in the number of competitors for the examination. In 1869, the number was 323, in 1879, 327 but in 1881 and 1882 it was 182 and 147 respectively."¹⁵⁸

"When the period available for competition was from 17 to 23 years of age, candidates found it possible to appear for the examination four times, with obvious results advantageous to the general education of the candidates."¹⁵⁹

"The present maximum limit of 19 years fixed for the Indian civil service is in striking contrast to the maximum of 24 fixed for the civil service of Ceylon, Hongkong and the Straits Settlements."¹⁶⁰

"Your memorialists, need hardly remind your lordship of the unanimous opinion, which men of all parties have expressed, as to the extreme desirability of associating Englishmen and natives in the administration of the Indian empire. Fifty years have elapsed since the crown, Parliament and the late Court of Directors declared that "no native of India, shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour or any of them, be disqualified from holding any place, office, or employment under the Government of India", and this decision, generous and statesman like as it was, received further weight from the declaration of Her Majesty the Queen Empress in

157 Vide the Memorial — G.O. No. 2357 (Mis), Pub. Dept. dated, the 4th of November, 1884, para — 7.

158 *Ibid.* — para 8.

159 *Ibid.* — para 9.

160 *Ibid.* — para 11.

1858. But, how far this generous and statesmanlike decision has had practical effect given to it will be seen from the fact that during the fifty years that have elapsed since natives were first pronounced eligible for any place in the public service, not more than 12 native gentlemen have obtained admission into the covenanted civil service."¹⁶¹

The age limit of 19 years had practically shut out the native of India from covenanted civil service. Lord Lytton introduced the Statutory Civil Service in 1879. According to this system, one-sixth of the posts hitherto held by the members of the covenanted civil service were in future to be filled by men of Indian birth nominated by the local governments in India with the approval of the viceroy-in-council and the Secretary of State. Candidates were to serve two years of probation and pass special tests before their final appointments. In a resolution dated, 24th of December, 1879, the Government of India stated that appointments under the rules would generally be confined to "young men of good family and social position possessed of fair abilities and education, to whom the offices which were open to them in the uncovenanted service had not proved sufficient inducement to come forward for employment".¹⁶² The statutory Civil Service held a position midway between the Covenanted and Uncovenanted Service.

"This system," as the memorial submitted by the Maha Jana Sabha on the 4th of November, 1884, observed, "is no compensation whatever to native youths, whose prospect of distinction in the service of the state, has thus been minimised in this direction,— that they have the new statutory civil service, which will eventually absorb onesixth of the civil service. Because, in the first place, a service consisting of men appointed by nomination can never be equal to another service to which appointments are made after a severe competitive test. The nature of the appointments made under the rules of this statutory service is described by William Wordsworth, Professor of Logic and Mental Philosophy in the College of Bombay, a high authority on questions affecting Indian educated youths, in the following terms :—

"It is clear, therefore, unless, we are to lose all credit for good faith and sincerity of purpose, that this patronage service must be

161 G.O. No. 3357 (Mis) Public Department, dated, the 4th of November, 1884, para — 12.

162 Vide H. H. Dodwell (Ed.) — *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. VI, p. 361.

remodelled or abolished. The people now selected are in reality representatives as little of the aristocracy as of the intelligence of the country. They are members of respectable families who happen to enjoy the favour of some elevated official - a Secretary to Government, a Member of Council, or Police Commissioner. In this Presidency, a college education and a University degree appear to be regarded as positive disqualifications for selection. A young man of independent character and high talents cannot now hope to enter the civil service by competition, and he has generally no wish to enter it by the back door of favour."¹⁶³

In the second place, the statutory service had avowedly a lower status than the covenanted civil service, certain high appointments open to the latter, not being open to the nominees under the rules of the former. Indeed, the position which the authors of the new service evidently intended to assign to it, is plain from the following words taken from the despatch to the Secretary of State :

"The difficulty, indeed the utter impossibility of getting European officers of position and education to serve cheerfully and successively *in subordination to natives of India*, is one which, whatever may be thought of it from an abstract point of view, no one with personal experience of India, will under estimate. In regard to the executive work of a district, this difficulty is, we do not hesitate to say, practically insuperable. *So long as natives can obtain admission to the Covenanted service by competition*, this difficulty will be liable to arrive. The only meaning that can be put upon this passage appears to Your Memorialists to be that statutory service which was intended to obviate the difficulty adverted to in the above extract and which was to be exclusively taken up by natives, was to be given a position subordinate to that of the Covenanted service to which thenceforth Europeans alone were to be appointed. It is preposterous to say that such a service intended as an emblem of the political inferiority of the natives can have any weight in reckoning the consequences, moral and politic, that have ensued from the recent changes in the regulations of the competitive civil service examination, against which Your memorialists respectfully remonstrate in this memorial."¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ *Ibid.* — para 13.

¹⁶⁴ Vide — G.O. No. 2357 (Mis.) Public Department, dated, 4th of November, 1884 — para 14.

Public Opinion expressed against the Statutory Civil Service system of Lord Lytton was not without effect. Lord Dufferin, Viceroy of India (1884—1888), appointed in 1886 a "Public Service Commission" to examine the whole question. The Commission was presided over by Sir Charles Aitchison and consisted of 15 members of which five were Indians. The Commission submitted its report to the Government of India in 1887. The Commission rejected the idea of simultaneous examinations for the covenanted service and advised the abolition of the statutory civil service. Hence forward the civilian officers were to be divided into three classes namely, the Imperial Indian Civil Service, the Provincial and the Subordinate Service. The first was still to be recruited in England, but was open to those Indians who made the journey to England and sat for the examination in London. The other two services were recruited in India almost altogether from Indians. Admission to the provincial service was to be made in one of three ways; by examination, nomination by the provincial governments, and promotion from the subordinate service. The members of the Imperial Civil Service held the majority of the most important posts; executive, administrative and judicial offices of lesser, but still of considerable importance, were filled by the officers of the Provincial Service.¹⁶⁵

The commission also recommended the raising of the maximum age for entrants to the Imperial competitive examination to 23. Though Indian public opinion welcomed the raising of the age limit to 23, it was not satisfied with the other parts of the reports of the commission. These recommendations were accepted and became the policy of the Government of India from 1891.¹⁶⁶

In 1893, the House of Commons passed a resolution in favour of simultaneous examinations in England and India for the Indian Civil Service. When the resolution of the House of Commons was under consideration by the Secretary of State for India who had referred it to the Presidency Governments and the Government of India for their opinion on the matter, the people of the Presidency arranged public meetings in different parts of the presidency and forwarded to the Government of India the memorials and resolutions passed in those meetings.

165 P. E. Roberts — *History of British India* — p. 500.

166 Mr. Herbert Paul, Member of the House of Commons, on the 2nd June of 1893, moved the resolution, Dadabhai Naoroji — the first Indian Member of Parliament — seconded it.

The following resolution was passed by the Babu Surendranath Banerjee Reading Room Sri Rangam, Trichy, on the 30th of July, 1893.

"That the meeting of the Banerjee Reading Room, Sri Rangam, begs to affirm in its entirety the resolution of the House of Commons passed on the evening of June 2nd - 3rd and to place on record its firm conviction that in the interests of justice, policy, economy and moral obligations as vouchsafed in their own charters, proclamations etc. it is imperatively necessary to hold simultaneous examinations both in England and India, both being as far as practicable identical in their nature and those that compete in both the countries being finally classified in one list.

That the meeting prays the Government of India to give practical effect to this resolution of the House of Commons and the Madras Government to forward their favourable suggestions to the Government of India.¹⁶⁷

A public meeting held at Nagapattinam on the 28th of July, 1893 passed the following resolutions:—

1. "That this meeting resolves to place on record its grateful sense of the resolution of the House of Commons on the subject of simultaneous examinations, and to express its firm conviction that the gracious proclamation of 1858 of Her Imperial Majesty will be a dead letter until the Civil Service is freely opened to the natives of this country by the institution of competitive examinations in India as well as in England."¹⁶⁸

The Union Club, Madurai, resolved on the 25th of July, 1893 that "this meeting of the members of the Union Club prays the Government of India to give early and full effect to the resolution of the House of Commons for the holding of simultaneous examinations for the Indian Civil Service both in India and England."¹⁶⁹

The tenth Congress, which held its session in Madras in 1894, passed a resolution, "That this congress respectfully urges on Her Majesty's Government that the Resolution of the House of Commons

167 Vide — G.O. No. 639-40 Public Department, dated, 14th August, 1893, pp. 2-3.

168 *Ibid.* — p. 4.

169 *Ibid.* — p. 6.

of June 2nd, 1893, on the question of simultaneous examinations should be speedily carried out as an act of justice to the Indian people.”¹⁷⁰

The provincial governments of India to whom the resolution was referred to, be reported, with the exception of Madras, unfavourably on the proposed change. “The resolution was not followed by an Act and so remained merely an expression of the academic and pious opinion of the legislature in one of its impulsively liberal moods.”¹⁷¹

Dropping of the resolution created a stir among the people of India. The people of the Madras Presidency spared no pains in organising meetings and expressing their deep disappointment. They repeatedly expressed their deep desire for reconsideration of the matter. A meeting was organised in the Pachaiyappa's Hall under the Presidentship of Rungiah Naidu on the 15th of September, 1894 and passed the following resolutions :—

I. “That this meeting records its sense of disappointment and deep regret caused through out the country by the despatch of the Secretary for India on the question of holding simultaneous examinations in India and England for the Indian Civil Service.

II. That this meeting strongly deprecates the illiberal and unsympathetic interpretation put by the Government of India on the pledges given to the people of this country by the Parliamentary statute of 1833 and by Her Majesty's Proclamation of 1858, and is of opinion that the scheme of provincial civil service recently introduced falls short of the aspirations and expectations of the people of India.

III. That this meeting views with great apprehension the consequences of the Government of India being allowed to set aside the resolution of the House of Commons.¹⁷²

It is sad to note, however, that some minority communities like the Muslims and Harijans were in favour of the existing position.

The *Pariyan* (a Tamil weekly published from the city of Madras) of the 22nd of September, 1894, referring to the meeting held at Pachaiyappa's Hall wrote, “as the result of a memorial signed by 3,412 pariyas having been submitted to Parliament, through General

170 Res. No. VIId — Vide Mrs. Annie Besant — *Op.Cit.* — p. 200.

171 P. E. Roberts — *Op.Cit.* — p. 500.

172 Newspaper Report (Conf.) dated, 30th September, 1894 — p. 366.

Chesney protesting against the Civil service examination being held in India, the just and merciful English Parliament, taking the memorial into its due consideration, came to the conclusion that, should the civil service examination be held in India, Brahmins alone would prove to be successful candidates and fill high offices and thought that Brahmins are a selfish class, caring only for their good and totally unmindful of the good of other classes. All those Members of Parliament who were prepared to advocate the cause of India have resolved never to believe the doings of the Congress after perusing the Pariya Memorial under reference."

Referring to the meeting, it declared, "Neither Pariyas nor native Christians made their appearance. None of the many classes of men living in Southern India were present on the occasion. The audience chiefly consisted of the students of Pachaiyappa's College, the Madras Christian College and the Presidency College."¹⁷³ Referring to the speeches made by some of the gentlemen at the meeting, the paper remarked, "Of those who spoke on that evening, it was Diwan Bahadur S. Subramania Aiyar alone who spoke with sense. He said that it would take a long time before it would be reasonable to grant the Hindus the concessions they ask for and that the people of this country would acquire the ability to administer justice when the time to grant those concessions arrived. What he says is true. The British Government will grant our prayer and leave the country in our possession, when our countrymen divest themselves of all the prejudices relating to religion, caste and so forth and try to work as the people of one community with feelings of brotherhood, having for their object of the public zeal. What is the use of our men making a hub-bub as being the members of the Congress, being subject to the machinations of the Brahmins? We are at a loss to see the reason: why the other classes of the community do not perceive the machinations practised by the Brahmins with a view to occupy even under British rule the supremacy which they held during the reign of the Hindu Rajas. Their agitation about simultaneous examinations is owing to the fact that they observe that the other classes of community are also beginning to enjoy the fruits of higher education, that they apprehend that the other classes will in a short space of time reach the high position which they hold and they desire to monopolise all the high offices under the British rule before the lower classes qualify themselves for such posts. In these circumstances, the resolution arrived at by our rulers on this subject is just and proper."¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Newspaper Report (Conf.), 1894, p. 368.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.* — p. 369.

The *Khasim-ul-Akbar* (a urdu weekly published from the city of Madras) of the 31st of May, 1894, stated that, "after all Mr. Paul's movement about simultaneous civil service examination has been rejected *intoto* by Parliament and also stated, that "the hopes of the Congresswallahs have at last been frustrated and their hope that the Liberal Party will accede to their request has been proved illusory."¹⁷⁵

It may be added in this connection that the government continued to be impervious to the demand of public opinion in the matter and that simultaneous competitive examinations were introduced only in 1922.

b) *The Arms Act* :—

Ever since the Mutiny, the British government developed a marked distrust of the use of arms by the Indian population. The Arms Act (Act XI of 1878) was passed by Lord Lytton in the same year as the Vernacular Press Act of 1878. The Arms Act made it a criminal offence to keep, bear or traffic in arms without getting a licence from Commissioners of Police in the Presidency Towns and from the district magistrates elsewhere in British India. These were empowered to grant licences for a fixed period and on payment of fees prescribed for the purpose for which the licence was granted after making full enquiries regarding the antecedents of the applicants from authorised persons.

A hue and cry was raised against this Act as it discriminated against the Indians and in favour of the Europeans who were exempted from the operation of the Act. The Indian National Congress had urged its repeal in many a session but with very little effect. The *Viveka Vardhani* (a Tamil monthly), in its issue of February, 1881, wrote against the Arms Act thus :

"The Arms Act was passed by that ruler whose name will not be forgotten by India for several years to come. Complaints were repeatedly made of the cruel nature of the act and, at last, the Marquis of Ripon has defined the object of the Arms Act to be "to keep a proper control over the importation and transport of arms." His Lordship therefore, ordered that, "it should be worked with the utmost leniency and consideration to the people and in such a manner as to give no cause for complaint." "But", the paper continued, "we have reasons to fear that either this order of His Lordship had not been known throughout the country or that it had not been

175 Newspaper Report (Conf.), dated, 15th June, 1894 — p. 176.

carried out properly. We shall give a curious instance of this which occurred in our town last week. Certain men of the weaver class in our town who are known to worship Siva started one night a procession in honour of that God. It started, after some preliminary ceremonies, a few swords always forming part and parcel of the procession. A sword or dagger is an indispensable feature of the procession. On the night in question, three old rusty swords and an equally useless dagger were brought by these poor weavers, who were probably ignorant of the Arms Act or the circular. The procession passed by the police station when the weapons were seized as those who were in possession of those "arms" could not show at the time that they possessed "licence" to have them. They were surprised at this interference of the police, their religious feelings shocked, the mirth spoiled, and they returned home with heavy hearts—resulting in an ominous ending of the ceremony and rousing worse bears for the future."¹⁷⁶

The Indian Arms Act, however, continued to operate in spite of repeated appeals of the public for its abolition.

(c) *Separation of Judiciary from the Executive :*

An issue which agitated Public Opinion during this period was the need for the separation of the executive and judicial functions of the Collector and district Magistrates and his subordinates. The collection of land revenue and the performance of magisterial functions went together from the beginning of the history of British rule in India. Warren Hastings as governor of Bengal began this system when the East India Company was forced to take up the administration and the collection of revenue of Bengal in 1772.

Cornwallis, who succeeded him as Governor-General of Bengal (1786-1793), effected a separation between the duties of a collector and those of a judge,¹⁷⁷ as he felt that individuals who had been aggrieved by revenue officers in one capacity could never hope to obtain redress from them in another.

This noble principle was departed from the governor-generalship of Lord Hastings (1813-1823) who felt that "the newer generations of the Company's servants with their higher traditions would prove superior to temptations to which their predecessors had suc-

¹⁷⁶ Newspaper Report (Conf.), 1881 — p. 3.

¹⁷⁷ Section 1 of Regulation XI of 1793.

cumbed.”¹⁷⁸ This step was definitely retrograde in character in as much it went against the principle of separation of executive and judicial functions.

The combination of judicial and executive functions was opposed on the ground that, in the execution of their civil administrative business, the Collectors might come into conflict with individuals or institutions and it would be inexpedient and unsafe to invest them with judicial powers which could be utilised against these. That absolute detachment and aloofness which was necessary for the impartial carrying out of justice could not be possessed by a magistrate who was also responsible for the peace of the district and who was therefore likely to entertain an unconscious bias in one direction or the other. Further, the control exercised by the collectors over subordinate magistrates would not secure to them an atmosphere of cool impartiality. Sir Henry Cotton, himself a distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service, expressed it to be a matter of universal knowledge that “subordinate magistrates whose position and promotion are dependent on the district magistrate cannot, in such circumstances, discharge their judicial duties with that degree of independence which ought to characterise a court of justice.”¹⁷⁹ Threats like the “the sentence is inadequate, if this occurs again, I shall report your misconduct to government”, were also some of the instances to prove this accusation.

As early as 1853, the people of the Madras Presidency submitted a memorial to the Secretary of State for India against, torture being used for collecting revenue. The Government under Lord Harris, Governor, appointed a commission to enquire into the matter on the 9th of September, 1854. The commission found out that torture was freely used to collect revenue dues in the Madras Presidency. The commission also pointed out that that was due to entrusting police and magisterial duties to the revenue officials. This combination allowed them to “resort with impunity to those methods of torture for collecting the revenue.”¹⁸⁰

The Indian National Congress took up the matter of the separation of judiciary from the executive. In its second session of 1886, it

178 P. E. Roberts — *Op.Cit.* (Third Edition), — p. 289.

179 M. R. Palande — *Indian Administration* — p. 366.

180 Vide — Report of the Commissioners for the Investigation of Alleged Cases of Torture in the Madras Presidency, dated, 16th April, 1855.

passed a resolution "that this Congress do place on record an expression of the universal conviction that a complete separation of executive and judicial functions (such that in no case the two functions shall be combined in the same officer) has become an urgent necessity and that, in its opinion, it behoves the government to effect this separation without further delay, even though this should, in some provinces, involve some extra expenditure".¹⁸¹

This grievance was felt not only by the public. It is significant to note that some retired civil servants¹⁸² who held high judicial positions in India, sent in the year 1899, a memorial to the Secretary of State for India praying for "a full and complete separation between judicial and executive functions." They stated "at present these functions are to a great extent combined in India, especially in the case of the officers who, in the districts of Regulation provinces, are known as collector - magistrates."¹⁸³ They emphatically stated "so long as collector - magistrates have themselves the power to try or to delegate to subordinates within their control cases as to which they have taken action or received information in (their) executive capacity, the administration of justice in India is not likely to command complete confidence and respect."¹⁸⁴

George Hamilton, Secretary of State for India, forwarded the memorial to the government of India for consideration. The Government of India under Lord Curzon referred the same to the provincial governments for their remarks. The Government of Madras referred the matter to the High Court, the Board of Revenue and some high officials of the revenue and judicial departments to elicit views of experts on the matter. Some gave opinion in favour and some, against.

The Chief Justice of Madras opined, "cases are constantly arising which show that the efficient administration of the criminal

181 Resolution No. XI Mrs. Annie Besant — *Op.Cit.* — p. 33.

182 It is particularly noteworthy that out of ten signatories, there were Europeans like Lord Hobhouse who had served as legal member of the Legislative Council, Sir W. Wedderburn and Mr. Reynolds, members of the Parliament of Great Britain and Sir Roland Wilson, a Barrister — G.O. No. 694-695. Judicial (Confidential) dated, 8th May of 1901 — Minutes — p. 36.

183 G.O. No. 694-695 — Judicial (Confidential), dated, 8-5-1901, p. 5.

184 G.O. No. 694-695 — Judicial (Confidential), dated, 8-5-1901, p. 11.

law is impaired by the combination." He also, pointed out that "the fault is, as a general rule, the fault of the system, not that of the individual."¹⁸⁵

On the other hand, J. Thomson, the First Member of the Board of Revenue, opposed the view of the memorialist and said, that "the combination as operated in this Presidency is neither abused nor leads to abuse."¹⁸⁶

A. R. Knapp, Under Secretary to Government in the judicial department, remarked, "the view of the majority of the officers consulted lend strong support to the view that as far as this Presidency was concerned, the present system did not actually lead to abuse."¹⁸⁷

To the argument of the memorialists that combination of executive and judicial functions tended to make the judge partial as he would have known the details of the case in his executive capacity, Knapp said that "a sub-magistrate or magistrate who was to know nothing except what he heard in court must be deaf, blind and dumb and must have no relations male or female."¹⁸⁸ Gabriel Stokes, Chief Secretary of Madras, characterised the demand of the memorialists as "the proposition that executive and judicial authority should not be in the same hands is a purely legal thesis and all these men of light and leading are purely legal luminaries."¹⁸⁹

Lord Ampthil, the governor, felt that to deprive the collector of this power would weaken his authority and influence in the district and would strike a fatal blow to peace and order in the country. He finally informed the Government of India that "no case had been made out for complete separation and that, if such a separation were effected, it would not only deny justice but endanger public peace."¹⁹⁰ The Government of India under Lord Curzon could not proceed further in the matter, as they were fully occupied by more pressing problems.

185 G.O. Letter No. 695 (Judicial) Dept. (Conf.), dated, 8th May, 1901 — p. 1 of the Minute.

186 Ibid. — p. 11.

187 Notes to G.O. Nos. 694-695 (Judicial) Dept. (Conf.), dated, 8th May, 1901.

188 Ibid. — p. 11.

189 Ibid. — p. 17.

190 G.O. No. 694-695 Judicial, (Confidential), 8th May, 1901 — Letter to the Government of India — p. 2.

But the demand was continued by the people of the presidency. Newspapers like "*The Hindu*" focussed the feelings of the people about this and kept the matter alive. The Madras Government had effected a certain amount of separation of the executive and judicial functions in 1892. They had divested the Tahsildars of their magisterial powers in most of the taluks and appointed stationary sub-magistrates to deal exclusively with criminal cases which were previously tried by the Tahsildars.

But it should also be remembered that this change was "designed mainly for the purpose of affording relief to the Tahsildars,"¹⁹¹ and further these additional sub-magistrates "though mainly magistrates yet revenue officers also, and that, in both capacities, would be wholly subordinate to the Tahsildars," who still retained their magisterial powers, though rarely exercising them."¹⁹²

In 1906, the Madras Provincial Conference forwarded a memorial to the Secretary of State more or less repeating the arguments of the memorialists of 1899. The conference was presided over by V. Krishnaswami Ayyar. The memorial emphatically stated that "the institution of stationary sub-magistrates by which the chief revenue officers of the taluk, of which the several districts are composed, have been relieved of their magisterial functions has been in force for the past 15 years and has been found a success, and it is capable of becoming even more successful, provided the pay of the office is increased so as to attract men of better qualifications and the control of the district magistrate over them is removed. They, however, exercise only second and third class powers under the code of criminal procedure. What is required is merely the extension of the same system so as to include within its scope the first class magistrates and the placing of all magistrates whether exercising first, second or third class powers as prescribed by the criminal procedure code, under the sessions judge of the district, subject to the control of the High Court so that the officer shall not have any control over such officers in judicial matters."¹⁹³

On the 7th of May, 1907, the Government of India sought "an information as to the exact degree of control or influence exercised by

191 G.O. No. 239 Rev., 26th March, 1891 — p. 557.

192 G.O. No. 239 Rev., 26th March, 1891 — p. 534.

193 G.O. No. 1812-1813 Judicial Dept. (Confidential), dated, 25th October, 1907, Pp. 2-3.

the executive over the judicial officers " in Madras, "also the changes which have been made in recent years in the direction of freeing judicial officers from such influence or control", a history of successive steps which have been taken in this direction and the "position at the present day as contrasted with that of 30 years ago." ¹⁹⁴

To this, the Government of Madras replied, "the most marked changes that have occurred are in two directions viz. (1) in freeing the district magistrate from criminal judicial work and in establishing "stationary" magistrates with no executive functions." ¹⁹⁵

Referring to the district magistrate's criminal work, "he has now for many years ceased virtually to exercise original criminal jurisdiction. He has, no longer, as he had 30 years ago, the charge of a territorial sub-division of the district, in which he exercised the ordinary criminal powers of a sub-divisional magistrate. So far as his original work goes, he exercises now only the power of transferring a case to his own file with the view of trying or inquiring into it himself, or of dealing with a case transferred for some special reason to his file by the High Court." ¹⁹⁶

"The establishment of stationary magistrates is another important measure which has the effect of dissolving the combination of magisterial and executive functions in the same officer. The scheme was introduced in 1892.¹⁹⁷ There are now on an average six such magistrates in each district, though there are still a few taluks in which owing to the small amount of revenue and magisterial work such courts have not been opened. The stationary magistrates ordinarily possess second class powers. The main object of the scheme was to relieve Tahsildars of their magisterial work and give them more time for their revenue duties. The Tahsildars still continue to be magistrates and under a notification issued with G. O. No. 1927 Judicial dated 6th May 1893, they are invested formally with all the powers of a magistrate of the second class except in very special cases, mainly cases transferred to them by the district or sub-divisional magistrate where there is some objection to the trial by the local stationary magistrate." ¹⁹⁸

194 G.O. No. 1812-1813 Judicial Department (Confidential), dated, 25th October, 1907 — p. 2.

195 G.O. No. 1813 Judicial Department (Confidential), dated, 25th October, 1907, p. 2.

196 G.O. No. 1813 Judicial, 25th October, 1907 — p. 2.

197 See Supra, p. 84.

198 *Ibid.* — p. 3.

Forbes, member of the Governor's Executive Council, opined "the only change which has been made in the direction of freeing criminal judicial functions from the influence or control of executive officers during the last 30 years has been the introduction of the stationary magistrates scheme which has not been an unqualified success. The object of the scheme was not so much the separation of judicial and executive functions as the improvement of the revenue administration by relieving Tahsildars." He also observed "the chief contrast in the present position with what it was 30 years ago lies in the waning influence of the Tahsildar whose magisterial work has been so much curtailed."¹⁹⁹

Public opinion still remained dissatisfied. In March 1908, the Government of India evolved a scheme to be tried first in Bengal and, if found successful, to be extended to other parts of India. This scheme is sometimes called Adamson's scheme, for it was Sir Harvey Adamson, then Home Member of Viceroy's Council who announced it first in a speech in the Legislative Council on the 27th of March 1908. According to this scheme "the trial of offences and the control of magistrates who try them should never devolve on officers who have any connection with the police or with executive duties, while, on the other hand, the prevention of crime ought to be a function of the district officer, and his executive subordinates who are responsible for the preservation of the peace of the district."²⁰⁰

This scheme, however, was not favoured by the Government of Madras. Sir Arthur Lawley, Governor of Madras, felt that it would be too costly, and in July 1908, he propounded a scheme of his own for Madras. The main feature of his scheme was "to extend to the lower courts the combination of civil and criminal jurisdiction now existing in the High Court and the District Courts subject of course to the District Collector and his subordinates retaining their powers for the prevention of crime"²⁰¹

The matter, however, was not finalised during the period of our study. So, this grievance remained a live problem which affected public opinion and a lasting solution to it has come only after India became independent.

(d) *Burden of Taxation:*

Public Opinion became also strongly critical of the taxation measures of the government. It was pointed out that a top-heavy

199 *Ibid* — note — dated, 7th October, 1907 — p. 3.

200 G.O. No. 1375 Judicial (confidential), dated, 31st August, 1911 — p. 8.

201 G.O. No. 3370 Revenue Department (confidential), dated, 8th December, 1909 — page 40 of the notes.

administration, dominance of highly paid European element in the services, extravagant expenditure on buildings and unnecessary wars fought for imperial purposes led to the imposition of crushing burden of taxation. Heavy land revenue assessments were considered as impoverishing ryots, while levy of other taxes like the salt duty and income tax were believed to affect adversely other classes. The press played a dominant part in echoing public opinion on these matters.

The Mutiny of 1857 had exhausted Indian treasury and there was an acute shortage of finance in the country. Finance was an All-India subject and hence the Government of India alone was entitled to promulgate policies. The governments of other presidencies like Madras could only make suggestions, and that too when called for. In order to overcome the financial stress, James Wilson, the Finance Member of the Council of the Viceroy and a Financial expert, proposed several taxes. Of these, an increase in the monopoly price of salt and a general income-tax upon all incomes over 200/- rupees a year were stoutly resisted by the public.

The Duke of Argyle, the Secretary of State for India, justified the salt tax. He observed, "on all grounds of general principle, salt is a perfectly legitimate subject of taxation. It is impossible to reach the masses of the people by direct taxes, if they are to contribute at all to the expenditure of the state it must be through taxes levied upon articles of universal consumption. If such taxes are fairly adjusted, a large revenue can thus be raised, not only with less consciousness on the part of the people but with less real hardship on them than in any other way whatever. There is no other article in India answering this description upon which any tax is levied. It appears to be the only one which at present in that country can occupy the place which is held in our own fiscal system by the great articles of consumption from which a large part of the imperial revenue is derived. I am of opinion that the salt tax in India must continue to be regarded as a legitimate and important branch of public revenue. It is the duty, however, of the government to see that such taxes are not so heavy as to bear unjustly on the poor by amounting to a large percentage on their necessary expenditure."²⁰² But it was pointed out that the salt tax had seriously affected the poor who were already on the margin of existence.

The system of a monopoly in salt was introduced by Madras Regulation I of 1805.²⁰³ Previously under Indian rulers, the manufacture of salt was farmed out in some places, but, on no defined

²⁰² As quoted in S. Srinivasa Raghavaiyengar — *Memorandum on the Progress of the Madras Presidency during the last Forty years of British Administration* — Pp. 117-118.

²⁰³ *Tinnevely District Gazetteer*, Vol. I — p. 321.

system and in other places, various persons had been allowed the privilege of manufacture without any payment. After the creation of the government monopoly, the price of salt at the government factories was fixed at 9 1/3 annas per maund at first and it was continually enhanced till it amounted in 1890 to two rupees and eleven annas.

It is worth noting that as early as 1859 Sir Charles Trevelyan (Governor of Madras 1859—1860) opposed the increase. He stated that "an increase in the salt tax is no doubt open to argument, but I am confident that on every ground of justice and policy (under which last head I include strictly financial results) it would not be advisable to increase this tax. The tax is of the nature of a poll-tax and it is already so heavy that the labouring population, who form the bulk of the consumers and consequently of the tax payers, are unable to provide a sufficient supply for themselves and their families."²⁰⁴

"Of all the taxes imposed in this country", remarked the *Swadesamitran* of the 23rd of January, 1886, "the salt tax seems to be the most unjust and cruel for it is a tax imposed upon one of the principal articles of food, and falls very heavily upon the poor."²⁰⁵

Another objection to the salt tax was the large establishment at heavy cost which was necessary to be maintained to collect the revenue. Another objection that was levelled against it was that it had rendered the suppression of the manufacture of earth salt in various places a necessity, thus preventing the utilisation of natural resources, and had interfered with the development of the salt petre industry and the manufacture of glass salt, being the chief material in alkali and alkali in glass. Even Srinivasa Raghavaiyengar admits that "the effect of the tax on public health is very prejudicial, and it seems to me to be a matter for serious consideration whether this tax should be maintained at its present high level, when so much attention is now being devoted to the improvement of the sanitation of the country and the health of the population. I would therefore venture respectfully to suggest that the gradual reduction and eventual abolition of this tax should be pressed on the attention of the Government of India."²⁰⁶

The Government of India in deference to public opinion, reduced the tax to Rs. 2/- per maund in 1903, to Rs. 1-8-0 and Re. 1/- in 1905 and 1907 respectively.²⁰⁷

204 G.O. No. 1774 — Revenue Dept., dated, 11th June of 1859 — Pp. 6-7.

205 Newspaper Report (confidential), 1886 — p. 4.

206 *Op. Cit.* — Pp. 119-120.

207 *Tinnevely District Gazetteer*, Vol. I — p. 322.

But the demand of public opinion for its entire abolition was not complied with as the government derived a sizable revenue from it. The gross revenue from salt, exclusive of miscellaneous receipts, averaged 149 lakhs during the decade 1881—1890 and 181 lakhs during the decade 1891—1900. In 1903-'4 it was 195 lakhs. The consumption averaged 237,000 tons during the decade 1881—'90 and 276,000 tons during the decade 1891—1900. In 1903-'4, it was 307,000 tons. These figures include the minor native states of Pudukkottai, Banganapalle and Sandur. The consumption of salt per head of the population in 1881-'2, 1891—'92 and 1903—'04 was 12.49, 15.18 and 17.79 lb. respectively.²⁰⁸

It may be added here that the demand for the abolition of the salt tax formed the subject of the famous Salt Satyagriha of Mahatma Gandhi. A remedy came only after independence.

The levy of income tax was equally subjected to severe criticism. The objections raised against it were entirely different from those levelled against the salt tax.

Income tax was introduced in 1860. At first, it was in the form of general levy of 4 per cent on all incomes of Rs. 500 or above and 2 per cent on all incomes between Rs. 200 and Rs. 500. It was abolished in 1865, but revived again two years later in the modified shape of a licence tax on trades and professions. A general income tax was imposed in 1869 but again dropped. Ultimately, it was again revived in 1886 and tax was levied on all incomes other than those derived from agriculture. The tax has since been continued in this form.

Though this tax affected only a fringe of the population, public opinion was widely diffused against it on account, of many people being subjected to the vexatious inquisition and harassment faced from tax-collectors who were bent upon securing large returns.

The levy of the income tax was opposed by Sir Charles Trevelyan, Governor of Madras (1859—'60), even when it was under contemplation by James Wilson. Sir Charles Trevelyan correctly anticipated public opinion on this matter in his observation that "the levy of these taxes was sure of creating distress, disaffection and even alarm in the minds of the people, for people in India, unlike in England, distrusted all new taxes."²⁰⁹

208 Vide — *Imperial Gazetteer of India* — Madras, Vol. I, p. 104.

209 Minutes of 1st December, 1859, G.O. Revenue Dept., dated, 9th of December, 1859 — No. 1660-A — para I.

Another reason why the income tax was opposed was the reason advanced for the levy of the tax. The Government stated that the income tax was levied in order to find finance to raise an army to defend Indian territories from Russian menace. The editor of *The Hindu Sumitra*, declared, "if the income tax is to be imposed to meet the expenses of strengthening the defences of India, who ought to bear the Tax? Which country fears the invasion of the Russians, India or England? It is surely the latter country that should fear it. India has no concern in the matter, for there is no native king that rules the country. It is governed by the English, who are foreigners and a foreign invader will have to wrest it from the English and not from any native ruler. If it be so, why are we bound to help them? If the income tax be levied in India, it is primarily for the benefit of the English and not of the Hindus. It should therefore be imposed in England and upon the English. To speak, finally, there is a good way to meet the difficulty. The salaries of government officials, who receive Rs. 1,000/- or more a month, may be reduced by 10% and the amount thus obtained may be supplemented by the money expended on account of the yearly removal of the seats of the several governments to the hills."²¹⁰

The Third Congress which met at Madras in 1887 had in mind the difficulties of people with low incomes and passed a resolution requesting the government to enhance the taxable limit to Rs. 1000.²¹¹

The Government of India had to yield to public agitation and consequently enhanced the taxable minimum from Rs. 500/- to Rs. 1,000/- per annum.

The very unpopularity of the tax and the consequent political discontent strengthened the demand for a due share of the people in the government. "Income tax", says Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy, "has lent immediate strength to the cry of no taxation without representation which has lain at the root of the Constitutional progress of the country. In spite of their small number, it is the people that pay income tax that have organised political agitation. Income tax and political agitation have grown together, little did the statesmen that introduced that income tax into the finance system of India dream that it would pave the way to the representative and responsible government that the country has been given."²¹²

People were also concerned over the high burden of land revenue. This matter is referred to in the next chapter. It is sufficient to note here that successive resettlements tended to increase the burden and operated to prevent any material improvement in the condition of the peasants.

210 Newspaper Report (confidential), 1886 — p. 4.

211 Vide — Res. No. VI — Mrs. Annie Besant — *Op. Cit.* — p. 53.

212 *Op. Cit.* — Pp. 520-521.

CHAPTER III

PUBLIC OPINION AND ECONOMIC ISSUES

(a) *AGRICULTURE*:—

It would be wrong to assume that Indian public opinion was concentrating only on political grievances. There were serious ills in the economic sphere which roused agitation and many leaders assigned importance to political reforms, because they sincerely felt that only a government based on popular consent would tackle the economic problem on sound lines, with the sole object of improving the standard of life and well being of the people. The progress India has made in the economic field after independence has amply justified this feeling.

Agriculture has been from the past the predominant occupation of India. The East India Company was not much interested in the development of agriculture except in so far as it touched on the question of land revenue with which they were primarily concerned.

"A systematic restoration and preservation of reservoir tanks built by ancient rulers of Madras and the excavation of new works of the same kind where most needed", says R.C. Dutt, "would have changed the face of the country within fifty or sixty years and the Company might have handed over the southern province to the Crown with its agriculture safeguarded and its population protected from famines. But, irrigation was sadly neglected, and when sometimes, a Collector undertook the restoration of an old reservoir it was mainly with the purpose of adding to the heavy assessment of his district."²¹³

A few administrators, however, perceived early in the 19th century the possibility of utilising the great rivers like the Godavari, the Krishna and the Kaveri and irrigating the deltas; and "the name of Sir Arthur Cotton is imperishably connected with the first great canal works in the South as those of Baird Smith and his colleagues are in the North."²¹⁴ Sir Arthur Cotton constructed about the year 1834 across the Coleroon a weir called the Upper *Anicut*. The Company took credit to themselves for the successful and profitable results of

213 *India in the Victorian Age* — p. 171.

214 *Ibid* — p. 171.

this great work but the real credit is due to Sir Arthur Cotton, who first conceived the idea and commenced the construction of the Upper Coleroon *anicut* against much opposition.

The Godavari weir was also undertaken in 1846 by Sir Arthur Cotton. Similarly, the Krishna river *anicut* and the Pennar *anicut* were commenced in 1853 and 1855 respectively. These were the only major irrigation works undertaken by the Company before 1858 when the rule of the Company ended. It should again be emphasised that these works were undertaken not to help the ryots but to enhance their land revenue. Said R. C. Dutt, "they raised the land revenue as much as it was possible to raise it leaving the unfortunate cultivators as permanently poor as they were before."²¹⁵

After the Crown took over the administration, some further attempts were made to improve irrigation facilities. The existing weirs across the rivers, the Kaveri, the Krishna and the Godavari were still improved so as to increase their agricultural output. The Srivai-kuntam *anicut* was undertaken by the government across the Tamraparni river in Tirunelveli district about 16 miles from the sea. It provided for the extension of irrigation on both sides of the river, the channels leading from which not only irrigated the land directly but furnished supplies to existing tanks, in which water was stored for use during the intervals between the freshes. This was completed by the year 1878.

Another irrigation facility provided was the reservoir of the Chembrambakkam tank. This is about 14 miles from Madras. It was enlarged out of an old tank.

The Pelandorai *anicut* gives its name to a system of irrigation in South Arcot. The *anicut* was built across the Vellar River. The works were commenced in 1870 and completed by 1878.²¹⁶

The Palar *anicut* is thrown across the river of that name near the town of Arcot in the North Arcot District. During the famine of 1878, extensive improvements were carried out to several of the old channels on the north or left bank of the river as a necessity of affording employment to the labouring population.²¹⁷

Similarly, wells were excavated in various districts of the presidency. Dr. Brandis who travelled through the several districts of the

²¹⁵ *Ibid* — p. 173.

²¹⁶ C. D. Maclean —

Standing Information Regarding the Official Administration of the Madras Presidency — p. 293.

²¹⁷ *Ibid* — p. 294.

presidency in 1880 writes in his report on Forest Management, "I was much gratified to see in Bellary, Salem and other districts the large number of new wells made since the famine (1878) and old wells deepened and it seemed to me that the people fully recognise the value of wells for irrigation."²¹⁸

Though these improvements were undertaken, yet they failed to satisfy public opinion, because the outlook of the government was still governed by financial considerations and did not touch the problem of the poverty of the agriculturists. As R. C. Dutt aptly observed, "nobody who was familiar with the inner life of the cultivators would say that the extension of cultivation had made the nation more prosperous more resourceful and more secure against famines."²¹⁹

The fact that the material condition of the ryot remained unchanged even under the rule of the Crown is deducible from the following comparisons. The general condition of the Madras ryot in 1853 had been well described by Bourdillon. He was one of the best known Madras officials of his day and had served as Collector in North Arcot and elsewhere and had acquired a thorough and intimate knowledge of the people among whom he lived. His account of the Madras ryot "is sober and thoughtful, it exaggerated nothing; but, it indicated with painful details the chronic poverty of the cultivators."²²⁰

"A ryot lives from hand to mouth; he rarely sees money except that obtained from the *chetty* (money lender) to pay his *kist*; the exchanges in the out villages are very few and they are usually conducted by barter. His ploughing cattle are wretched animals not worth more than from 7 to 12 shillings ($3\frac{1}{2}$ to 6 rupees) each and those perhaps not his own, because not paid for. His rude and feeble plough costs when new, no more than 2 or 3 shillings, and all the rest of his few agricultural implements are equally primitive and inefficient. His dwelling is a hut of mud walls and thatched roofs. His food and that of his family is partly thin porridge made of the meal of grain boiled in water, and partly boiled rice with a little condiment and generally the only vessels for cooking and eating from one of the coarsest earthenware, much inferior in grain to a good tile or brick in England and unglazed brass vessels though not wholly unknown among this class are rare"²²¹

218 As quoted in S. Srinivasa Raghavaiyangar — *Op. Cit.* — p. 55.

219 *Op. Cit.* — Preface — p. VII.

220 *Ibid* — p. 71.

221 *Remarks on the Ryotwari System of Land Revenue in the Madras Presidency in 1853* — Pp. 50-51.

Even official apologists like Srinivasa Raghavaiyengar admitted that "it is true that there is a considerable portion of the ryot class which still answers to Bourdillan's description".²²²

The indebtedness of ryots has been an age long problem in India. The principle causes of rural indebtedness were: The excessive pressure of the population on the land, the excessive subdivision and fragmentation of the soil, the decline of the cottage industries and the loss of income to the ryot owing to the absence of subsidiary occupation in the off-season and the insecurity of harvests. This feature has justified the description of Indian agriculture "as a gamble in the monsoon." It has been calculated that "an agricultural cycle of five years gives one good year, one bad year and three that are neither good nor bad. It is only in good years that the peasant can possibly keep himself out of debt".²²³

The indebtedness of the ryot was further increased by expenditure on marriage and social and religious ceremonies. Thus though land revenue alone was not the sole cause of rural indebtedness, yet the heaviness of the tax together with the rigidity of its collection had often driven the ryot to a money lender who was the only source from whom an agriculturist had been accustomed for ages to borrow.

The money lenders in this presidency might be divided into four classes namely the richer ryots, the *Komaties* or Banya traders in the Telugu districts, the *Lingavat* traders in the tracts of country bordering on the Mysore territory and the Muhammadan *Labbai* traders on the East Coast and *Mopalahs* in North Malabar and the *Nattukottai Chettis* in the Southern districts. The terms and conditions of the loans differed from district to district. 12% was the usual rate of interest for loans amounting to between Rs. 100 and Rs. 500/-. For loans between Rs. 500 and Rs. 1,000 it varied from 12 to 9 per cent, and for loans above Rs. 1,000 between 9 and 6 per cent, the rate of interest diminishing as the amount of the loan increased. On the other hand for loans below Rs. 100 the rate of interest ranged between 12 and 18 per cent, the rate of interest increasing as the amount of the loan diminished.

The following description given in the *Salem District Gazetteer* vividly portrays the mode of transaction that prevailed usually between the borrowers and lender. "The business which combines grain trade with money lending is perhaps the most lucrative in the district (Salem). In the days when the ryots' first *kist* fell due in December,

²²² *Op. Cit.* — p. 164.

²²³ Jathar and Beri — *Indian Economics*, Vol. I — p. 253.

full advantage was taken by capitalists of the fact that the crops could not be placed on the market till January. Advances were freely made on the security of the presumptive crops. At harvest time the loan was paid back in its equivalent of grain at the current market price, and a stipulated quantity per rupee of the loan was added by way of interest. As the big grain merchants are well in touch with each other all over the district, it is easy for them to reduce the market price of grain at harvest times, so that they can recover their loans on the most favourable terms. The ryot must realise his produce as soon as harvested, for he has *kist* to pay. The merchants, having called in all their dues, can afford to wait for the inevitable rise of prices before they sell. In this way the money lenders tend to "corner" the food supply of the district annually, and their profits by way of interest are far larger than they appear to be from the terms of contract. The lender generally makes a clean profit of not less than 25 per cent., on his outlay".²²⁴

The money lenders as a class were unpopular and public opinion frowned upon their usurious transactions. Owing to repeated outcry of the public about the atrocities of money-lenders, the Government took some steps to protect the ryots.

In 1883, the Government of India passed the Land Improvement Loans Act (India Act XIX of 1883) under which long-term loans repayable in 20 to 30 years can be granted at cheap rates of interest for making such improvements to the land as would increase its letting value, like the construction of wells, tanks, irrigation channels, etc.²²⁵ In 1884, they passed the Agriculturists' Loans Act (India Act XII of 1884) under which short-term and medium-term loans can be granted for the purchase of seed grain, manure, cattle, fodder, pump-sets etc".²²⁶

It is significant to note that the loans granted under the Acts of 1883 and 1884 are stated "to have failed to become popular because of the delays and irksome enquiries, because of the insufficiency of the loans granted and because of the rigour with which they are collected as arrears of land Revenue".²²⁷

Public opinion was not satisfied with the poor safeguards provided to the ryots by these Acts. This forced the Madras Government to entrust the work of conducting an enquiry as to the feasibility of starting a system of agricultural or other land banks to Nicholson

224 Vide — *Salem District Gazetteer* — p. 279.

225 B.S. Baliga —

Tanjore District Hand Book — p. 206.

226 *Ibid* — p. 207.

227 *Ibid* — p. 207.

in 1892. He submitted his report in 1897 in which he pleaded powerfully for the introduction of Co-operative Credit Societies. He asserted that co-operation offered the only satisfactory solution in a country like India for "bringing to the peasant that continued, ever-fluctuating credit which he needed". He observed, "that conditions in Madras were not less favourable than those in Europe for Co-operative Credit banks, as there were already a number of successful indigenous societies known as *Nidhis* comparable to the Friendly and Building Societies of Great Britain". He suggested that "the starting of agricultural co-operative banks should be encouraged by the government by legislation and suitable indirect means, although personal devotion and zeal were necessary for success". He summed up his conclusion in the two words "Find Raiffeissen". In 1899, the Madras Government reviewed his report but shelved the whole question by declaring that it was unnecessary to take any action on it, as rural credit in their opinion was not an urgent problem.²²⁸ This illustrates the characteristic bureaucratic attitude of not understanding the real need of the people. The official view of the problem is best illustrated in the observations of S. Srinivasa Raghavaiyengar who while admitting that "as regards the question whether agricultural indebtedness as measured in money value had increased in recent years, the answer must certainly be in the affirmative", sought to account for it on the grounds that "first because of the great rise which has taken place in the value of property of all descriptions and of the facilities available, owing to fixed laws and security of property for raising money required for various purposes, and secondly, because of the abundance of money and the growth of a money economy".²²⁹

The Famine Commission that was appointed by Lord Curzon under MacDonald which submitted its report in 1901, strongly recommended the establishment of the Raiffeissen type of village banks. So, Lord Curzon again appointed a Commission under Edward Law in 1901. The result of this commission was the passing of the Act X of 1904 entitled "The Co-operative Credit Societies Act of 1904". The Act provided for the formation of credit societies. Credit Societies were distinguished as rural and urban according as at least four-fifths of their members were agriculturists or not respectively. In the case of rural societies unlimited liability was the rule; in the urban societies the matter was left to the option of the society.

To encourage the movement the government offered certain concessions and privileges to the societies registered under the Act, such

228 Vide — Government of India Memorandum accompanying the Co-operative Credit Societies Act of 1904.

229 *Op. Cit.* — p. 258.

as exemption from income-tax, stamp duties and registration fees, the grant of the benefits of a corporate body, priority over the ordinary creditors of a member next to land revenue, government audit etc. The government also promised the grant of loans to societies free of interest for the first three years, subject to the condition that the loan was not to exceed Rs. 2000/- and was to be granted only upto an equal amount raised independently by the society concerned.

Viewing from present day, progress in this field during the period of our study was incredibly slow. In fact, the co-operative movement in Indian agriculture is still in its infancy. Agricultural co-operation is even today practically confined to the sphere of credit. Further co-operative credit has generally prospered only where the monsoon is normal. In precarious tracts, overdue loans and failure to repay loans are distressingly common.

The heavy burden of land revenue accentuated the sufferings due to famines and epidemics. The tragic part of a famine is not only in the loss of human lives but also in the loss of cattle which play a very important part in the agricultural economy of the peasants. Famines also lowered the resistance of the people so that they easily succumb to epidemics and it is noteworthy that famines were always followed by epidemics. Famine followed by malaria or plague, this succeeded by famine, alternating one another, could not but have deleterious effects on the health of the people.

Though the immediate cause of famines in almost every instance was undoubtedly the failure of rains, still as R. C. Dutt says, "the intensity and the frequency of famines were greatly due to the resourceless conditions and chronic poverty of the cultivators caused by the overassessment of the soil on which they depend for their living".²³⁰

The misrule of the servants of the Company added to the effects of the unhappy blunders when a new race of rulers found themselves suddenly called upon to administer the land revenues of a strange and newly conquered country. Under the Company's rule, there were six famines in the Madras Presidency alone between the years 1783 and 1854²³¹ and it is noteworthy that the Company never attempted any well thought out scheme of famine relief.

A brief historical account of the occurrence of famines in the Presidency during the period of our study is necessary to understand its effect on the growth of Public Opinion.

²³⁰ *Op. Cit.* — p. 17.

²³¹ In 1783, 1792, 1807, 1823, 1833 and 1854.

The first famine to occur in the Presidency under the rule of the Crown was in 1866-67. This took a heavy toll of human lives in Orissa and spread all along the eastern coast from Calcutta to Madras. Within the decade of this famine, there occurred another famine in 1876-78 the most terrible in point of magnitude, intensity and duration that was known for upwards of a century. This calamity extended over a wide area in Madras, Mysore, Hyderabad, Bombay and the United Provinces. The area affected in the Madras Presidency alone was 74,000 square miles containing a population of 16 millions.²³² The famine was most severe in North Arcot, Bellary and in the neighbouring districts, the suffering was equally great in Salem where but few relief works were provided. The *Salem District Gazetteer* states, "it would be hard to exaggerate the horrors of that trying time, when cholera, starvation, small-pox, famine, diarrhoea, dysentery, dropsy, and fever were claiming their victims by thousands; the dead and dying lay so close in the camp hospitals, that it was difficult to move without treading on them, and hard to distinguish the one from the other, and up to the pitiless sky floated the black or yellow-green smoke from the pyres on which as many as 24 bodies were sometimes burnt together in a single camp, when cattle lay gasping for breath, licking the dust for food, and when for miles not a drop of water was to be found. The fruits of the avenue trees, the very leaves and grasses, the roots and berries of the jungles, failed to meet the demand; the ties of maternal affection failed, and even respectable women sold their honour for food".²³³ People left their homes and flocked in large numbers into the city. William Digby gives a graphic account of the acuteness of the famine thus:—

"An immense number of the "emaciated", congregated on the beach, and obtained a precarious existence by picking up the grains which fell from the rice-carts, the grain being not always accidentally dropped. The scenes in the streets of Madras at this time (Nov. 1876) and for seven or eight subsequent months were unique, and in many respects sad and disheartening. Much excitement was caused by a report of death from starvation in one of the most frequented streets of the city, a villager and his family had "wandered" into the town; these were without food for several days, two of the children died and were buried; and then the man died of absolute want in sight of thousands of bags of grain. One

232 Vide Srinivasa Raghavaiyangar — *op. cit.*, p. 42.

233 *Salem District Gazetteer* — p. 306.

of the daily journals in a spasm of excitement, charged the authorities with man-slaughter." ²³⁴

The Government adopted some measures to alleviate the distress of the people. As part of the famine relief, the East coast canal was dug and it subsequently developed into the well-known Buckingham canal extending for 261 miles along the East Coast of the Presidency from Pedda Ganjam to Markanam.²³⁵ The excavation of the canal was begun so early as 1801; but, prior to the famine of 1876-1878, the expenditure incurred on it was only about 5½ lakhs of rupees. During the famine, nearly 30 lakhs of rupees was spent on the work of which about 22 lakhs represented the normal value of labour done.²³⁶

"Notwithstanding the gigantic efforts made by the Government" admits S. Srinivasa Raghavaiyangar in his official memorandum, that, "three quarter million of persons on an average having been relieved daily for a period of 22 months and the cost of famine including revenue remitted amounting to 8 million sterling, the loss of the population was nearly 4 millions."²³⁷

The Government of India under Lord Lytton appointed a commission under General (Sir Richard) Strachey to enquire into causes of famines and measures to be adopted to curb them. The Commission submitted its report in 1880. Its report formed the basis of the Famine Code which was promulgated in 1883 by the Government of India and the provincial Governments followed it.

The commission affirmed the fundamental principle that it was the duty of the State to offer relief to the needy in times of famine. The relief was to be administered in the shape of providing work for able-bodied men and distributing food or money to the aged and infirm. Local works such as excavation of ponds or raising embankments etc. in villages might also be undertaken for the employment of persons who were not fit to be sent out on larger works. It was specially emphasised that the people should be provided with work before the physical efficiency had deteriorated through starvation. Further relief was to be provided by suspension and remission of land revenue and rents and offer of loans for

234 *The Famine Campaign in Southern India*, Vol. I, 1878 — p. 13.

235 In the early part of the 19th century two canals known as Cochrane's canal and the South Coast canal existed. The former led from the Cooum northwards as far as Doograuzpatnam and the latter from Paupanchavady in Chingleput district southwards to the mouth of Palar, near Madras.

236 C. S. Srinivasachari — *op. cit.*, p. 268.

237 *Op. cit.*, pp. 42-43.

purchase of seed grain and bullocks. In order to bring home to the people concerned a sense of responsibility, the Commission recommended that relief should be administered through the representatives of the tax-payers who were to provide the major part of the funds.

In order to meet the heavy unforeseen expenditure caused by famine, it was decided to set apart fifteen millions of rupees every year in order to constitute the Famine Relief and Insurance Fund".

The year 1896-1897 again saw a terrible famine in Madras and other provinces like Bihar, United Provinces, Central Provinces and Bombay. Lord Curzon appointed a commission under Sir J. B. Lyall in 1898 to consider the matter. The commission endorsed the principles of 1880, and also laid stress on the benefits occurring from early suspension of land revenue and rents and early distribution of advances for purchase of seed grain and cattle. It recommended the appointment of a Famine Commissioner in a province where relief operations were likely to be adopted on an extensive scale. It also recommended that non-official assistance should be utilised on a large scale in the matter of distributing relief, establishment of agricultural banks and introduction of improved methods of agriculture and wide extension of irrigation works.²³⁸

The responsibility of the government to combat famine was fully endorsed by the commission when it stated "in conducting a campaign against famine it must be laid down as a first principle that the object of state intervention is to save life and that all other considerations should be subordinated to this. The success or otherwise of relief methods at such a crisis cannot be subjected to a financial test, for the bills of mortality will furnish the only true criterion".²³⁹

These measures, however, could not satisfy public opinion. The frequent occurrence of famines was attributed to the evil of alien administration. The twelfth Congress which met at Calcutta in 1896 passed the following resolution which indicates the general public opinion on the famine policy of the government. "That this Congress deploras the outbreak of famine in a more or less acute form throughout India and holds that this and other famines which have occurred in recent years are due to the great poverty of the people, brought on by the drain of the wealth of the country

238 Vide — *Madras Famine Code*, 1904 — Chapter IX, p. 26.

239 *Madras Famine Code*, 1904 — Introduction — p. 1.

which has been going for years together, and by the excessive taxation and over assessment consequent on a policy of extravagance followed by the government both in the civil and military departments which has so far impoverished the people that, at the first touch of scarcity they are rendered helpless and must perish unless fed by the state or helped by the private charity. In the opinion of this Congress, the true remedy against the recurrence of the famine lies in the adoption of a policy, which would enforce economy, husband the resources of the state, foster the development of indigenous and local arts and industries which have practically been extinguished and help forward the introduction of modern arts and industries.”²⁴⁰

So the real solution of the problem lay in raising the low standard of the life of the people. This was not achieved under British rule and deliberate efforts towards this have been taken only after independence.

(b) *Industry and Trades*:—

The general impression that India has never been an industrial country is misleading in the extreme. Indian arts and crafts had been an important contributory factor from time immemorial to her immense wealth in the past. The finished products of Indian Industry as well as her natural products such as pearl, perfumes, dye-stuff, spices, sugar etc., were exported to distant countries and she imported gold, copper, zinc, tin, lead, wine, horses etc., but there was always an excess of exports over imports, which meant necessarily the influx of a large quantity of gold. In the first century, Pliny bitterly complained of the drain of gold from the Roman Empire caused by the use of Indian luxuries. A similar complaint was made in the 18th century even by Englishmen.

It is a historical fact that when Queen Mary came to England with her husband after the English Revolution of 1688, she brought “a passion for colored east Indian calicoes, which speedily spread through all the classes of the community.”²⁴¹ But this did not suit the English philanthropists of those days. They proclaimed a boycott of Indian goods. To quote Lecky:—

“At the end of the seventeenth century great quantities of cheap and graceful Indian calicoes, muslins and chintzes were imported into England, and they found such favour that the woollen and silk manufacturers were seriously alarmed. Acts of Parliament were accord-

240 Res. No. XII — Annie Besant — *op. cit.*, p. 247.

241 Lecky — *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*.

ingly passed in 1700 and in 1721, absolutely prohibiting, with a very few specified exceptions, the employment of printed or dyed calicoes in England, either in dress or in furniture, and the use of any printed or dyed goods of which cotton formed any part."²⁴²

But, the indigenous industries declined by the 19th century. This was partly due to the competition of cheap goods produced by machinery and partly due to the unwillingness of the government of the company to protect or encourage Indian arts and crafts. So, by the first half of the 19th century, India lost the proud position of supremacy in the trade and industry of the world which she had been occupying for well high two thousand years, and was gradually transformed into a plantation for the production of raw materials and a dumping ground for cheap manufactured goods from the west.

The position little improved even under the rule of the Crown. The government did not think of protecting and rendering aid to indigenous industries, because this would have adversely affected British trade and industry which was flourishing after the Industrial Revolution. This non-interference was defended on the academic ground that the British government adhered to the policy of *Laissez Faire* as the best policy to be followed by the state in economic matters. This policy suited the interests of British traders and industrialists admirably who were able to exploit the raw materials and rich resources of undeveloped countries like India.

The Indian spinning and weaving trades were the most badly affected by foreign competition. Raw materials like cotton were exported to England where they were made into cloth. Finished cloth was imported into India and sold in Indian markets at competitive rates. This ruined the Indian Cotton Industry and rendered the weaving community unemployed. "The rapid development of machinery and manufactures and the cheapness with which cotton clothes were produced in England led to India being flooded with Manchester goods to the injury of the weaving classes."²⁴³

Another industry which had suffered from foreign competition was the manufacture of iron. In his essays on *Indian Economics*, Mr. Justice Ranade wrote:—"The iron industry not only supplied all local wants, but it also enabled India to export its finished products to foreign countries. The quality of the material turned out had also a world-wide fame. The famous iron pillar near Delhi, which is at least fifteen hundred years old, indicates an amount of skill in the manufacture of wrought iron, which has been the marvel of all who

²⁴² *Ibid.* — Vol. VII, pp. 255-56.

²⁴³ Srinivasa Raghavaiyengar — *op. cit.*, p. 98.

have endeavoured to account for it The Indian Steel found once considerable demand for cutlery even in England. The manufacture of steel and wrought iron had reached a high perfection at least two thousand years ago." ²⁴⁴

The *Salem District Gazetteer* states, "Iron-smelting in Salem District is an art of extreme antiquity. The remains of slag mounds and furnaces in numerous villages, not only in Attur, Salem, Omalur and Tiruchengodu but also on the border line of Hosur and Krishnagiri taluks, and even in the heart of the Anchetti jungles, testify to the wide extent and importance to the industry." ²⁴⁵

It is a fact that the British did not develop this industry. Of course, elaborate enquiries were made in the last decade of the nineteenth century as to whether the iron ores of Salem District could be exploited on commercial scale. But, the idea was dropped on the pretext of the heavy expenditure to be incurred on fuel.

The destruction of indigenous manufactures had had the effect of impoverishing the artisan classes and driving them to crowd on agriculture which owing to the capriciousness of the seasons was a precarious industry and the result was that the population as a whole was growing poorer and poorer every day and losing in stamina. The position of the labourers had thus deteriorated under the rule of the Crown.

Not merely did industries suffer but indigenous trade also declined. Foreign trade rapidly increased during the period of our study. Internal trade was accelerated on account of marvellous improvements in communications. Nicholson in his *Manual of the Coimbatore District*, has so well described the revolution in trade effected by the improvement of communications in that district that his remarks may be usefully quoted in full. He stated "from various reports it is known that in 1800 there were practically no roads, but merely tracks, there was not a cart in the district, and what traffic existed was carried on by pack bullocks, and by ponies and by basket boats on the Cauvery. The result was not only that all imported commodities were dear, but export trade was insignificant and only invaluable articles such as ghee, spices and so forth. Grain could not be moved, so that prices depended on local scarcity or abundance with the result that substantial ryots were no worse off in bad years than in good for storage was a necessity, so that deficient crops were supplemented from the surplus of good years, which then fetched very high prices, while in the good

244 As quoted in B. D. Basu —

The Ruin of Indian Trade and Industries — pp. 3-4.

245 *Salem District Gazetteer* — p. 272.

years, especially if consecutive, the markets were glutted, prices fell heavily, and the ryots who were compelled to sell in order to meet the government and other demands were ruined by their own super abundance. This reproach remained for many years. There are now (1887) in the district above 1500 miles of metalled or gravelled roads in good order, besides numerous cross roads and village lanes and 147 miles of railway — Madras and South Indian. The result of this improvement is an immense internal traffic between the various trade centres such as weekly markets and towns, and a considerable import and export trade in which thousands of carts take part with railways."²⁴⁶

Laying of roads, the gradual introduction of railways and other communications like Post and Telegraph have increased the volume of trade during the period of our study. But, in the absence of real industrial development in the country, this development of trade only benefitted Western industrialists, helping the export of raw materials from India and import of Western manufactures.

The volume of overseas trade also began to increase enormously with the opening of the Suez canal. In 1855-'60 the average annual value of Indian trade was about fifty two lakhs of rupees. During the five years beginning with 1869, when the Suez canal was opened, the average annual value of exports and imports amounted to nearly ninety crores of rupees. The average in 1900 exceeded two hundred crores. But, this did not satisfy public opinion, because trade was to a large extent monopolised by foreigners who had ousted the natives of the soil from their legitimate fields of enterprise. Further, these improvements were utilised for impoverishing the people still greater. They were able to procure raw materials from remote parts of the Presidency and export them to their country in order to import them as finished products.

For an instance the proportion of manufactured exports to total exports of India rose from 8 per cent in 1879 to 16 per cent in 1892 and 22 per cent in 1907-1908 while the proportion of manufactured imports to total imports fell from 65 per cent in 1879 to 57 per cent in 1892 and to 53 per cent in 1907. Thus not only were indigenous industries destroyed by the import of machine-made goods but also trade was in the hands of the Europeans. One of the worst hit trades was shipping. This might be explained as one of the causes for starting the Swadeshi Steam Navigation by V. O. Chidambaram Pillai.

The State took no interest in industrial development till the 20th century. The following instance shows this apathy. Alfred Chatterton

²⁴⁶ Vide—

Manual of the Coimbatore District — Vol. II, p. 131.

wanted to improve technical education in the Madras Presidency and even set up a department of industries in 1906. Handloom weaving, chrome tanning and aluminium industries were encouraged and pioneer government enterprises were even set up. This roused the alarm of European business interests. Lord Morley, the Secretary of State, ordered the closing of the department. The government was confined to collect industrial information and provide some technical education.²⁴⁷

We have already seen how the suggestions of Frederick Nicholson to develop co-operation to improve the lot of agriculturists were not carried out. Similarly, the efforts of Alfred Chatterton to improve indigenous industries were not encouraged. This anti-national economic policy of the government was resented by the public. Hence developed the Swadeshi Movement.

An ardent advocate of Swadeshim in South India was V. O. Chidambaram Pillai who with his devoted patriotic followers spread the ideals of swaraj and swadeshim all over South India. He did not content himself with merely addressing meetings exhorting these ideals to the people. He also took concrete steps in that direction and started a Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company at Tuticorin.

On the 16th of October, 1906, the Company was registered under the name of the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company Limited with a capital of Rs. 10 lakhs divided into 40,000 shares of Rs. 25 each. He became its Secretary. Soon after the registration of the Company he went to Bombay to arrange for the purchase of two steamers one of which, the *Gallia*, arrived in Tuticorin on the 16th of April, 1907, and the second, the *Lawoe* on the 11th of June, 1907. In January 1907, he opened an agency of the Company in Madras.

In a meeting held at Tuticorin, he explained the need for boycotting foreign goods thus, "why should foreigners purchase our cotton and export it for profit? Why should not we ourselves do so as the cotton is ours and the men who work are our men? Such being the case, why should others derive gain from our labour?" He continued, "the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company is already established and has caused loss to the British India Steam Navigation Company which will die away in due course. Next to it comes the cotton trade. It is very easy to capture it. I have received letters from several persons from Madurai and Salem intimating that they are willing to invest three-fourths of the capital needed if the Tuticorin people help them with the remaining one-fourth and also supply labour. If you people would assist me, I would open a big mill for

247 T. K. Venkataraman — *History of India* — Vol. II, p. 303.

the manufacture of thread and cloth of all sorts. Just as the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company is now established on a firm basis, a mill also will succeed." ²⁴⁸

The press played a no less significant part in echoing public opinion on this matter. *The Hindu* of the 2nd of April, 1908, observed, The Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company, was projected in competition with a well established and resourceful European Company, made it specially popular and obtained for it the support of a large number of moneyed men throughout the Tamil Districts of the presidency. Merchants, Vakils, Land-holders and a large number of the lower middle classes have taken shares in it. It is looked upon as a national concern of which the success will demonstrate the vitality and resources of the new Swadeshi movement." ²⁴⁹

Associations also came to be formed with the avowed object of expressing public opinion on these matters.

In 1906, the National Fund and Industrial Association was formed in Madras "for fostering and improving indigenous industries, for the promotion of scientific and technical education and diffusion of knowledge on industrial matters among the people by means of demonstrations, lectures, leaflets and the like, provision of scholarships for the study of industries in India or in any foreign country, the helping of students trained as above in the starting of industries, the establishment of a bureau of information relating to the industries, trade and commerce in India." ²⁵⁰

Chennai Jana Sangam was started on the 11th of January, 1908, with an object similar in scope and aim to the National Fund and Industrial Association, and also having for its special purpose the furtherance of nationalism in the city by delivering lectures on Swadeshim and boycott of foreign goods, by founding a school for physical culture, a reading room and library and by training youngmen to preach on Swadeshim." ²⁵¹ Such *sangams* were established in different parts of the presidency.

The British Steam Navigation Company was so alarmed at the starting of the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company that it resorted to all sorts of tactics to put it down. The local magistrate, Wynch, was favourable towards them. Referring to this attitude *The Hindu* of the

²⁴⁸ Vide G.O. No. 1542, Judicial (Conf.) Dept., dated 3rd Octr. 1911 — pp. 19-20.

²⁴⁹ *Newspaper Report (Confidential)*, 1908 — p. 191.

²⁵⁰ *Madras Year Book*, 1924 — p. 344.

²⁵¹ Vide *C.I.D. Report (Secret)*, Madras, dated 19th of June, 1909 — p. 4.

2nd of April, 1908, stated, "disorder and lawlessness must be put down but there is enough statesmanship in Madras not to regard the new spirit of self-help as criminal. The spirits of Swadeshim is not a passing phenomenon and it has vitality and strength enough to survive the temporary reverses. If anybody anywhere fancies that a dose or two of repression will drive out the Swadeshi spirit, it is a mere delusion."²⁵²

Appealing to the people, the paper remarked, "we also must awaken to the necessity of saving Swadeshi movement in this hour of danger. The time is a critical one and it is as if Providence had determined to test the spirit of the people and see whether it was strong enough to deserve assistance. The Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company was on the point of crushing its British rival, if the bureaucracy had not interfered; it is now on the point of being crushed itself unless the people interfere. The people have the power to save it by blotting out its rival. If the merchants refuse in a body to ship by the alien service, if the people refuse to tread its decks, no amount of bureaucratic help, no amount of magisterial injustice and police tyranny can save it from the doom it deserves. We look to the nationalists of Madras to see that this is done. The British jails are not large enough to hold the whole population of Tinnevely district; let every man follow the noble example of Chidambaram Pillai and, for the rest, let God decide."²⁵³

In spite of staunch public support, the government was strong enough to hinder the effort of Chidambaram Pillai. The Swadeshi Movement also failed because of a number of other causes besides the hostility of the government. The promoters lacked business ability and experience. This was because of the lack of technical education. The education that was imparted was mainly literary. In the absence of facilities for technical instructions, industrial advance could not develop.

Another cause was the lack of sufficient capital. It is only gradually that Indian capitalists got over their shyness and began to seek investments in industries.

However, the most important reason was that not only was the government indifferent to industrial development but under the influence of European commercial and industrial interests, it was generally antagonistic to the development of industry in India.

Public discontent over all these economic issues contributed to stimulate nationalism and the desire for political freedom.

²⁵² *Newspaper Report (Confidential)*, 1908 -- p. 193.

²⁵³ *Ibid.* — p. 195.

CHAPTER IV

PUBLIC OPINION AND SOCIETY

It will be wrong to imagine that public opinion was directed only on channels antagonistic to the administration. Influence of contact with the West led to discussions on many matters concerning society. Emergence of a large volume of opinion in favour of social reform is counteracted by a crystallisation of conservative and orthodox opinion which resisted any interference with the *status quo*. An analysis of the growth of public opinion in this period will be incomplete if account is not taken of these currents and cross-currents of opinion dealing with the society.

Indian society is one of the most complex societies of the world. It presents a fascinating and at the same time a baffling problem. This complexity has been the result of political subordination to different foreign powers from time to time. Public opinion has expressed itself on several features of our social life just as it has done in the political and economic spheres.

During the days of the Company, the government were reluctant to interfere with conditions in Indian Society. A body of foreign merchants, as seen earlier, who had turned administrators, naturally had to show great caution in dealing with Indian Social life. Says, M. Ruthnaswamy, "they attempted to interfere with any evil custom or usage only when the ends of orderly and stable administration required it".²⁵⁴ Every step, therefore, in this direction demanded vigilance to avoid, as far as possible interference in religion — an interference which in those early days of the Company's administration, was considered fraught with danger to the very existence of the rule of the company in India. There was a strong feeling that interferences in social usages of Hindus by a foreign agency might lead to grave discontent.

It may be noted here that the outbreak of the Mutiny of 1857 which terminated the Company's rule was also partly due to social causes like the introduction of railways which threatened the sanctity of caste.

254 *Op. cit.* — pp. 608-609.

In spite of this, however, a few enlightened administrators felt the need of interfering with some grave social abuses. Their path was helped by the effects of Western learning and Western culture. Through these channels came the liberal ideas of the West which stirred the people. A critical outlook on the past and new aspirations for the future marked this new awakening. As said by Dr. R. C. Majumdar, "Reason and judgment took the place of faith and belief, superstition yielded to science, immobility was replaced by progress, and a zeal for reform of proved abuses overpowered age long apathy and inertia and a complacent acquiescence in whatever was current."²⁵⁵

Enlightened *elite* of the Society organised associations with the avowed purpose of creating public opinion in favour of the removal of some of the evils. This enabled the Company's administrators to remove evils like the *sati* the predial slavery that prevailed in the country.

The foremost among them was the Brahma Samaj. This was founded by Raja Ram Mohan Rai in 1828. He has been described as the "Father of Indian Renaissance" and his name stands foremost in the field of religious and social development. He stood for the abolition of *sati*, emancipation of women, widow re-marriage and the eradication of the rigid caste-system. The Brahma Samaj also advocated the worship of one God and the brotherhood of men.

An offshoot of the Brahma Samaj was developed in Bombay under the name of Prarthana Samaj by M. G. Ranade (1842 — 1901), G. K. Gokhale (1866 — 1915) and R. G. Bhandarkar (1837 — 1925). Out of this developed the Servants of India Society formed by Gokhale for educational and philanthropic work.

Dayananda Sarasvati (1824 — 1883) founded the Arya Samaj in 1875, interpreting the Vedas to justify social reform and worship of one God and condemn caste.

The Ramakrishna Mission started by Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1834 — 1886) rose to defend the old faith by appeals based on modern thought. The most important follower of Ramakrishna was Swami Vivekananda (1863 — 1902) who preached his tenets even in the United States in 1893 where he attended the Parliament of Religions at Chicago. The Ramakrishna Movement developed also as an organisation for educational and social service.

255 R. C. Majumdar, Raychaudhuri & K. Datta — *An Advanced History of India* — p. 812.

These new religious movements not only checked the tendency for the conversion of educated classes to Christianity but also helped enlightened persons both in the West and in the East to study all religions with reverence. Hence developed the Theosophical Society which believes in the unity of all faiths. This society was founded by Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott in 1875 in the United States. In 1879, both of them came to India and established the headquarters of the society at Adyar in Madras. The society became prominent in the time of Mrs. Annie Besant. She joined the society in 1889 and came to India in 1893.

The establishment of the Indian National Congress was followed by an organisation for social uplift of the people. "The feeling that besides the Indian National Congress, there must be an organisation on an All-India basis, in order to discuss side by side with the considerations of political questions, questions affecting social economy and best endeavours should be put forth for ameliorating the existing conditions of our society",²⁵⁶ resulted in the birth of the Indian National Social Conference.

In fact when A. O. Hume had conceived the idea of 'forming Indian National Congress, he did not desire that politics alone should form part of their discussion for there were recognised political bodies in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and other parts of India.²⁵⁷

R. Raghunatha Rao might be styled the father of the social reform movement and Ranade its wet-nurse.²⁵⁸ Madras had the honour of being the birth place of the Indian National Social Conference which was first held at Madras in December, 1887, under the presidency of Rajah Sir T. Madhava Rao, the premier Indian statesman of the 19th century. It was agreed by the members then present that annual conferences should be held in different parts of India for considering and adopting measures necessary for the improvement of the condition of our society. From the year 1887, the conference had been conducted every year in the same place where the Congress met. In 1892, The Madras Hindu Social Reform Association was established in Madras, "to promote social reform among Hindus, including female education, removal of restriction as to the marriageable age and the re-marriage of widows, relaxation of the rules of caste and discouragement and abolition of such other customs, habits, practices and prohibition as are injurious to the well-being of individuals and of society".²⁵⁹

256 C. Y. Chintamani (Ed.) — *Indian Social Reform* — Appendix — p. 365.

257 G. A. Natesan (Ed.) — *op. cit.* — Introduction by W. C. Bannerjee — p. vi.

258 C. Y. Chintamani (Ed.) — *op. cit.* — Appendix, p. 365.

259 *The Madras Year Book*, 1924 — p. 338.

Besides these associations, there came to be established during the closing part of the 19th century and of the early quarter of the present century various associations in the Madras Presidency for communities like the Christians, the depressed classes, the Muham-madans etc.

The Young Men's Christian Association was first established at Trivandrum in 1873. The object of this was said to be "the spiritual and mental improvement of its members and of the non-Christians around."

From 1880 until 1890 branch associations of this were started throughout South India. The first national convention was held in Madras in February, 1891. It was at that convention that the first Indian National Council was organised with its headquarters in Madras.²⁶⁰ This association, though primarily intended for the Christians, also rendered valuable service in focusing public opinion on social abuses like degradation of women and caste system.

The Young Women's Christian Association was established in 1892 in Madras to develop the spiritual and intellectual life of women and to foster fellowship and mutual service as the ideal life.

There were also European and Anglo-Indian Associations. In 1879 the Anglo-Indian Association of Southern India was established at Egmore in Madras, "to promote the material, social, moral and intellectual advancement of the Europeans, Americans and Anglo-Indians."²⁶¹ There was also an European Association established in 1883 at Madras for the same purpose as the Anglo-Indian Association of Southern India.

As the names imply, these associations guarded the interests of these classes and served as channels for the expression of their opinions to the government.

The Madras Adi-Dravida Maha Jana Sabha was founded in Madras in 1892, "to raise the social, moral and intellectual status of the Adi-Dravida communities by every possible means."²⁶² By the term Adi-Dravida, the association ostensibly meant the numerous untouchable communities existing in South India. Membership was open to the Adi-Dravidas only. The Sabha had branches throughout the presidency.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.* — p. 109.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1923 — p. 286.

²⁶² *Ibid.* — p. 291.

The Muhammadan Educational Association of Southern India was established in 1901 in Madras, "to devise means for disseminating higher education among the Muslims and to promote the study of Urdu, Persian and Arabic; to arrange for imparting religious instruction side by side with secular education, to help the poor but intelligent and deserving students with scholarships, books, etc., and to impress on the minds of the Muslim public by means of lectures, tracts and social gatherings, the necessity for imparting Western education to their children." ²⁶³

It is, however, an unfortunate fact the sectional organisations like the Adi-Dravida Maha Jana Sabha, the organisation of the Muslims, the Anglo-Indian and European Associations broke away from the general national movement under the fear that their sectional interests would be affected if the British Government ceased to function. We have already surveyed, while dealing with the political conditions, the deleterious results of the activities of such communal organisations.

(a) *The Position of Women:—*

The principle of equality of man brought in by contact with the West had important repercussions on the position of women in Hindu Society.

The removal of the various disabilities to which womenfolk were subjected to form the matters on which Public Opinion constantly expressed itself during this period.

Though many rules and customs restricted an orthodox Hindu Woman's life until very recent times, the position of women in ancient India was free. They were respected members of society.

Vedic literature has ample references to the status enjoyed by the woman: The *Mahabharata* says,

"The woman is half the man,
The best of friends,
The root of the three ends of life*
And of all that will help him in the other world."
"With a wife a man does mighty deeds....
With a wife a man finds courage

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 1924 — p. 343.

* righteousness, worldly prosperity and satisfaction of desire.

A wife is the safest refuge"...

"A man a flame with sorrow in his soul,

Or sick with disease finds comfort in his wife

As a man parched with heat finds relief in water."

"Even a man in the grip of rage will not be harsh to a women"

"Remembering that on her depend the joys of love, happiness and virtue."

"For woman is the everlasting field, in which the Self is born."²⁶⁴

But when we reach the time of Manu, we find that the position of women in society had degenerated. Her subordination to the husband was recognised.

"Though destitute of virtue, or seeking pleasure (elsewhere) or devoid of good qualities (yet) a husband must be constantly worshipped as a god by a faithful wife."²⁶⁵

She lost her independence of thought and action. "In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent."²⁶⁶

The deterioration in the position of women in Hindu Society is seen in the law regarding property rights, development of sati, ban on re-marriage of widows and growth of the custom of child marriage.

Advocating the claim of women to a higher status, G. Subramania Iyer stated, "it is self-love, narrow sympathy, and a low standard of conduct that constitute the cause of the subordination of woman to man"..... "We hold that the true test of civilisation is the position of women, and the incongruity between our pretensions outside our home and our practice within it, should gradually lead to a greater harmony between our two lives."²⁶⁷ He also pleaded that "their education should be as high, as scientific and as invigorating as the education of men."²⁶⁸

264 Mahabharata — I, 74, 40 — As quoted in A. L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India* — pp. 181-182.

265 Max-Muller (Ed.) — *Laws of Manu* (translated by G. Buhler) — V, 154 — p. 196.

266 *Ibid.* — V, 148 — p. 195. But, such statements should not be taken in their face value. In another passage, Manu says, "Where women are honoured, there the gods are pleased; but where they are not honoured no sacred rite yields rewards." — *Ibid.* — III, 56 — p. 85.

267 C. Y. Chintamani (Ed.) — *op. cit.*, Part IV — p. 356.

268 *Ibid.* — p. 358.

Subramania Bharati besides being a zealous patriot, also an ardent advocate of women's emancipation. He championed the cause of their freedom in various poems.

There was keen discussion on the ban on re-marriage of Hindu widows.

Those who championed the cause of widow re-marriage pointed out how widow re-marriage was allowed as early as the Rig Vedic age where a childless widow was allowed to marry her husband's brother. The fact that widow re-marriage was not disallowed is proved by such words as "*didishu*", a man that has married a widow, "*parapurva*", a woman that has taken a second husband, and "*paunarbhava*", a son of a woman by her second husband.

P. Anandacharlu, advocating the need for the widow re-marriage, stated, "despite all that is asserted to the contrary on the meaning of diverse words and on the interpretation of diverse texts — the single fact that there is distinct and recognised status conceded (i) to the "*punarbhū*", a twice married woman, as distinguished from "*swairini*" (adulterous) and "*vidhava*" (widow) and (ii) to "*paunarbhava*", son of a twice-married woman marking him off from a "*kunda*", bastard son born of a married woman, "*golaka*", bastard son begotten on a widow, would seem fairly to establish beyond all cavil, that re-marriages of women were in vogue for all practical purposes of life at one period in the history of our people."²⁶⁹

But, gradually, widow re-marriage had come to be considered not respectable or had fallen into disrepute. The life of Hindu widow became full of misery. According to strict *śāstras*, she was expected to eat only one meal a day. She was not to sleep on a bed. She was never to put on good clothes. In some cases, her head was clean shaved. She was prohibited from taking part on all auspicious functions. These were a few causes for widows consenting to self-immolation in *sati*, as they preferred immediate death to this kind of disgraceful and humiliating life.

Lord Dalhousie, Governor-General (1848-1856), who had distinguished himself by a policy of bold reforms in other directions, passed the Widow Re-marriage Act of 1856, making re-marriage of widows legal. This act was welcomed by social reformers like Pandit Vidyasagar. Pandit Vidyasagar was a noted reformer of Bengal (1820-1891). As a staunch advocate of female education, he established several girls' schools. He succeeded in solemnising a number of widow re-marriages, the first of them taking place in December, 1865.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.* — Part I — pp. 57-58.

He also chose a young widow as the bride of his son. Social reform could not, however, be enforced through legislation. Though legal sanction was accorded by the government to widow re-marriages, yet few people came forward to take advantage of the act. This had to be achieved more by persuasion than by coercion.

Leaders like G. Subramania Iyer and Rao Bahadur K. Viresalingam Pantulu spared no pain in convincing the people about the necessity of widow re-marriage. G. Subramania Iyer not only advocated widow re-marriage but himself set an example by re-marrying his own daughter who had become a widow.²⁷⁰

K. Viresalingam Pantulu was an ardent champion of women emancipation. He was born on April 6, 1848 and died on May 27, 1919. A correspondent of the *Hindu* writes on the 8th of January, 1963, "Viresalingam Pantulu pleaded and worked with dynamism, having dedicated his life and scrupulously earned resources for the cause of the liberation of women from thralldom to ignorance and superstition and social disabilities at a time when society was hostile and the very idea of the emancipation of women through education was considered a sacrilege. It was to a great extent, his indefatigable services that paved the way for legislation acknowledging women's right to property, banning child marriage as a crime and making widow re-marriage too common to evoke comment."²⁷¹ He also started a journal known as *Hasya Sanjivini* to ridicule the evil social customs.

In recognition of his distinguished services, the Government of India conferred on him the title of "Rao Bahadur" in January, 1893. In 1898, he was made a Fellow of the Madras University. He founded the Rajahmundry Hithakarin Samaj and also executed a trust deed, in 1908, with the object of establishing and maintaining widows' homes, orphanages, asylums, boys' and girls' schools, industrial and technical institutions and other educational and philanthropic institutions. W. M. Kalhatkar in an article on widow re-marriage in *Indian Social Reform* edited by C. Y. Chintamani praises Viresalingam Pantulu as one, "than whom a more ardent worker, in the cause of social reform does not breathe in the whole country and who is justly known as the Pandit Vidyasagar of Southern India."²⁷²

In spite of all these efforts, it must be admitted that widow re-marriage is not popular among the people even to-day. The strongest opponents are many women themselves whose orthodoxy might be

270 *Newspaper Report (Conf.)*, 1908 — p. 596.

271 *The Hindu*, dated Jan. 8, 1963.

272 C. Y. Chintamani (Ed.) — *op. cit.* — Part IV — p. 308.

summed up in these words, "we are born once, we die once and we marry once."²⁷³ It must also be admitted that Hindu public opinion does not look kindly on widow re-marriage and many who sympathise with it do not dare to express their sympathy in positive action.

The question of child marriage in Hindu society was another matter on which public opinion was expressed, though here also it was divided.

Hymns of the *Rig Veda* refer to freedom of choice in marriage allowed to brides to select their husbands and freedom of movement of women. In the epics, we hear of many Svayamvaras when the bride was asked to select a husband out of a number of worthy young men who had come to be chosen by her.

But, Manu and other writers of later *smritis* suggested that a girl should be married before she had reached maturity.

Gradually, opinion in favour of early marriage must have become more predominant and, late marriages became rare and, in those days, sometimes, girls were married even when they were a year or two old.

Pandit Vidyasagar, champion of widow re-marriage, was also an opponent of child-marriage. He had his daughters married only after they attained their fifteenth year.

The 3rd Social Conference which met at Bombay in 1889 passed a resolution:—

"With a view to prevent early completion of marriages, which leads to the impairment of physical health of both husband and wife, and to the growth of a weakly progeny, co-habitation before the wife is 12 years old should be punishable as a criminal offence, and every effort should be made to awaken public conscience to the grave dangers incurred and to postpone the completion of marriage till the age of 14 at least, as being in accordance with the dictates of our ancient medical works of modern science, and countenanced by the approved sentiment and practice of the country, that every member, joining any of the Social Reform Association connected with this conference should be asked to pledge himself not to contemplate in his own case or in the case of his children, who are minors any marriages before the bride completes her 14th year."²⁷⁴

²⁷³ C. S. Srinivasachari — *Social and Religious Movements in the 19th Century* — p. 40.

²⁷⁴ Vide Res. No. I — C. Y. Chintamani (Ed.) — *op. cit.* — Part IV — p. 368.

One of the opponents of child-marriage was Guruzada Venkata Appa Rao (1861-1916). He wrote in 1896 a social play known as *Kanyasulkam* ridiculing evil customs and stupid superstitions in the Telugu country, particularly the pernicious custom of infant marriages and the selling of girls in marriage to old men. Such plays were already written by K. Viresalingam. So, his work still strengthened public opinion against this evil.

Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri was an ardent social reformer of the Madras Presidency. He was born in 1869 at Valangaiman, a village in Tanjore District. He had a distinguished academic career. In 1907, he joined the Servants of India Society and became its president in 1915. He also served as Secretary of the 1908 session of the congress at Madras. Till his death in 1946, he played an important part in public life. Though a moderate in politics, he was an ardent social reformer. He advocated post-puberty marriages of girls and wrote books about it and also on the status and rights of Indian women.

The issue of child marriage was widely discussed in the press. A correspondent to the *Swadesamitran* of the 18th of July, 1890, referred to a case in which a Bengali girl of 11 years died from the effects of injury caused to her by her husband being allowed to cohabit with her. He urged the people of this country the necessity of removing this evil practice. The method suggested was that all public bodies and associations should simultaneously memorialise the government, praying that the age at which a girl might be allowed to cohabit with her husband should be by special legislation and be raised from 10 to 12.²⁷⁵ It may be stated here that the age of Consent was fixed at 10 by law in 1860 at the instance of Pandit Vidyasagar.

Pleading for prohibition of child-marriage, the *Vrittanta Chintamani* of the 28th of January, 1891, cited an occurrence. "A few days ago," it said, "in Mysore there was a case of a girl of 9 years showing signs of menstruation, and the party of the husband were anxious to have the consummation performed at once, although the girl looked not more than 6 years of age, while the husband was a strong grown up young man, by the side of whom the girl looked like his child. People should make it a rule that all who consummate the marriage before the age of 12 years should be excommunicated."²⁷⁶

²⁷⁵ Newspaper Report (Confidential), 1890 — p. 159.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 1891 — p. 19.

Not only child marriage was condemned but also ill-sorted marriages. The press focused public opinion on the need for the abolition of these also. The *Karnataka Prakasika* of the 11th of August, 1890, gave an instance. It stated that "a child of 9 months was married to a man of 35 years in Bengal. It pleaded that the government should step in and fix a maximum age for marriage."²⁷⁷

Public opinion on this matter was given expression to in the resolution passed by the Indian Social Eleventh Conference which met at Amraoti in 1897. "That in the opinion of the Conference, the practice of men of more than 50 years of age marrying young girls below 12 is opposed to the spirit of the sastras and is extremely prejudicial to the interests of the community, and that the power of adoption given by the law leaves no excuse for such ill-sorted marriages and the Conference therefore affirms the necessity of actively discouraging all marriages where the difference of age between the parties exceeds 30 years."²⁷⁸

Orthodox sections opposed this reform also. A few orthodox papers like *Hindu Jana Bhushani* of the 15th of November, 1890, deprecated the demand and observed, "the Government of India was totally wrong in coming forward to act against the policy of neutrality on the representations of a few educated natives and that if government should take action in the matter before ascertaining the opinion of the whole population, people would, to a certainty, become discontented and even disloyal."²⁷⁹

Another paper by name *The Komali* of Madurai of the 24th of November, 1890, also opposed the demand on the ground that the proposed legislation raising the age of consent would, instead of eradicating any of the existing evils, only increase them by subjecting the Indian girls to unnecessary medical examinations in cases in which charges would frequently be brought against the families of the bridegroom and the bride by their enemies who would be ever ready to take advantage of the proposed measure.²⁸⁰

Nevertheless the Government of India was persuaded to pass the Age of Consent Act of 1891 which raised the age of consent to 12 from 10 which had been originally fixed in 1860.

Though the orthodox opposed the Act, yet it was hailed by all progressive minded people. The *Kerala Sanchari* of the 25th of

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 1890 — p. 169.

²⁷⁸ *Vide Res. No. VII — C. Y. Chintamani — op. cit. — Part IV — p. 370.*

²⁷⁹ *Newspaper Report (Confidential)*, 1890 — p. 261.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.* — p. 278.

March, 1891, stated that "all friends of womenkind should rejoice at this enactment. Some might complain that the punishment (Sec. 375 of the Indian Penal Code states that sexual intercourse by a man with his wife under 12 years of age with or without her consent, was an offence of rape), was very severe. But the law should not be partial in the punishment of offenders. This Act would tend to diminish the number of Child-marriages which were productive of physical deterioration and of other evils in the Hindu Community".²⁸¹

To show how public opinion has gradually changed on this issue, we have only to add that the Government felt emboldened to raise the Age of Consent to 13 subsequently. Rai Saheb Harbilas Sarada, a private member of the Central Legislature succeeded in passing a law in 1929 called the Child Marriage Restraint Act, popularly called after his name Sarada Act, which fixed the lowest age of marriage at 14 for girls and 18 for boys.

we have only to note that child marriages have definitely become disused now. This shows how public opinion has definitely changed on this matter. This change has been helped by economic considerations which have operated in favour of late marriages for boys and girls.

A controversial question was the custom by which Hindu women were excluded from the right of inheritance to the property of their parents. Manu clearly stated: A wife, a son, and a slave, these three are declared to have no property; the wealth which they earn is (acquired) for him to whom they belong".²⁸²

But, we cannot conclude from this that women had no rights of property at all. It has been stated in Manu's code that "an unmarried daughter is entitled to one-fourth of the father's property. But, this share was in the charge of the brother, who might give it as a dowry to his sister"²⁸³

Most schools of law allowed women some personal property called "*Stridhana*" in the form of jewellery and clothing. The husband had certain rights over the property of his wife, he might sell it in dire necessity and he might restrain her from giving it away wantonly. But, for all practical purposes, it was her own and, when she died, it passed not to her husband or to her sons, but to her

281 *Ibid.*, 1891 — p. 77.

282 Max-Muller (Ed.) — *op. cit.* — Translated by G. Buhler — VIII, 416 — p. 326.

283 *Ibid.* — IX, 118 — p. 348.

daughters. Thus women had certain property rights, limited though they were. But, they had no equal rights with men.

Public opinion was expressed about this during this period. Pleading for inheritance rights for women, P. Anandacharlu, quoted from Yajnavalkya to prove that the inheritance rights were approved by the *sastras*. Yajnavalkya said, "after the death of a father, let a mother also inherit an equal share with her sons in the division of the property left by the father."

Though progressive-minded people pleaded for equal inheritance right to women, it must be noted that the bulk of Hindu opinion is still remained hostile to the idea of enlarging the inheritance rights of women and Public Opinion in favour of it had still a long way to march. It is only after independence that the right of equal inheritance for women has been recognised with regard to the self-acquired property of the father.

Progressive Public Opinion also turned its attention to the practice of dedicating Hindu girls to the temples, the girls being called hence Deva-dasis.

The Madras Census Report, 1901, gives a general account about Deva-dasis thus:—

"Dasis or Devadasis (handmaidens of the Gods) are dancing-girls attached to the Tamil temples, who subsist by dancing and music and the practice of "oldest profession in the world." The Dasis were probably in the beginning the result of left-handed unions between members of two different castes but they are now partly recruited by admissions, and even purchases, from other classes." ²⁸⁴

The Deva-dasi system prevailed among all sections of South India. In the Telugu districts, the girls were called *Bogams* and *Sanis*. In the Oriya country, the caste was called *Guni*. In South Canara, the caste was called *Moili*.²⁸⁵

"In the Canarese (or western) taluks of Bellary, and in the adjoining parts of Dharwar and Mysore, a curious custom obtains among the Boyas, Bedarus, and certain other castes, under which a family which has no male issue must dedicate one of its daughters as a Basavi. The girl is taken to a temple and married there to the God, a tali and toe-rings being put on her, and thence-

²⁸⁴ *Census of India, 1901, Vol. XV: Madras, — Part I, Chap. VIII — p. 151.*

²⁸⁵ *Ibid. — Chap. III — p. 151, op. cit.*

forward she becomes public woman, except that she does not consort with any one of lower caste than herself. She is not, however, despised on this account, and, indeed, at weddings she prepares the tali (perhaps because she can never be a widow)."²⁸⁶

The Devadasis performed many duties like fanning the idols with *chamaras* (Tibetan ox tails), carrying the sacred lights called *Kumbarati* and singing and dancing before the deity when he was carried in procession. They practised the art of Bharata Natya and were accomplished in many ways. They performed useful cultural services to society by perpetuating accomplishments in music and dance.

Many inscriptions and charters of the medieval south commemorating donations to temples refer specially to devadasis; for instance a general of Vikramaditya VI Chalukya, named Mahadeva is recorded as founding a temple in memory of his late mother, with quarters for the most beautiful temple-girls in the country.²⁸⁷ The system, however, fostered prostitution, though immorality was much disapproved of by the *Smriti* writers. Says Edgar Thurston, "it is one of the many inconsistencies of the Hindu religion, that, though their profession is repeatedly and vehemently condemned by the *sastras*, it has always received the countenance of the church."²⁸⁸

At the beginning of the 19th century, there were a hundred dancing girls attached to the temple at Kancheepuram who were F. Buchanan tells us, "kept for the honour of the deities, and the amusement of their votaries and any familiarity between these girls and an infidel would occasion scandal."²⁸⁹

Similarly at the temples at Madurai and Tanjore, there were numbers of them, who received allowances from the endowments of those temples.

Public opinion gradually developed against this system. The discountenancing of the system was begun by missionaries and taken up by the Brahma Samaj and other social reformers. Lord Wenlock, Governor of Madras (1891-1896) was the first prominent official, who refused to countenance the nautch. It may particularly be noted that, in 1905, the Executive Committee of the Prince and Princess of Wales' Reception Fund unanimously decided that there

286 *Census of India*, 1901, Vol. XV; Madras — Part I — p. 152.

287 *Epigraphica Indica* — XIII — p. 36.

288 *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. II — p. 126.

289 *Journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar*, Vol. I — p. 9.

should be no performance by nautch girls at the entertainment to be given to their Royal Highnesses at Madras.²⁹⁰

P. Anandacharlu is said to have said, "our temples cannot improve unless the dancing girls be first kicked out."²⁹¹

The Madras Hindu Social Reform Association supporting the purity movement of the Indian Social Conference collected an anti-nautch pledge from adults. "With the help of God, I pledge myself to keep the following covenant:—

(1) Will not attend any gatherings where nautches are present or invite them myself or do anything else that tends to encourage them.

(2) I will not use impure language or tell coarse jests or sing indecent songs, or indulge in listening to such language, songs or jests.

(3) I will not indulge in witnessing indecent pictures, paintings or scenes.

(4) I will not converse or read, for the sake of impure pleasure, about subjects that are calculated to suggest impure thoughts and will try my best not to entertain any such thoughts.

(5) I will be chaste in body and will endeavour my best to be chaste in mind as well as to promote the cause of purity in general.²⁹²

At the fourth anniversary meeting of the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association held on the 28th of November, 1896, N. G. Chandravarkar, in his presidential address, complimented the association thus, "I notice with particular pleasure that both in your programme and in your lectures and in your newspapers, you lay stress upon a life of purity. That indeed, ought to be, as indeed, you have made it, the key-note of the social reform movement. Men now may make light of and ridicule your attempt to denounce and put down what are called nautch parties; they may laugh at you and take you for visionaries; but be sure enthusiasm in the cause of morality has unrivalled charm and power which does not fail sooner or later to assert itself."²⁹³

The Devadasi system, in spite of the best efforts of the members of the Brahma Samaj, continued to persist. This system survived until recent times in the Presidency.

290 E. Thurston — *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. II — p. 133.

291 C. Y. Chintamani (Ed.) — *op. cit.* — Foot note, p. 263.

292 *Ibid.* — Part I — p. 281.

293 *Ibid.* — Part IV — p. 341.

(b) *Untouchability* :—

The rigidity of the age-long caste system felt the onslaught of the new winds brought in by Western contact. Public opinion was, however, slow to develop against the evils of the caste-system, in spite of the efforts of the social reformers who condemned the treatment of the "Untouchables."

The class of "Untouchables" were called by different names in different parts of the country. They were called "Malas and Madicas" in the Circars, "Pariahs" in the Tamil country, "Holiyas" in Canara, "Polyas" in Malabar and "Dhedas" in Maharashtra. They were known as "Chandalas" to the writers of the *Smritis*.

Abbe Dubois, thus characterised the "Untouchables" of his time :—

"The Pariahs were most probably composed, in the first instance, of all the disreputable individuals of different classes of society, who on account of their various offences had forfeited their right to associate with respectable men. They formed a class apart, and having nothing to fear and less to lose, they gave themselves up without restraint, to their natural tendencies towards vice and excess, in which they continue to live at the present day."²⁹⁴

They were subjected to rigorous restrictions and on the whole they were treated and considered as if they had been "cursed". "Any one who has been touched, whether inadvertently or purposely, by a *Pariah*, is defiled by that single act, and may hold no communication with any person whatsoever until he has been purified by bathing, or by other ceremonies, more or less important, according to the status and customs of his caste. It would be contamination to eat with any member of this class; to touch food prepared by them, or even to drink water which they have drawn; to use an earthen vessel which they have held in their hands; to set foot inside one of their houses or to allow them to enter houses other than their own."²⁹⁵ This lurid picture given by Abbe Dubois remained substantially true down to the period of our study.

Reformers made efforts to eradicate this evil. The 10th Social Conference held at Calcutta in 1896 passed a resolution condemning this system. "That in the opinion of the conference the education and the social amelioration of the Pariahs and other out-castes in all parts of India is a duty which rests on all those who have the per-

294 Henry K. Beauchamp's translation of Abbe Dubois — *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, Vol. I — p. 53.

295 *Ibid.* — pp. 52-53.

manent good of their country at heart and every effort should be made to raise these classes to a position where by education and industry they may rise above the disadvantages of their condition.”²⁹⁶

Subramania Bharati was one of those ardent advocates against the evil of caste system and untouchability. He in his poems exhorted the so-called people of the higher castes to give up the contemptuous treatment meted out to their unfortunate brethren who formed a part and parcel of their body politics and society.

The 8th Indian Social Conference which was held at Madras in 1894 passed a resolution. “The Conference re-affirms the necessity of further steps being taken by societies for social reform in all parts of the country to remove all hindrances in the way of inter-dining of members of the different sub-sections of the same caste and to promote inter-marriage between persons who can dine together under existing rules.”²⁹⁷

Kumaran Asan and Vallathol could be considered the most prominent scholars of Kerala who advocated social reform through their writings. Kumaran Asan's book *Duravastha* deals with the life of a Brahmana woman who became the wife of an untouchable by force of circumstances. In his another work *Chandala Bhikshuni* also, we find that the main note of story is the evil of the caste system.²⁹⁸

It must, however, be noted that a strong section of the public was against reform on the ground that the caste system was laid down by Sanatana Dharma and that any interference with that would be an interference with religion. Further, the caste system had become so stratified that any change in it became difficult. So, in this period, we find no positive action taken towards the removal of the social disabilities of the untouchables. All that happened was that the vigour of caste system was imperceptibly slackened to some extent because of the principle of equality before the law laid down by the British administrators and the fact that the public transport systems like railways did not recognise caste distinctions. Real progress in the conditions of the untouchables began only when Mahatma Gandhi espoused their cause and gave them a new status in the society under the ennobling name of *Harijans* (men of God).²⁹⁹

296 Reso. XI of the 10th Conference of 1896 — Vide C. Y. Chintamani — *op cit.* — Appendix No. 31 — p. 374.

297 Reso. No. X — C. Y. Chintamani — *op. cit.* — Appendix No. 19 — p. 371.

298 Dr. Nagendra (Ed.) — *Indian Literature* — Malayalam by Dr. K. M. George — p. 228.

299 Vide M. K. Gandhi — *The Removal of Untouchability* — p. 16.

(c) *Foreign Travel* :—

One other question which came under discussion in this period was that of the Hindus travelling beyond the sea — a question closely connected with the caste system.

Travelling across the sea which was common among the Hindus in the past came to be disused since the 11th century A.D. and those who crossed the sea were excommunicated.

This feeling probably arose owing to the growing rigidity of the caste system and the consequent fear that those who voyaged to other countries might eat forbidden food or contract forbidden marriages. But, after the introduction of Western education, many enlightened Hindus like Raja Ram Mohan Rai began to travel outside India and the value of foreign travel was getting to be appreciated more and more.

So, a public opinion in favour of foreign travel began to develop. Addressing the fifth anniversary meeting of the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association held in December, 1897, G. Subramania Aiyar observed, "I do not know that any conceivable state of Hindu Society in the past could have furnished reasons for the necessity of such prohibition. But, there can be no doubt that this self-inflicted isolation was the cause of serious deterioration in the character of the people. They became ignorant and conceited, and while they lost one strong incentive to sustained advancement in the arts of civilisation which a free intercourse with foreign countries should have supplied, they lost all knowledge of the outside world, believed that their own country and their own people constituted God's Universe, flattered themselves that everything worth knowing they already knew, and that human race could not advance further than the stage they had themselves reached." ³⁰⁰

Travel across the sea became more and more prevalent and many Hindus travelled to London, Paris, New York and other places during the period of our study. This in turn stimulated nationalism as seen earlier. It is not an exaggeration, if it is said that almost all leaders who championed the cause of the independence of our country were not only educated in English but also visited foreign countries.

Nowadays, travel to foreign countries has become a matter of course and it is difficult to visualise that there was a time when it was vehemently opposed on religious grounds. This forms another instance to show how public opinion has changed to a tremendous extent under the impetus of modern conditions of life.

300 C. Y. Chintamani (Ed.) — *op. cit.* — p. 348.

The same cannot, unfortunately, be said of the Drink Evil.

(d) *The Drink Evil* :—

Drinking liquor has been a popular habit from time immemorial, though this came to be discouraged from the later Vedic Age and the *Sastras* condemned consumption of liquor as one of the five great sins (Mahapatakas).

Though the *Quran* condemned the consumption of liquor, it was widely practised even by the Muslims.

After the coming of the Europeans and the consequent import of foreign liquor, consumption of liquor increased.

But, at the same time, enlightened leaders, who created public opinion on various matters, also, bestirred themselves against this evil. Drinking of liquor was opposed on two considerations — economic and social. Drinking led the addicts to commit offences which they would refrain from doing under normal circumstances. Drink also affected the health of the drunkards. Above all, it kept them permanently in utter poverty as they spent their hard earned money on liquor. "The comparative poverty of the Pannial Class", states an official of Tanjore district, "is attributed to their fondness for drink and a want of prudence and forethought in storing up paddy to provide against a rainy day. They are in fact the most barbarous part of the community, and live precisely like animals, being to all intents and purposes, serfs attached to the soil and generally of the Pariah caste, few being Sudras".³⁰¹

Though this picture refers only to the Tanjore district, this also true of the other districts of the Presidency.

Enlightened public opinion was strongly against the evil of drink, as drink is condemned by both Hinduism and Islam.

Members of Parliament of Great Britain like, W. S. Caine and Samuel Smith got convinced that the Government of India had established the drink habit in a large number of places where formerly such a thing was unknown in defiance of native opinion leading to the misery and ruin of the population.

Samuel Smith moved the following resolution in the House of Commons on the 30th of April, 1889:

"That, in the opinion of this house, the fiscal system of the Government of India leads to the establishment of spirit distilleries,

301 Vide S. Srinivasa Raghavaiyangar — *op. cit.* p. 145.

liquor and opium shops in a large number of places, where, till recently they never existed, in defiance of native opinion and protests of the inhabitants and that such increased facilities for drinking produces a steadily increasing consumption, and spread misery and ruin among the industrial classes of India, calling for immediate action on the part of the Government of India with a view to their abatement".³⁰²

The resolution was carried by 113 votes against 100, in spite of the fact that the government was against the resolution. The Secretary of State forwarded the resolution to the Government of India who instituted an inquiry into the administration of the excise departments of the various provinces of India. But this had not materially altered the position in India because any sign of a diminishing revenue from excise on liquor filled the officials of the department with great alarm.

The government paid little attention to this problem, as they derived considerable excise revenue called Akbari on the sale of toddy, liquor and other spirituous and intoxicating drinks.

The Tenth Indian Social Conference which met at Calcutta in 1896 passed a resolution expressing its thanks to the noble efforts made by Caine and Samuel Smith for the promotion of total abstinence. The resolution also stated "the vice of intemperance is not of ancient growth here and is still confined to minorities; and it is in the opinion of the conference necessary that the majority of total abstainers should have the power of enforcing them by some adoption of the principle of local option which cannot be secured without the co-operation of the English and American Temperance Societies".³⁰³

The following figures show the huge revenue collected by the government on this head. The gross revenue from arrack (country spirit, a species of rum ordinarily distilled from cane or palm jaggery or from the molasses obtained in the process of manufacturing refined sugar from jaggery) during the two decades 1881 — 1890 and 1891 — 1900 averaged 46 lakhs and 56½ lakhs respectively. In 1903 — 1904 the revenue was 72 lakhs.³⁰⁴

Toddy is the fermented sap of the coconut, palmyra, date, sago (Caryota urens), or Dadasal (Arenga Wightii) palms. The gross revenue from toddy averaged 31 lakhs during the decade 1881-1890

302 Vide C. Y. Chintamani (Ed.) — *op. cit.* — Part I — p. 91.

303 *Ibid.* — Appendix No. 22 — p. 372.

304 *Imperial Gazetteer of India* — Madras Presidency, Vol. I — p. 105.

and 65½ lakhs during 1891-1900. In 1903-1904 it amounted to 88 lakhs.³⁰⁵

Foreign liquor included all liquors imported from outside. The gross revenue from foreign liquor (excluding customs) averaged 4 lakhs during the decade 1881-1890 and 3½ lakhs during 1891-1900. In 1903-04 it was 4 lakhs.³⁰⁶

The gross revenue from Ganja during the decade 1891-1900 averaged Rs. 90,000/- and in 1903-04 it was 3 lakhs.³⁰⁷

The gross revenue from Abkari collectively was increased to Rs. 2,56,61,084/- in 1909-1910.³⁰⁸

It may be added here that under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, the Indian National Congress included prohibition of the consumption of liquor and other intoxicating drinks as an important reform to be carried out. Congressmen took up the cause of this reform. When the Congress formed the ministry in Madras under Sri C. Rajagopalachari in 1937, it introduced prohibition in the district of Salem in 1937. Madras could congratulate itself for having introduced complete prohibition in all the districts immediately after independence. The importance of public opinion being behind the law is well illustrated in this instance. The experiment of prohibition, which failed in U.S.A., is bound to succeed in India where public opinion is solidly against the drink evil.*

(e) *Religious Issues* :—

Public opinion in India as well as in Madras Presidency in the past had been almost entirely influenced by religious issues and, even

305 *Ibid.*

306 *Ibid.*

307 *Ibid.*

308 Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency during the years 1910-1911 — p. 71.

* The Tamil Nadu Government was, however, constrained to suspend the prohibition from 30-8-1971 due to financial consideration. The stand of the Government can be understood from the observation of Mr. V. R. Nedunchezian, Education Minister, who said "the Tamil Nadu Government had only suspended prohibition and not scrapped it. If circumstances changed and warranted it, the Government would not hesitate to re-introduce prohibition."—*The Hindu*, Oct. 3, 1971, p. 9. Accordingly when public opinion was for it, the Government decided to introduce prohibition gradually from Sept. 1, 1973.

It is gratifying to note, as the book was in the Press, that the Tamil Nadu Government had decided to re-introduce total prohibition in the State with effect from the 1st of September, 1974.—*The Hindu*, dated July 18, 1974.

later on, religion has played a significant part in the problems which had convulsed the public mind. "No European settlers have been brought into contact," says M. Ruthnaswamy, "with a more religious people than those of India."³⁰⁹

From the beginning, the Company was not desirous of interfering in the religious disputes of the people as it is clear from the declaration of Lord Hobart, Governor of Madras, in 1795 that "the Board do not think it advisable to interfere in the religious disputes of the native, lest, by giving a decision on grounds of which they are not certain, it might become the cause of dissensions serious in their consequences to the peace of the inhabitants."³¹⁰

But, in spite of this, the government had to interfere on specific occasions when religious passions threatened public order. A dispute arose on the question of the route for taking out a religious procession along the Esplanade shortly after Sir Archbald Campbell's arrival to Madras as Governor in 1786. The Left Hand Caste people presented a petition. The curious reader may note the exaggerated emphasis made in the petition,³¹¹ on the alleged infraction by the Right Hand Caste of the custom of monopolising the use of "Tom Tom and spoon and bell"³¹² when called upon to meet the governor.

The dispute was enquired into and ultimately the government ordered: "Resolved for the prevention of future disturbance, that each caste(s) shall have liberty of performing their ceremonies according to their respective customs: that neither caste(s) shall have a claim and preference on the ground of the Esplanade, which is to be common for all persons of whatever nation or sect, but that the inhabitants shall conform to such rules as have been usual in all other places within the Black Town and the villages adjacent." (P.C. Vol. CXXXIX, 5th of August, 1786).³¹³

It might be noted that it was only at the request of parties to a purely religious quarrel that the Company's government sometimes intervened. We find in 1790, the Brahmanas of Triplicane referred

³⁰⁹ *Op. cit.* — p. 632.

³¹⁰ Between 1707 and 1790, the Company was confronted by a dispute between the Right Hand and Left Hand Castes. The President of the Council of Fort St. George had to take notice of the quarrels.

H. D. Love — *Vestiges of Old Madras* — Vol. III, p. 390.

³¹¹ *Ibid.* — p. 384.

³¹² *Ibid.*

³¹³ *Ibid.*

to the government a difference of longstanding between the Vadagalai and Tengalai sects concerning a religious invocation used in the Parthasarathy Temple in Triplicane, Madras. In 1794, in response to a representation concerning this matter, Saunders, Governor of Madras, ordered that as there were two pagodas in the temple under the circumference of the same wall, one fronting to the east and the other fronting to the west, the Vadagalais were to enjoy the right of uttering their own prayer in the shrine that which fronted to the west and Tengalais were to use the shrine which fronted to the east.³¹⁴

On the other hand, Lord Hobart, Governor of Madras, refused to interfere in the matter in 1795 as stated earlier.³¹⁵

Still, public opinion became suspicious of missionary activities. Some individual officers of the Company, encouraged the proselytising activities of Christian missionaries. This caused offence to public opinion, both amongst the Hindus and the Muslims. The Minute of Sir Thomas Munro, Governor of the Madras Presidency (1820-1827), indicates that official patronage was extended unmasked to certain missionaries, though many officials did not approve of this encouragement. Sir Thomas Munro himself in his minutes strongly deprecated such pro-missionary activities. He uttered words which were destined to be prophetic. "In every country, but especially in this, where the rulers are so few, and of a different race from the people, it is the most dangerous of all things to tamper with religious feelings: they may be apparently dormant, and, when we are in unsuspecting security, they may burst forth in the most tremendous manner, as at Vellore; they may be set in motion by the slightest casual incident, and do more mischief in one year than all the labours of missionary collectors would repair in a hundred. Should they produce only a partial disturbance, which is quickly put down, even in this case the evil would be lasting; distrust would be raised between the people and the government, which would never entirely subside, and the district in which it happened would never be so safe as before."³¹⁶

In spite of this grave declaration made by Sir Thomas Munro, individual European Officers were still acting against the excellent principles laid down by Munro.

It is needless to say that such activities were highly unpopular amongst the people and were regarded by them as a violation of the pledge which the British power had made to them.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.* — p. 389.

³¹⁵ See *Supra* — p. 129.

³¹⁶ John Bradshaw — *Rulers of India—Sir Thomas Munro* — p. 184.

The Madras Native Association and other Hindu and Mahomedan inhabitants of the Presidency drew up an exhaustive memorial to Lord Stanley, the Secretary of State for India, pointing out clearly therein how official patronage was extended to Christian propaganda.

The petition declared that "Lord Harris, Governor of Madras (1854-1859), in the month of January 1856, he as the Right Honourable the Governor and with considerable display, laid the foundation stone of a building in Royapettah, with the object of bringing Christian proselytism to bear upon the Mussalman community of that locality. This particular object being rendered transparent by the fact, that for the purpose of secular education, no such establishment was needed, there being a school, founded by His Highness the late Nawab, called *Madriisa-i-Anzum*, in Triplicane, since his death transferred to the government, by which it has been placed under control of the Director of Public Instruction, and the Koran class, associated with it, from its commencement abolished; although the school was and still is for the education of the Muslim youth alone, who are thus prevented from receiving instruction in their own religion³¹⁷ — and another of many years date, supported by the inhabitants Hindu, Mohamedan and European, containing 235 pupils in Royapettah, the very next door to which was selected for this educational institution; as if to mark out the jealousy and hostility of His Lordship, in the palpable attempt to introduce a missionary religious seminary in such close proximity, with the intent of drawing off the scholars, and basing its success on the ruins of a detested rival. The edifice was denominated on that occasion the "*Harris School*", a female relative of His Lordship having (as is understood) bequeathed a sum of money for educational purposes, and His Lordship in virtue of the "discretionary power", just before adverted to, added to the said bequest a donation of 7,000 Rupees, from the Grants-in-aid, — subsidiary to purchasing the ground and erecting the building. The management of this seminary was assigned to the agents of the Church Mission Society, and in the return of the Director of Public Instruction, it is entered as the "*Harris School for the instruction of Mahomedans in Triplicane.*" In the first year of its existence, it obtained some half a dozen scholars, and now their number in the report of the same officer for 1857-1858 is not more than 15, a proof that except as a lever for government proselytism, the school was not required, and that the government money, being that of the people, has been wantonly and offensively misappropriated.

The Memorialists cited two public meetings in which not only Lord Harris took part, but also allowed his officials to take part in the deliberations and share the sentiments expressed therein. At a

317 G.O. No. 1044, Pub. Dept., dated 9-7-1859, para 8.

meeting of the Colonial Church Society held in Christ Church on the Mount Road, on the 21st January, 1858, at which the Bishop of Madras presided, His Lordship (Harris) encouraged his audience to more strenuous exertions, from the progress of the agitation in England — “Newspapers, Corporations and Religious Societies,” said His Lordship, “all with one accord have lifted up their voices and demand that for the future, our Christian cause shall no longer be kept in the background, but put forth before the people in all its Majesty and Excellence. This the people loudly call for, and are preparing to do. I ask you, are the friends of the Gospel in this country to sit still? No, let us share the signal honour of going forward in this righteous cause, and unite all our efforts in the furtherance of this blessed end.” And the first resolution, at the said meeting — “to make special exertions and sacrifices for the extension of Christ’s Kingdom over the dark places of this earth, and to use renewed efforts to support and extend the operations of the society” — was moved by the Hon’ble Mr. Walter Elliot, a member of the Madras Government; seconded by Mr. C. R. Baynes, a Judge of the Sadr Court, the highest legal tribunal of this Presidency. Other gentlemen in the civil, military and ecclesiastical service of the government like-wise took prominent part in the proceedings, and altogether the meeting bore the appearance of a government demonstration, intended to stir up the Christian and missionary party to redouble its attacks upon the religions of the country, at the instigation of and under the patronage of the state.”³¹⁸

The other meeting which the memorialists stated was that of the meeting of the Bible Society which took place in St. Andrew’s Church, Vepery, on the 9th of February, 1858. The meeting was presided over by the Right Hon’ble Lord Harris. The report read on the occasion stated — “Your committee feels that the present time is a time when the most strenuous efforts should be made for the diffusion of saving truth among the sin-bound inhabitants of this land; for while the blood-bought experience of the past year has proved the utter insufficiency of mere secular instruction to summarize and soften the heart of man, the fact that the false religions of the people sanction such cruelties as have been committed may well be made the ground of urging upon their acceptance the merciful and heart-enlarging doctrines of the Gospel of peace” — and in delivering a long speech on “The First Topic” — the spirit in which they should enter on their future labours, the Reverend Dr. Murphy, a government chaplain, said — “Let man take our crown. Let not our friends at Home have the honour of doing all the work. Let us emulate them by our local efforts. Let us exalt the Bible in a way we have never

³¹⁸ *Ibid.* — para 2.

done before. Let the Bible be our banner and let our motto be 'under this thou shalt conquer'." ³¹⁹

Lord Harris argued, that government cannot avoid the charge of proselytism by any course it might adopt and that this charge or suspicion was not brought forward by the people but was a cry raised by a few ill-disposed men who were stirred up by unprincipled Europeans. To this argument of Lord Harris, the memorialists answered, "that Lord Harris is totally wrong; the objections being made by all classes of the people who are everywhere, in the mufussil as well as at the Presidency, suspicious of the converting designs of government; not only where there is just reason as in the present instance but almost in everything it undertakes; in fact there is the same jealous and, distrustful feeling abroad in this Presidency on the subject of intended state conversion by force or fraud, which so notoriously and openly is prevalent in other quarters for a considerable time before the outbreak on the plea of the "greased cartridges", and outbreak which a prudent government might have foreseen and prepared for, had it only been commonly attentive to the signs of the times. If Lord Harris was blind to this, he was wilfully, his proselytising propensities casting a veil over circumstances patent and demonstrative to all but those who are in the habit of denying disagreeable facts, simply because they have obstinately determined to shut their eyes against conviction." ³²⁰

The same memorial vehemently opposed the recommendation of Sir John Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, that "the Bible not only to be placed among the college libraries and the school books for the perusal of those who might choose to consult it but also it should be taught in class wherever we have teachers fit to teach it and pupils willing to hear it" and also observed, "indeed this very measure has been introduced by the Colonial Government in Ceylon, and the Bible is taught in the schools of that Island. Why should not the same thing be done in India?" On which your memorialists have to observe, that "the experience of Sir John Lawrence has been principally, if not entirely, confined to the Punjab. Widely different is the case of this continent, and especially within the Presidency of Madras, where pure Hinduism has had its seat for immemorial ages, which possess the most ancient and celebrated Temples, where the people have suffered for less than in other districts from the earlier foreign invasions, and in which the royal families of Mysore, Travancore and Tanjore are of Hindu extraction. Unlike the Seiks and the Singalese, the people here profess uncontaminated Hindu Orthodoxy, or simple Islamism and are

319 *Ibid.* — para 3.

320 *Ibid.* — para 19.

strongly, not to say begotingly attached to their Religion, their Books, their Temples, and their customs; it cannot therefore be reasonably be expected, that they should be ready, at the mere order of the Government to accept the "aggressive" doctrines of Missionaryism, nor that they should willingly consent to have those doctrines instilled into the unformed minds of their children, by teachers commissioned for that purpose by the state. But as they wish to confine their remonstrances to what affects the continent lately under the management of the East India Company, and to restrict them, as much as possible, to what passes in the Madras Presidency, they refrain from any fuller consideration of proceedings adopted by a quasi foreign Government; and from commenting upon measures of an extraneous character, with which they might perhaps be said to have no immediate concern. The Despatch indeed, repudiates the adoption of coercive measures, it professes not to compel the pupils to attend the Bible class; but your memorialists are thoroughly aware, that coercive means can be and have been, adopted — though falling short of physical compulsion, and broad, open violence — to induce the native youth to embrace Christianity, even apart from sanction of government; and they can but too easily conceive the powerful use to which converting teachers would infallibly put the sanction of government to the introduction of the pretended optional principle, proposed by the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab."

The Memorial further states that "While it may be right and safe to offer instruction in missionaryism to persons who are not without any religion, or who profess one which can be laid aside as easily as an upper garment. It would not be equally right and safe to tamper in the same manner with the children of religion, the strictness of whose duties and injunctions carries its essence into every actions of daily life, and cements every varied form of thought and duty into one compact whole; the observance of which is the vital element of family, and social and national inter-communion and the deviation wherefrom, necessarily and assuredly, engenders confusion, strife, hatred and every other disastrous passion, rendering as under the dearest and holiest ties and connections of human society; breaking in upon the peace and respectability of entire families; trampling upon all recognised order; degrading all that is held to be honourable; impoverishing all that is considered valuable; and overturning the whole basis of the people's happiness. Your memorialists unhesitatingly affirm that it is neither right nor safe; and in proof that the effects of coercive proselytism are such as have been alluded to, they can appeal to the numerous disturbances occasioned by missionaryism sanctioned by the government during the administration of Lord Tweeddale; when he was Governor of the Madras Presidency, he tried to establish a Bible

class in 1846 in the High School of Madras." A strong remonstrance was addressed to the Court of Directors against this. A passage in it declared:—

"The Marquis of Tweeddale's object in introducing the Bible, is the conversion of the children attending the National Schools from the faith of their fathers to Christianity, for His Lordship must be aware, and your memorialists are sure that he is aware that the inculcation of the Christian Scriptures is the primary mode by which the present system of proselytism is actually carried on in the Missionary Schools. The Marquis of Tweeddale by adopting the practice of the missionaries becomes himself a missionary agent, and involves Your Honourable Court, whose representative he is, in the same predicament."

"That your memorialists refrain from quoting at greater length from the memorial of 1847, but they trust the few and short extracts above given will be sufficient to convince your Lordship, that the belief expressed by Lord Tweeddale is the most complete fallacy; that the proposed Bible class has always been met with the most pertinacious resistance, and that the objection to it is still undiminished, and although all agitation against it was necessarily dropped when the Court of Directors forbade its introduction after the last appeal of the memorialists the embers are rather smouldering than extinguished and the recurrent suspicion of a return to the deceptive policy of Lord Tweeddale, in the institution of the so-called optional Bible class as proposed by Sir John Lawrence, would suffice to rekindle them into a flame."³²¹

This lengthy memorial has been quoted here to illustrate the intense resentment roused on this question amongst the people of the Madras Presidency.

Ceaselessly the people of the Presidency were expressing their disapproval of the missionary activities and the official patronage. On the 1st of February, 1861 the inhabitants of the Presidency town, Madras, submitted a petition to the Secretary of State against Christian propaganda.

"That inhabitants of this country have peculiar rights and privileges connected with the respective classes or castes of which they are composed. This has been in existence and continuance from time immemorial. Under the Mahomedan Government, though in other respects a cruel and tyrannical one we enjoyed all the privilege and right and no infringement or abuse of them whatever was allowed.

321 *Ibid.* — para 4.

The Mahomedan rulers though opposed to us in our religious principles not only continued the former grants and support of Native Princes for the maintenance of the then temples and everything connected with them, but they also made liberal grants for the endowment of new places for Hindu worship. Religious toleration was allowed in the fullest sense of the word. The British Government also followed the noble example of their predecessors, the Mahomedans in this respect, and by taking a neutral side left the Hindus unmolested in their religious and caste distinctions, rights and peculiar privileges.

Under the British Government we enjoyed these privileges undisturbed for upwards of 60 years, but though repeatedly and solemnly assured by the British Government that we would not be molested or disquieted in our religious faith and observance, we exceedingly regret to find that they now gradually interfere and encroach on these privileges and peculiar rights by, if not directly, indirectly countenancing and liberally supporting Missionary operations and Government Evangelical Servants.

"Firmly relying ourselves on the truth of Christianity and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion, we disclaim alike, the right and desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects. We declare it to be our Royal will and pleasure that none be in any wise favoured, none molested or disquieted by reason of their religious faith or observance; but all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law; and we do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under us, that they abstain from all interference with the religious belief or worship of any of our subjects, on pain of our highest displeasure."

This Proclamation of Her Majesty of 1858 stands only in letter and not in performance. Missionaries are allowed and countenanced more than ever in carrying on their operation. Their preaching is most abusive and repugnant to native feelings. The missionaries not only insult us through their publications in the way of pamphlets, but also prevail on certain Editors of Newspapers to attack us in the most delicate points of our feelings, viz., religion and caste. One of the ablest statesmen of England Lord Ellenborough, has publicly and in presence of Parliament condemned the proceedings of these editors as unjust and disgraceful. The "Belly Converts", both in public and private and in every possible manner abuse and insult us in our religion.³²²

³²² Proceedings of the Madras Government — Public Department — No. 204, dated the 26th February, 1861 — pp. 203-04.

The *Tarangai Nesan* of the 7th of September, 1889, referring to the construction of a church at Perambur exclaimed "the government have sanctioned a grant of a Christian Church at Perambur, Madras, while they plead financial pressure as an excuse for, not effecting reforms in several important branches of administration, it is to be regretted that they spend large sums of money on such works as the construction of Christian Churches towards which the Hindu tax-payers are in no way bound to contribute."³²³

Public opinion was also expressed through the Press concerning the controversy on the study of the Bible in educational institutions

The *Swadesamitran* of the 9th of January, 1901, observed: "In his lecture on Sunday last, Bishop Welldon of Calcutta observed that the Bible should be taught in government schools and colleges. But we regret to state that the teaching of a foreign religion in institutions maintained from public revenues will be equivalent to the government compelling the people embrace that religion. The British administration of India has hitherto been conducted on principles of non-interference with the religions of the natives, and the authorities at the head of the Indian government have invariably refused to act against this principle, even to the advantage of the people, as will be seen from their silent attitude towards the Devasthanams in the face of the repeated demands of the people for an amendment of the Religious Endowments Act. Moreover, in the Queen's Proclamation of 1858, it was declared that neither Her Majesty nor Her Majesty's representatives in India would ever interfere with the religions of the natives. History also shows that rulers of the type of Aurangzeb have, by their interference with the religious convictions of their people, paved the way for their own ruin, while rulers like Akbar have, by their generosity and tolerance towards the faith of others made their empire as strong and stable as possible. We fear that the suggestion of Bishop Welldon, if carried out, may endanger the harmonious relations which are existing at present between the rulers and the ruled in India."³²⁴

It would be useful to recall the observations of the *Hindu* in its issue of the 18th of February, 1901, about the remarks of Welldon: "He has argued himself into the conviction that it is inevitable that India should at last become either Christian or atheistic; and it is to save her from atheism that the Church by her sacred ministry labours and prays." Though it is perfectly permissible for any one to speculate what the future religion of India will be, and for a Christian to wish that Christianity will be that religion, it may be, at best, doubtful wisdom for the highest ecclesiastical officer of the

³²³ *Newspaper Report (Confidential)*, dated 15th September, 1889 — p. 188.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1901 — pp. 71-73.

government even to be prophetic in favour of his own religion. But Dr. Welldon not only prophesies, not only wished, but earnestly emphasises that Christianity and no other should be the religion of India. "God", he declares, "has given India to Great Britain and Great Britain will give India to God. The evangelisation of India will be the fulfilment of the responsibility laid upon the spirit and conscience of the British race." It is impossible to mistake the significance of this language; and we should be very much surprised if those who are responsible for the peaceful government of India have not had their minds made uneasy and anxious; for they must surely know what effect the above words would produce among the masses of the Indian people who are most intensely devoted to their ancestral religion and in whom the very idea of conversion to an alien faith would cause a violent shock. The Indian people have thrown away their property, they have abandoned their country and everything of value to them in this world, in order to save their religion. When they anticipated danger to their religion and caste they ran away before invading hordes instead of endeavouring to resist them and sought refuge in other countries. To tell such a people as Dr. Welldon does that God has given them to Great Britain and that Great Britain is therefore bound to convert them to Christianity, is to do the most dangerous thing politically and the most unrighteous thing morally. Dr. Welldon talks as if India was a Godless country shown by Him to the British rulers to be converted to the Christian faith. But, he will do well to remember that it was British diplomacy and British arms that established their supremacy; and the right to spiritual conquest which he now insists on, if it were God-given, must have been exercised without the aid of those material forces which contributed towards worldly supremacy, but do not justify aggressive proselytism. The history of the world and particularly of India has recorded spiritual conquests effected without the adventitious aid of material forces; but Christianity has not made, and cannot make, such a conquest of India. Bishop Welldon seems to think that all those who differ from him in regard to his curious ideas and impossible hopes are idiots and fools; for he says that "of the strange fallacious ideas which some few thinkers in India or at home strive to shut their eyes perversely against the clear facts of contemporary Indian life, none perhaps is stranger than the fancy that the British Government can rule India without effecting, modifying, and transforming the Indian creeds. Nobody, we believe, is so foolish as to think that a ruling race will not, in some degree, influence the life and ideas of a subject people; but no thinking or prudent man will desire or advocate that such influence should be exercised in the manner that Dr. Welldon suggests.³²⁵

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, dated the 23rd February, 1901 — pp. 76-77.

Looking at the matter from this distant of time, these petitions and press views seem to exaggerate the effects of missionary activities and to belittle the solid services done by missionaries in several fields. But, they reflect the trend of public opinion at that time.

Another important matter which agitated public mind was the misappropriation of the property of religious institutions by the persons who were in charge of them. We have instances where petitions were addressed to government concerning this kind of abuse dating from early times. This abuse was indeed referred to in the memorial submitted by the Native Association in 1859.

The memorial pleaded for government control over the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments. "Your memorialist will only here observe, that, with reference to such endowments as have already been restored to native management, and those which have yet to be so made over. Your memorialists request your Lordship will be pleased to press upon the Legislative Council of Calcutta, or some other competent authority. The imperative necessity for an enactment or legal regulation, by which the native Trustees of temple property, government commutations, personal bequests or donations, or the current contributions of the worshippers, may be rendered amenable to the control of the people; on this subject it is the intention of your memorialists to address your Lordship in a separate communication, and they merely touch upon the necessity in this place, by observing that the Madras Government and natives ever since the first partial restoration, nearly 19 years ago, have been continually applying for such an authority without effect; during the whole of which long period the trustees as apparent in several remarkable instances have been misappropriating the temple revenues, entrusted to them by the Madras Government, according to their own discretion and convenience, without submitting any accounts either to the public or to the Government whom they have appointed."³²⁶

The scandal was so great that the government itself was compelled to pass a law in 1863. The unsatisfactory state of things, in spite of this act, is illustrated in many petitions which were addressed to government.³²⁷ The people did not stop with the submission of petitions. As a matter of fact, we find also positive attempts at legislation sponsored by non-official persons.

P. Anandacharlu, a personage of great political acumen, whose activities we had surveyed already, proposed certain changes in the Act of 1863 investing the Committee with powers to deal severely

326 Vide G.O. No. 1044, Public Department, dated 9th July, 1859 — p. 7.

327 Vide Appendices — pp. 141-147.

with those trustees who were negligent and disobedient and supervising the accounts kept by the trustees.

But, in spite of all these efforts, the government refused to interfere with the religious affairs of the natives and ultimately P. Anandacharlu was obliged to withdraw his Bill, as its principles and details were not acceptable either to the Government of India or to the Local governments.

Regretting this, the *Andhra Prakasika* in its issue dated the 24th of March, 1900, stated, "though there may prevail a difference of opinion as regards the subject in Bengal, the people in the Madras Presidency are unanimously of opinion that there should exist an act to ensure the safety of religious endowments and to bring to book the unscrupulous *dharmakartas*." Concluding, the paper remarked, that "it was strange that the Government of India should entertain doubt regarding the unanimous support of the Bill by the people of the Madras Presidency in the face of the unanimous memorials, press comments and speeches in public meetings in support of the measure."³²⁸

Referring to the same matter, the *Swadesamitran* pointed out, that "the arguments of the Government of India were not due to their genuine interest to adhere the policy of non-interference in their religious affair but due only to their sheer desire to evade their obligation." The paper observed, "the people of this presidency never asked the government to interfere with their religion; but, what they required is a bill to secure the property of *devasthanams* from being misappropriated. Has not the government passed an act to protect the property of minors? Will it not interfere with against the misappropriation of public property? How can the people of this country be benefitted if the Government of India rejects, on the score of "religion" every reform we may be in need of? Has not *sati* been abolished although it was religious custom?"³²⁹

We must recognise in this context that a foreign government feels always extra-cautious in interfering with a religious issue, and it can always claim that such an interference cannot be made even if a minority of the public is against it. Animal sacrifices and personal torture of devotees in the name of religion continued to be tolerated. Indeed, we cannot say that public opinion was alive to many matters which needed reform in the religious fields. Even after independence, our popular government feels itself competent to interfere on religious matters only if public opinion calling for a change expresses itself in unambiguous terms and represents the *WILL* of the greater part of the community.

³²⁸ Newspaper Report (Confidential), 1900 — pp. 99-100.

³²⁹ *Ibid.* — p. 99.

APPENDICES

I

Petition from the Mirasdars of Devarajaswamy's temple and the inhabitants of Conjeevaram complaining as to the misappropriation of the church property by its wardens and praying that the Temple Endowment Act may be brought into force.

To His Excellency The Right Honourable Grant Duff, Governor in Council, Dated 25th July, 1882.

1. That the Government have in the year 1842, entrusted to the wardens of the above temple properties to the value of two lakhs of rupees and pay annually Rs. 14,000 for the support of the above Devarajaswami's Temple. The above sum of Rs. 14,000/- is realized from various villages and from various people.

2. That the Government have entrusted this public money to an ordinary class of people, who all belong to one sect and whose religious life is opposed to that of the temple and never enquire into its accounts.

3. That the said wardens misappropriate the property and the money of the temple and create unnecessary disputes; and by section 3 of Act XX of 1863, being under the bad impression that the above temple belongs exclusively to themselves, do not submit themselves to the supervision of the committee.

4. That, when the people memorialized to the government respecting these grievances, Mr. Robinson, late Member in Council of the Government of Madras on the order of the Governor, brought in a Bill to amend Act XX to form a committee and invest them with full power over the management of all the temples and it was said that the Bill would soon come to force. But, unfortunately for the people, no effect was given to the Bill. Consequently, the temple wardens have been enabled to misappropriate the properties of the temple and perpetual magisterial and Civil litigations are carried on regarding the troubles caused to the Mirasdars and the servants of the above temple by the said wardens.

5. That the petitioners, in conclusion, most humbly beg your Excellency who is known to labour for public welfare, to pass the above Bill and bring it into force which will be a source of immense happiness to the poor suffering petitioners".*

* G.O. No. 701 (Mis.) Public Department, dated 7th August, 1882 — p. 1.

II

The humble memorial of the members of the Native Chamber of Commerce, Cocanada, to His Excellency The Right Honourable Earl of Dufferin, Viceroy and Governor General in Council, praying for an Enactment on the subject of Hindu Religious Endowment, dated, 17th February, 1888.

1. That your Excellency's memorialists have learnt with great regret the decision of the Government of India with-holding sanction for introducing the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Bill into the Local legislative council.

2. That the subject is one on which the whole Hindu Community feels strongly and has expressed itself with one voice pressing for an early amendment of the existing laws.

3. The present Bill being the out-come of the deliberations of a Committee of experienced Native gentlemen has many features in it which would recommend themselves to the public and tend to a great extent to remedy the evils complained of in the management of temples.

4. That should any particular provisions of the present Bill not commend themselves to the Government of India your Memorialists submit that they do not form cogent reasons for rejecting the Bill altogether.

5. That unless some measure providing for effectual check and control over the Religious and Charitable institutions in this Presidency, a majority of which are now mismanaged, be speedily adopted, your Memorialists apprehend that the properties appurtenant to these Institutions will gradually disappear.

6. Therefore, pray that your Excellency in Council will be pleased to give the subject the consideration which it deserves and confer on the Hindu community of this Presidency the advantages of a salutary enactment in the direction above pointed out.*

III

Memorial of the inhabitants of Srivilliputur and its adjoining villages, in Tinnevely district, praying that a temple committee may be stationed at Srivilliputur for the management of the Nachiar Coil Davastanam, to His Excellency The Viceroy in Council, dated 2nd December, 1891.

* G.O. No. 365, Pub. Dept., dated 4-4-1888 — pp. 1-2.

1. That of all the Vishnu temples in the district, the Nachiar Koil Devasthanam is the largest containing many huge temples, mantapams, a high tower and many splendid buildings attached to it.

2. That it has an annual income of Rs. 25,000/- besides jewels, vahanams, vessels, Parivatams (Silk Clothes), cattle, an elephant and a huge and splendid car etc., movable property worth Rs. 20,000/-.

3. That there is a committee established at Tinnevely to manage the affairs of the above Devasthanam.

4. That Tinnevely, the seat of the managing committee is 60 miles off from Srivilliputur the seat of the said Devasthanam.

5. That, in consequence of the great distance between the Devasthanam and the seat of the committee and the members thereof being in different Taluqs of the district the affair of the temple are very badly and unsatisfactorily conducted and the Devasthanam itself is subjected to unnecessary expenses and losses as shown below.

6. That the Devasthanam owns much landed property, many tanks, canals, large topes, and numerous buildings. When the heavy rains set in, tanks are breached, lands submerged under water, canals damaged and building tumbled down.

7. That proper measures may be taken towards remedying such evils, by the members of the committee if the members were the residents of Srivilliputur and its adjacent villages. As the office of committee is at Tinnevely and each of its members being persons residing at six different places which are 30 or 40 miles apart from one another, the meeting of the members to take necessary steps to sanction the amount as reported by trustee, takes place after so long a time, that damages which can be repaired at a cost of Rupees 10 as soon as they occur, require Rupees 100, may even 1000 and thus the temple incurs a heavy and unnecessary loss, thus affording a good example for the proverb "A stitch in time saves nine."

8. That the postage alone to report the temple affairs to the committee amounts to Rs. 100 per year.

9. That besides, the members of the committee set apart Rs. 300 every year for the cost of the establishment of the committee which is really an unnecessary loss to the temple.

10. That the members of the committee come here from Tinnevely and other places on the grounds that they have come for inspection and enquiry. They spend much for their trainage, bandy

hire and other expenses and pass such proceedings as would enable them to take the amount from the temple funds. And on what authority they do so is unknown.

11. When they come here on festival occasions do they bring a single pie for their expenses such as bandy hire, boarding etc? No. Certainly not. Is there any other way to meet the expenses with but from the temple funds? Though these are all private affairs we cannot but express these things considering the unnecessary and unlawful expenses that the temple is forced to undergo.

12. That as the seat of the committee is far away from the Devasthanam it is quite difficult for them to become aware of the arbitrary expenses, misappropriation of the temple funds, and such other irregularities as may be committed by the trustees and managers. This is another source of loss to the temple.

13. After mature and deep consideration on such evils the Government has very wisely legislated by Act XX of 1863 separate committees and trustees for every temple and established them at the seats of those temples. This has been observed in all other districts.

14. That since, a Zillah Committee has been established in this District alone in contravention of the above mentioned Act, there are many reasons for the losses, to which this *Devasthanam* is subjected to, as shown above from paras 6 to 12.

15. That under these circumstances the humble petitioners fervently pray that the Government will be gracious enough to protect these poor subjects by remedying the above-said irregularities with reference to the above Devasthanam, which is the chief source of felicity both in this world and in the next, and to make the following arrangements as requested by the humble memorialists (1) that proper persons qualified by wealth, high rank, charitable disposition and heavenly piety may be appointed as trustees and as members of the managing committee and (2) that the committee may be stationed at Srivilliputtur itself, so that this charitable institution existing from time immemorial may exist and continue for ever — a favour for which the humble memorialists shall, as in duty bound ever pray. *

IV

The Hindu residents of Tirupati, submitted the following memorial praying that more efficient means be provided for safeguarding the interests of religion and charitable public funds in India on 21st May 1894 :

* G.O. No. 40, Public Dept., dated 19-1-1892 — pp. 1-3.

1. "That ever since the administration of the Hindu Religious Endowments passed over to the hands of the irresponsible trustees a good deal of Public money is being wasted in diverse ways, quite inconsistently with the objects of these Endowments.

2. That, the knowledge where of induced the benign Government to codify the Act XX of 1863, as a provision against the mis-appropriation, misfeasance, and the misapplication of these public funds; but which has determined by the sad experience of over 30 years not mended matters even a bit.

3. That, necessity for a new legislation on the subject was felt long ago, the Government was approached on subject several times before this and that the Government responded in a measure by replies to certain addresses, from time to time, by preparing and criticising some draft bills, and at present by taking into its consideration the Draft Madras Hindu Temples Bill.

4. That, feeling mere abstract theories, and general statements are not sufficient to carry conviction home, the petitioners take the liberty of citing a concrete typical instance, which would conclusively prove the want of sufficient safe guards in the legislation now in force, and also show the direction in which they are to be provided.

5. That, the Temple of Sri Venkatesa (Balaji) on the Tirupati Hills attracts pilgrims to itself, not from one part of the country, or during one part of the year, but from all the parts of the country, from Himalayas to Cape Camorin, and during all the 365 days.

6. That, it is maintained by cash and other offerings made by the pilgrims amounting to about two lakhs of rupees annually.

7. That, the trustee of the temple is the hereditary priest of a religious institution and he is known as the *Mahant* of the Hathiramji Mutt, and that the temple was made over to him in 1843 to the then *Mahant*.

8. That, in the year 1867 the successor of the 1st trustee of the temple was sued in the District Court of North Arcot (Original Suit No. 18) to recover Rs. 92,402-15-11, being the sum misappropriated by the 1st trustee (some of the records of the case are not available to show the conclusion of the case, except the order of the remand for trial by the High Court to be found on page 2, Volume 4, M.H.C.R.).

9. That, in the same year the said second trustee was sued for the recovery of some six lakhs of rupees misappropriated by himself and for himself. The High Court on appeal adjudged (Appeal Suit No. 38) the restoration of the sum of Rs. 2,28,457-14-0 to the temple funds, as well as the payment of the court costs from his own pocket. As for his dismissal it was not granted only on expediency.

10. That, the third trustee in office was prosecuted in 1889-90 for criminal breach of trust to the extent of Rs. 2,28,000/- and was convicted accordingly which was upheld by the High Court on the 18th of March, 1890.

11. That, the fourth and the present trustee has been sued in the District Court of North Arcot for misappropriating Rs. 1,30,178-4-1 of the temple funds during 1890 in which year he became trustee (vide Original Suit No. 4 of 1892).

12. That, there is also pending before the District Court of North Arcot a suit to recover the sum of Rs. 14,82,033-0-1 alleged to have been misappropriated and misapplied by the aforesaid trustee (Original Suit No. 3 of 1892).

13. That, the cost of bringing the third trustee to book was Rs. 36,000/- and that of instituting the suit (referred to in para 12 supra) has already reached the sum of Rs. 5,000/- being only the stamp duty and consultation fees. The enquiry not having been commenced yet, what it would cost in the long run cannot be foretold. Information concerning the expenses incurred in conducting the other suits is not available.

14. That, the public purse cannot be expected to be able to cope with the task of conducting the suit of this sort, for experience shows that litigation in matters of no private interest have been most ruinous and consumes no little time and energy of the public.

15. That, the trustees who have had to defend themselves must have spent much more than their prosecutors, where did they get their money from? The Tirupati Temple accounts show that the said third trustee appropriated about Rs. 93,000/- to defend himself in the aforesaid prosecution.

16. That, the present 4th trustee is involved in a series of cases against himself. "Wherefrom does he find the means to carry on litigation", is a question of moment. The accounts go to show

that he is drawing from the temple funds to enable him to meet the expenses in some of the suits.

17. That, these *Mahants* have no private personal property to be charged with the sums for which they are responsible. On the one hand they are the heads of the *Mutts*, on the other hand priests of the temples, and both these are public charitable religious endowments. In proof whereof it may be mentioned that the convicted third trustee is leading the life of a mendicant at Madras.

18. That, para 6 of the *Sannad* by which the temple was transferred to the *Mahants* reads — “As regards the receipts and disbursements of the pagodas accounts shall be regularly drawn and kept in readiness for production whenever they are required. “It is not known to anybody, when any accounts were required and when produced. Periodical inspection might have prevented a good deal of these scandals as far as this temple is concerned.

19. That, these *Mahants* more than once actually set up the plea that they were the sole masters, and not answerable to anybody. But the High Court said “Except on the supposition that there was a trust, the suit there under consideration would not have been maintainable.”

20. That, as to the conduct of these *Mahants* as a rule, the following lines taken from the judgment delivered by Justices Hallaway and Collet in Appeal No. 38 of 1869 of the Madras High Court is worth perusal. “To talk of the preservation of the funds of any institution of this character would be idle. They have always been funds for embezzlement and what embezzlement has left will speedily be swallowed up in litigation. That in many cases so found against him he has simply followed the example of his predecessors, there can be no doubt . . . Now no doubt exists of this man's fraudulent conduct. That he deserves removal is clear, but whether his removal is expedient is a wholly different question.

That he has committed fraud there is no doubt, that his predecessors defrauded before him, and that his successors, if we should nominate them, would commit fraud also, there is as little doubt.” Subsequent events have more than confirmed the above statements.

For these reasons, the memorialists most humbly pray your Excellency to be pleased to provide more efficient means of safeguarding the interests of religious and charitable public funds of India.*

* G.O. Nos. 86-87, Legislative Dept., dated, 3rd July, 1894 — pp. 1-3.

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