

India

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An Index with Title-page to Vol. IX. of INDIA (January to June, 1898) and an Index with Title-page to Vol. X. (July to December, 1898) are ready. Copies will be sent gratis and post free to Subscribers on application to the Manager.

NOTES AND NEWS.

THE important correspondence between Sir William Wedderburn and Mr. Chamberlain which we print in our present issue concludes with a statement that will give no little satisfaction to the British Indian traders in the Transvaal and to true "Imperialists" throughout the Empire. In a letter of January 13 last, Sir William Wedderburn reviewed in detail the series of misunderstandings and "graceful concessions" by which the legal rights of a peaceable and industrious body of British subjects have been gradually frittered away; and he appealed to Mr. Chamberlain to make forthwith to President Krüger the friendly representations indicated in the despatch of September 4, 1895. This appeal came opportunely at a time when Sir Alfred Milner was in London conferring with the Colonial Secretary upon the position of affairs in South Africa. Mr. Chamberlain's reply of February 15 is as good as could have been hoped for. "Sir Alfred Milner," he says, "is prepared on his arrival at Cape Town to take up the question and to endeavour to arrive at some arrangement of a favourable character to the Indian traders. In the meantime the Government of the South African Republic have suspended the notice for the removal of Asiatics to locations." We trust that Sir Alfred Milner's efforts will be successful. He has, as our readers are aware, an excellent case, and it looks as if President Krüger were disposed to come to a reasonable understanding. If so, Mr. Chamberlain's hands will be immeasurably strengthened in dealing with the large number of British colonists in various parts of the world who have not shrunk from imposing upon their Indian fellow-subjects disabilities and indignities of the most hateful kind.

It is stated that the Committee on Indian Currency, of which Sir Henry Fowler is chairman, will probably have completed the hearing of evidence by the end of March, and that if so the report may be expected early in June. It will be noticed, however, that Sir Henry Fowler said in the House of Commons on Tuesday last that the work of the Currency Committee was being hampered by the delay of the Report of the Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure.

The *Indian Empire* points out a number of objectionable elements in the Calcutta Municipality Bill which, it fears, "will prove to be an engine of oppression to all and sundry." It deals more particularly, as is quite right, with sections that "will work very hard upon the people." No doubt our contemporary would nevertheless agree with the criticism of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* that "they would have meant very little if the representative character of the existing system was not sought to be done away with." The *Patrika* asserts that these "horrid sections" are "bad, very bad"; and the autocratic executive will make them worse. The purpose of embodying them in the Bill, the *Patrika* thinks, was "to divert the attention of the ratepayers from the real point at issue."

The real plague-spots lie in the principle of the present Bill, which, by taking away the semblance of local self-government that we have,

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closes the door for ever against the Indians sharing in the administration of their country. If they are condemned as unfit to manage some parochial affairs after a trial of nearly a quarter of a century, surely they have no chance of ever again being entrusted with any important work by their rulers. It is against the principle of the Bill therefore that not only the citizens of Calcutta but the whole of India should fight. The ratepayers of the town who are getting up these protest meetings should not forget for a moment that the real sting is in the principle and not in the details of the Bill.

Yet there is of course no good reason why the details also should not be kept in view, and worked in subordination for all they are worth. With many people it is conceivable that they may be even more effective than the principle of the Bill itself.

The *New Age* in its issue of yesterday (Thursday) had some pertinent remarks upon the debate in the House of Commons on the Calcutta Municipal Bill. Lord George Hamilton, it said,

assured the House that he "would, to the best of his judgment, impartially consider the many provisions of this Bill, when it came finally before him." But the assurance would have been more satisfactory if it were not known that he sanctioned the introduction of the Bill, presumably with knowledge of its outlines and of the main facts on which it was based. How, then, can it be anticipated that he will disallow any part of it? Again, it is quite obvious that Lord George Hamilton does not know the facts. He speaks of Calcutta as if its sanitation were a danger to the empire. Yet the incontrovertible evidence to the contrary is overwhelming. He insists that the plague must be warded off. So does everybody; but, as a matter of fact, the existing corporation has warded it off. There is no such thing as plague in Calcutta. Lord George could not obtain a single authenticated case for all the wealth of Golconda. There is no great city in this world that would not, on his argument, be rightly deprived of self-government. Besides, it is beyond question that the new non-representative body cannot carry out any reform whatever that the existing corporation is not at this moment as anxious and as competent to carry out itself. Municipal reforms are matters of money, and the thing is to get the money. It is nothing less than deplorable that the Secretary of State should exhibit such ignorance of the facts of so "serious" a question, and should have taken up an attitude so favourable to the destruction of an edifice that Englishmen have laboured so long and so hard to rear.

Let us hope that, in spite of untoward appearances, Lord George Hamilton's consideration of the Bill will be really impartial. There can then be no doubt as to the result.

Sir Antony MacDonnell having lately had occasion to lecture the Agra Municipal Councillors on the state of their finances and to threaten to supersede them, the *Tribune* has brought forward several reasons for mitigating the harsh views which have been formed of their conduct. In the first place the heavy taxation of the town is in great measure due to the debt they were forced to contract in order to provide the town with new waterworks. Again, the present financial confusion is admittedly the fault of the secretary, who throughout had the support of the chairman. Now, as has been already pointed out in these columns, the chairman of the Agra Corporation was always an official, and this at once renders the moral that has been drawn in some quarters most ludicrous, the valiant opponents of Indian local self-government having been apparently quite ignorant of this fact. Against the official chairman and the secretary acting together the Commissioners felt themselves powerless. It is satisfactory to find that, in view of the valuable assistance and advice which the Commissioners have lately rendered in the work of removing the financial difficulties of the Municipality, Sir Antony has decided not to supersede them.

Thanks to the failure of the Mad Mullah, to abundant harvests, and to the rigid exaction of the famine arrears of land-tax, it is evident that the Indian Budget will show a "surplus," and the *Champion* is naturally anxious to know what will be done with it. Is it to be spent on new adventures beyond the frontier, either on the North-West or on the North-East, towards Afghanistan or towards Tibet? Is the debt to be reduced? Are the cotton duties to be partially repealed as a propitiation to Lancashire—

Lancashire which, if it only knew it, has so much more to gain by the prosperity of India than by any rearrangements of the Customs? Or is the salt revenue to be at least reduced, and the subjects of our beneficent empire in India to be in this matter no worse treated than those who live at Goa under the effete tyranny of Portugal? Or is the entire surplus to be reserved to buy gold in order to enforce the new nostrum of a gold currency on a people that does not want it? Good fortune has brought what Anglo-Indian finance calls a surplus. Will there be wisdom to expend it to the best advantage?

The great example of beneficence set by Mr. Tata will not be lost upon other wealthy Indians of enlightened mind. In particular, *noblesse oblige*. We are extremely glad therefore to observe that His Highness the Mahārājā of Benares has given to the Hindu College land and buildings worth half a lakh of rupees. The main building was built by the donor's grandfather as a summer palace, but was left unfinished at his death. It stands in a very fine and healthy position in the district of Luca. We hope it is the fact that Sir Romesh Chandra Mitter has joined the board of trustees; his name carries the greatest weight with all classes of his countrymen and is universally respected. The Mahārājā's gift will give a healthy impulse. It is stated that committees for raising additional funds for the college have been formed at Madras—the Benares of Southern India—and at Tanjore and Salem. The generosity of individuals and of the public ought to stir up the teachers to fresh efforts to crown the College with the distinctions of learning.

The *Hindu* calls attention to the policy of unduly favouring mission schools that seems to be adopted in Madras. Two instances are given. In one, a school at Vellore, supported out of the funds of the temple at Tripati, has been refused a grant in aid chiefly, it would seem, because it was near a mission school; for the second reason alleged—that the three highest classes were organised together—is somewhat discounted by the favourable report of Mr. Pillai, who is a Christian, and therefore unlikely to be unduly favourable. There are so few schools on which temple funds are spent that this one must always be an object of interest; but it is said that the Mahant of Tripati, looking on the refusal of the grant as a sign of Government disfavour, talks of withdrawing his support. The other case is still more serious. The municipality of Salem has established a municipal college, which is described as a successful institution, but the Government now refuses to give it a grant in aid, apparently because there exists in the same place a mission school, subsidised by the L. M. S., which, if the municipal school were given up, would have a complete monopoly.

Sir James Westland professed to be much disturbed in mind by the great number of Bengalis serving in the offices of the Bengal Government; so he issued a circular known as "The Westland Circular," with the object of removing race distinctions from the offices under the Controller-General. The way he sought to do this is curious and instructive. The Bengali, after passing an entrance examination and spending at least two years, but usually more, as an apprentice, having at the end of his apprenticeship surmounted a second examination, found himself in the possession of a salary of 30 rupees per month. After five or six years more he might reach the next grade, in which the salary varied from 40 to 55 rupees. Under the circular Europeans and Eurasians were to be admitted without examination, to serve no apprenticeship, and to begin at once at the salary of the higher grade. This is Sir James Westland's idea of the removal of race distinctions. The circular was so flagrant a violation of all just dealing between the races, not to speak of the terms of the Queen's proclamation, that it was hoped it would never be put into practice. But according to the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* four Eurasian lads have been brought into the Accountant-General's office without examination at the higher salary, to the detriment of the claims of the clerks and apprentices whose promotion is thus stopped. Our contemporary hopes that the circular will engage the attention of Lord Curzon. We hope so too. But it may yet have to engage the attention of Parliament.

Bombay is again smitten by the plague, but in more ways than one the terrible lessons of the past have not

been without their effect. The panic which spread throughout the city at the former visitation is now entirely absent. Everywhere the business of life goes on as usual, and all classes show a determination to meet the enemy bravely. In Poona, too, now again threatened, there is no panic. The *Mahratta* says:—

It is to be observed that the last conciliatory plague régime has succeeded in one thing at least, viz., in educating the Poona public to be dutiful and self-reliant. May the plague never visit Poona again; but if it unfortunately does, nobody would be so sure of helpful co-operation from each other as the Poona public and the plague officers.

So that here again we see another lesson of the former epidemic has been laid to heart.

But there seem to be some parts of India in which no experience teaches and no lessons are learnt. An Indian in the Government service was recently travelling with his wife and children from Jubbulpur, a non-infected place. To his surprise, at Chausa they were ordered to leave the train, and were marched some distance to the segregation camp. There they had to remain twenty-four hours in miserable sheds. In the camp there was only one shop, at which prices were exorbitant and the food very bad. Though passengers of all kinds were indiscriminately mixed in the camp, no police were to be found inside it, and our travellers, who had some jewellery with them, spent the night in fear of thieves, to add to their other miseries. In the morning they were medically examined and pronounced free of plague, and were therefore allowed to proceed on their journey, though they were kept waiting an hour before their tickets were returned to them. The *Bengalee*, from which this narrative is taken, draws attention to one other point. The mother and her eldest daughter hesitated to submit themselves to a male doctor for examination, which indeed turned out to be but slight; but the doctor on seeing their hesitation half-jestingly threatened a week's detention if they did not come out. Yet there were three or four women doctors in the camp.

The *Pioneer* is still unwilling to support the "Elgin legend" which Lord George Hamilton and his supporters in the English Press have been so anxious to establish. Far from accepting this view, our contemporary thinks that the comments of the English newspapers "are chiefly interesting as showing with how little knowledge knowing articles on Indian affairs can be compiled in Fleet Street." It is especially amazed at the remarks of the *Saturday Review* that Lord Elgin's frontier policy has been "justified by results," and that "the vast majority of informed persons are of his opinion." In view of the expression of Indian and Anglo-Indian opinion on the subject, this is ludicrous. The *Pioneer*, however, agrees with the *Speedator* that if the Viceroyalty is to be looked upon as a post for educating "unknown and untried" persons, the term of office is too short.

Lady Curzon, it is said, with natural kindness is anxious to cultivate the acquaintance of Hindu ladies. It seems a curious thing that such an abyss as is disclosed in this announcement still yawns between the two races, despite the promptings of human feeling and after a century of active political Anglo-Indian administration of the most friendly and unselfish intentions. Yet the unhappy barrier is by no means all Anglo-Indian. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* fears that Lady Curzon "will find scarcely a single Hindu lady strong enough in English to be able to speak in that language." Our contemporary is modest to excess; we should have no difficulty in naming Indian ladies who speak English as fluently and correctly as any Englishwoman. The *Patrika* speculates without much hope:—

The way to bring about this desired meeting would be for a Hindu lady to give a party in honour of Lady Curzon, and invite her friends to meet Her Excellency. The other way is for Her Excellency to give a party and invite Hindu ladies. Alas! the time is yet to come for such social gatherings. How glad the Indians would be if the time had come! We hope it will be within the power of Lord and Lady Curzon to remove the social barriers that exist between Indians and Europeans before they leave these shores.

That would be a great triumph. It is not impracticable.

The *Englishman*, hoping against hope, thinks that the Imperial Institute, now that half of its building is to be handed over to the new university, may enter on a period of reform "after its far from brilliant career." Our con-

temporary however is very far from being sure that a new era has set in. It goes on to say:—

The Australian colonies recently retired from it in disgust, and India would long since have done so if the Indian Committee had not been subject to considerations from which colonial representatives are free. Nothing but a breakdown could bring about the sweeping changes that were necessary to save the institution from utter and lamentable ruin.

It is strange that the Imperial idea of which we hear so much has not had sufficient vitality to make the Institute a success. It is, however, satisfactory to find an Anglo-Indian organ insisting that, if the new reform does not fulfil its promise, pressure should be brought to bear on the Indian Committee, compelling it to sever all connexion with the enterprise.

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* draws attention to the disagreeable position in which the Indian princes are placed by the tutelage in which they are held by the Government. There is no wish to minimise the gratitude which they ought to feel for the services rendered to them in the past, but in the present a ruling prince seems unable to call his soul his own. Our contemporary gives an account of the efforts of a representative of a vernacular religious paper to interview a certain Maharaja. The private secretary refused even to take in the visitor's name, and gave as his reasons that, if the Maharaja informed the Political Officer, the secretary would be dismissed for announcing the visitor's wish, and if the Political Officer was not informed, but afterwards discovered the visit, not only would the secretary be dismissed, but the Maharaja would be held responsible. To keep these princes on their thrones and at the same time treat them with such suspicion as to put an end to all feeling of affection and loyalty is surely a most absurd policy.

The *Pioneer*, commenting upon the Unao settlement, says that "the desirability of moderate assessments on every ground, political and fiscal, is an axiom of modern statesmanship in India." Nevertheless it is difficult to share the confidence of our contemporary that a settlement must of necessity be reasonable because it has been confirmed by three most experienced revenue officers. It is to be feared that all officials do not act up to such a high standard of political wisdom. One unfortunate aspect of our rule comes out strongly in Mr. Moreland's report. He says:—

The general movement seems to be in the direction of transfers in favour of Brahmans, a caste to which the principal bankers of the district belong. The cultivating castes are steadily losing ground as proprietors.

The *Pioneer*, while allowing that "this is not a satisfactory state of affairs," supports Mr. Moreland in his view that the restriction of the power of transfer is inadvisable, for he considers that these transfers usually take place when the land, owing to division by inheritance or other causes, becomes insufficient to feed those who have to live upon it; while tenants and labourers gain by the land coming into the possession of substantial men who are not forced by their poverty to oppress those under them.

An Anglo-Indian correspondent writes:—Sir Antony MacDonnell in his speech at Cawnpur (January 19) stated his opinion that the Indian Government's efforts to give fixed value to the rupee are not open to the reproach of having artificially lowered prices. But his statements in support of that contention are not only diverse but contrary to one another. Sir Antony admits that "theoretically" to raise the value of the rupee by legislation should lower prices; but he says that this result had not followed until quite a recent period. He had told the Currency Committee that up to the time of his leaving India, early last year, no contraction of currency had become apparent; and since his return he found that the statement still held good. In another passage he asserted that "loanable capital" seemed to suffice for the demands of district trade, and that advances to agriculturists were at rates below bank rates in the cities. (His Honour can scarcely have realised the essential distinction between money-lenders' funds in the Mofussil and those of the Anglo-Indian banks by which the export trade is financed. The peculiar difference as regards the supply and demand on these two sets of funds was pointed out a year ago by Mr. David Yule, and since more specifically by the Manager of the Bank of Bombay.) But to return to Sir

Antony's proper sphere—the agricultural districts of Hindustan proper. He seems, almost by chance, to have hit upon the obvious reason why closing the mints had not lowered prices of food grains—namely, the famine and the absolute scarcity of edible produce. Besides almost in the same breath his Honour tells us that contraction of currency had not then taken effect. Therefore, so far, the suspension of coinage had not affected his Province. Then why offer a superfluous apology for an intended restriction of currency which had not then arrived? But, curiously enough, before Sir Antony had completed his confused statements one finds him remarking that "since the famine prices of food grains had reached a point much below what obtained before the mints were closed." That is, contraction is taking effect even in purely agricultural districts.

The Blue-book on the trade of British India discussed in our columns on February 10 (p. 69) brought the statistics of exports and imports up to the close of the last financial year, namely, March 31, 1898. The figures we are now able to present for the first six months of the current financial year ending September 30 indicate that the largely increased volume of Indian foreign trade noted in the early part of 1898 continued to flow on during a great part of the year. Before we comment on this broad fact, our readers may consider for themselves the figures as we here set them out:—

INDIA'S SEA-BORNE TRADE.

(Three half-years, ending September 30.)

EXPORTS.	1898.	1897.	1896.
Merchandise ..	Rx. 56,492,473	Rx. 43,937,370	Rx. 50,006,650
Treasure ..	4,198,547	3,666,230	2,800,166
Total Exports	Rx. 60,691,020	Rx. 47,603,600	Rx. 52,806,816

IMPORTS.	1898.	1897.	1896.
Merchandise ..	Rx. 32,644,244	Rx. 33,336,161	Rx. 38,512,695
Treasure ..	9,460,614	9,561,894	6,239,650
Total Imports	Rx. 42,104,858	Rx. 42,898,055	Rx. 44,752,345

INDIA'S EXCESS OF EXPORTS each half-year:—

1898.	1897.	1896.
Rx. 18,586,162	Rx. 4,711,545	Rx. 8,054,471

INDIA'S TOTAL TRADE each half-year:—

1898.	1897.	1896.
Rx. 102,795,878	Rx. 90,495,655	Rx. 97,559,161

The only qualifying remark needed (if such it be) is that the totals of the half-years' imports include rather over a million and half that come under the broad designation of "Government Stores." The chief item in these is railway material, including rails, fittings, locomotives, and other rolling stock. Next come military material, ordnance and other arms, ammunition, and so on. There are also considerable amounts for imports of stationery and other stores "of sorts." But all these are obviously real imports that have to be paid for by exports, and so far as such factors in the Indian trade balance-sheet as are piece-goods.

The one great fact that stands out in this and all other tables of Indian trade, differentiating them from similar tables relating to other countries, is the large excess of exports over imports—a gulf never bridged, a deficit never made up. Our readers of course are well aware that this adverse course of India's trade as a whole is due to the obligatory political and non-commercial payments that have to be made to the United Kingdom, thereby *pro tanto* adding to the material prosperity of this country. As will be seen, the aggregate excess in these three half-years amounts to about Rx. 31½ millions or rather over ten millions for each half year. This, it must be pointed out, would represent a larger annual drain than is shown by a series of annual totals. In the present instance the aggregate is swollen by the rush to get off the good harvest of export products which were just being brought to market in the month when our table begins. This enormous excess of exports, Rx. 18½ millions in one half year, goes to average the inexorable demand towards which the corresponding half year in 1897 only contributed Rx. 4½. As to the enormous bulk attained by Indian foreign trade in recent years, that is illustrated by the above figures, showing an aggregate balance of sea-borne trade in the three half years of Rx. 290,847,700. That is equal to nearly 97 millions for each of these half years.

"THESE WRETCHED PRESS COMMITTEES."

SIR WILLIAM WEDDERBURN, as will be seen from our Parliamentary record, yesterday asked Lord George Hamilton whether he would furnish a return showing the number of Press Committees which have been established in India, the names of the places where they have been established, and the number of warnings which they have respectively issued, together with the names of the parties warned and the nature of the warning in each case. Lord G. Hamilton's reply was not merely inadequate but at variance with notorious facts. There has all along been a very marked disinclination on the part of the Government to furnish particulars of any kind. Such indeed is the customary attitude of officialism. Yet if these Committees are doing good work their light should not be hid under a bushel; and if the work is not good there can be no harm in letting the facts be known. The people of this country are not accustomed to place confidence in any work that needs to be carried on in the dark. We know how these Committees are regarded in India. So obnoxious are they to the sense of the educated community that the Indian National Congress at its recent meeting at Madras considered it necessary to condemn them in a special resolution:—

That this Congress is strongly of opinion that the establishment of Secret Press Committees in certain parts of India is highly objectionable and inconsistent with the spirit of British administration.

A very proper resolution, certainly. Such a system is wholly unworthy of men who understand the value of freedom. And it is even more hurtful to the interests of the administration than it is to individuals immediately affected or even to the public.

It was in May last year that we began to hear rumours of the institution of Press Committees. On May 12 Mr. Swift MacNeill asked the Secretary of State for India "whether a censorship of the Press had been instituted by the Indian Government in Bombay and Poona," at the same time enquiring about details. "I think," replied Lord George Hamilton, "the hon. member must be under some misapprehension, for the law gives no power to institute a censorship of the Press." In the light of subsequent events the answer proved to be characteristic. In our issue of June 10 we were able to quote the following telegram from the Bombay papers:—

Government has ordered the establishment of a Press Committee for Poona. All Vernacular and Anglo-Vernacular papers published there are asked to send copies to the Committee appointed to scrutinise the utterances of Native journalists. Mr. Carvalho, city magistrate, is president. The members are Mamlatdar Ransing, City Police Inspector Moore, and non-officials Rao Bahadur Vishnu M. Bhide and Ganesh Gokhale.

"The thing," we said then, "seems incredible." But it was quite true. The comment of the Anglo-Indian *Times* of India was ominous:—

The Bombay Government has not apparently completed its tale of blunders. The latest is the appointment, telegraphed by our correspondent, of a Press Committee, consisting of officials and non-officials, to scrutinise the Vernacular and Anglo-Vernacular Press of Poona. We do not know how far this appointment is legal. It is opposed to the declaration of the Viceroy that the Government of India was opposed to class measures. The presence of the city magistrate and the police inspector on the committee is impolitic and may lead to complications in future.

Such comment from a strong supporter of the Government and of things English was decidedly significant. On June 21, in answer to Mr. Herbert Lewis, Lord George Hamilton said:

Under the existing law of India no committee which may have been appointed in Poona or elsewhere could have any power of censorship over the Press. Its functions would necessarily be limited to keeping the responsible officials informed as to the character of the matter published in the new papers.

Well, we shall see about that presently. We note in passing that Mr. Lewis asked three questions and Lord George answered one; and, as to the one answer, it seems very odd that the officials should need a committee to do for them what everybody else does for himself, either personally or by his secretary or assistant.

On July 8 we were in a position to set before our readers the grounds, motives, constitution and duties of the Poona committee, in the very words of Mr. Lamb, the district magistrate, which we now recall:—

Government considered that the weekly abstract compiled by the reporter on the Native Press was lacking both in the rapidity and the closeness of scrutiny which it deemed desirable. It therefore instructed district magistrates to themselves arrange for the careful

observation of the newspapers published in their districts. The district magistrate, not being able to undertake this duty personally, was empowered to form at headquarters a committee subject to his immediate control, consisting of three or five members, of whom the majority should be official, and the president should be the huzur deputy collector or city magistrate.

At Poona the late acting collector, Mr. Bonus, accordingly constituted a committee of five, comprising the city magistrate as president, the city mamlatdar, the city police inspector, and the two non-official gentlemen who, in reply to his enquiries, expressed their willingness to serve on the committee. The duty of the committee is to bring to the notice of the district magistrate anything appearing in any newspaper published in the district which in the opinion of the committee is deserving of the attention of the district magistrate. The committee is available for use, if the district magistrate thinks fit, as an intermediary between himself and the Press of his district.

From this it appears explicitly that the origin of these committees is due to Government, which admittedly "instructed" and "empowered" the district magistrates. The grounds alleged are frivolous to the point of silliness. The constitution is official, and even menacing; the non-official members do not count, except that to the eyes of ignorant and confiding persons they give an impartial and representative air to a packed body. The duties as explained by Mr. Lamb are, it will be seen, much wider than as explained by the Secretary of State yesterday.

In the same issue (July 8), and in the same column, we exhibited by an actual example the victim's side of the business. Mr. Kelkar, the editor of the *Mahratta*, had been summoned before Mr. Lamb, and had sustained cross-examination "for nearly an hour." "Mr. Lamb's way of addressing us during the interview," wrote Mr. Kelkar, "led us to believe, rightly or wrongly, that we were then standing in the dock, and that we had committed some very, very big crime." Matters would thus appear to have reached in practice a point considerably beyond Lord George Hamilton's idea of their "necessary limits" a week or two after they had actually happened. On August 5 we recorded another illustrative case. The editor of the *Kala* was required to express regret for remarking in his paper that "it was bad that the Natives should not possess strength or endurance enough to bear a few strokes or kicks given by Europeans." Why on earth should he express regret for such a remark? In view of the facts before his mind, and open to common knowledge, the remark is mild as milk. We venture to say there are no words in the vocabulary too strong for legitimate application to the abominable incidents in question. It is not the editor that comments on such facts, but the blackguards that perpetrate them to the shame of the English name, who ought to be taken in hand by the magistrate. But the editor of the *Kala* was obliged to humble himself, apparently to avoid the uncomfortable alternative of a criminal prosecution. Let us reproduce one more case, which was laid before the Westminster Town Hall meeting on October 26 last by Mr. W. A. Chambers. The editor of the *Jagadadarsha* of Ahmadnagar, on July 10, 1898, commented as follows on the imprisonment of a European soldier for robbing a Roman Catholic church:

One soldier sentenced, the Goddess of Justice being in favour of the whites, they (the thoughtful Europeans) do not fear at all to behave unguardedly. Moreover, the soldiers being quite ignorant have not the least cause to fear. Justice being so, the soldiers have hitherto committed serious offences and escaped from them (the consequences).

On May 19 last one Richardson entered a Roman Catholic chapel at Belgam and did away with 1,100 rupees from the custody of the priest. Police arrested him after information. His case was sent up to the High Court. It was tried before Mr. Stacey. The jury was called. There were six Europeans, one Goanese, one Parsi, and one Hindu on the jury. The jury being satisfied of the man having committed theft, the hon. judge passed two years' rigorous imprisonment on him.

The idea that the punishment to Mr. Richardson will have a deterrent effect on the whites is a mistaken one. The complainant in the present case being a European priest the Goddess of Justice was sitting with eyes open. If he had been a Native she would have fast shut up her eyes. There is no fear of partiality when the colour of the skin of the two parties is the same. No wonder that the result of the present case is such. How would other white people be frightened by this?

On July 18 the District Magistrate—chairman of "one of these wretched Press Committees," as Mr. Chambers called them—wrote:—

No. 7929. NAGAR, July 18, 1898.

The editor of the *Jagadadarsha* is warned that his article of July 10, 1898, on the conviction of a soldier and the partiality of the Bombay High Court where Europeans are concerned, was conceived in bad taste, and that its tone is objectionable.

(Signed) C. HUDSON,
District Magistrate, Ahmadnagar.

So far we have been able to let some light in upon "these wretched Press Committees." The cases are all in the Bombay Presidency—indeed, at Poona and Ahmadnagar only. But we want to know whether Committees are in operation in any other places, and if so, what places; and we want to know further the character of their positive operations. Their negative effect is sufficiently obvious. It is repressive and wholly bad. Lord William Bentinck, in a much more disturbed condition of the country, acknowledged that amidst all the hard criticism that was showered upon him he found more useful information in the Native newspapers than anywhere else. We are getting thinner-skinned—with only too good reason, it is to be feared. Even the *Indian Spectator* plucks up courage to tell the Government that this system is properly described as a "policy of perpetual espionage, of constant intermeddling and fussy attempts to shape in a particular direction the lines on which journals shall be conducted." "It seems to me," said Mr. Chambers at the Westminster meeting, "utterly un-English—(cheers)—utterly un-British—(cheers)—that there should be a censorship of this description. I want, if possible, to arouse your hatred, and your dislike, of a committee which is used in this fashion." Lord George Hamilton may play with words and complacently tell the House that a Press censorship in India is illegal. But plain men will find not a little difficulty in distinguishing "these wretched Press Committees" from a formal—and illegal—censorship.

THE GOVERNMENT AND THE NATUS.

THE Natus have not yet received justice. They are still confined to one district. Their immovable property is still attached, while they have to live on a monthly allowance doled out to them by the Government. Worst of all, they are still left under the stigma of being accomplices in murder and dangerous citizens against whom it was necessary to put an unusual procedure in force. For the illegal seizure of their movable property they have received no compensation. The various and contradictory accusations which Lord George Hamilton has urged against them have neither been proved nor withdrawn. Their constant prayer to be put on their trial and to be given an opportunity of vindicating their innocence has been disregarded. They have suffered in health, in fortune and in reputation; and the authorities refuse not merely to give them any redress for the past but even to free them from further inconvenience in the future. But the Government have persisted in their defiance of justice too long, and now their own most devoted supporters are losing patience. The matter has reached a point at which even those who are most anxious to defend them find it impossible to go with them further. The iniquity is becoming too glaring for even their most devoted friends.

The *Times of India*, alone of the Anglo-Indian Press, has been distinguished by its strenuous support of the policy of Government beyond the North-West frontier. While the *Pioneer* and the *Englishman* opposed, nothing could shake the faith of their Bombay contemporary; and when the arrest of the Natus was announced, that journal gave the Government the same unquestioning support. But now it has been compelled to adopt another tone. The *Times of India* says:—

It did not need the letter which we published last week, calling attention to the present state of the case of the brothers Natus, to satisfy a good many people who have not hitherto criticised the action of the Bombay Government in this matter that the time has come for Government either to bring the detention of these men to an end, or to take the public more into their confidence in regard to it than they have yet done.

It pertinently remarks:—

For if so light a restraint as confinement within the limits of a spacious collectorate is sufficient to make these men harmless to the State, they cannot now be very dangerous persons. There is a point, indeed, at which the very leniency of the measures taken by Government makes it difficult to justify them. Had the two brothers still been detained in gaol the inference would have been that though their treatment was irksome, there was presumably good reason for it.

And it reminds its readers that nearly a year ago, while defending the action of the Government, it declared that

The time will come when the Government will have to render for this measure the justification which for the present they are obliged to keep to themselves.

The *Times of India* concludes that the time has come.

Springing from such a source, it is impossible to exaggerate the weight of such a pronouncement.

It is not difficult to trace the process by which this change has come about in the opinions of those who at first defended the Government but have now rallied to the view that has been so often expressed in these columns. There have been several things which have told against the Government and have inevitably discredited their case—the absence of any proof or even probability that the Natus were concerned in the Poona murders, the contradictory reasons given by Lord George Hamilton for their arrest, the illegality of some of the earlier proceedings of the Government, the conduct of the Natus since they were first thrown into prison, and the obvious absurdity, if they were the dangerous criminals alleged—a supposition which alone would justify their original detention—of thinking that their present treatment would suffice to render them harmless. If to this be added the natural dislike of such an arbitrary measure as imprisonment without trial, definite charge, or opportunity of defence, it can hardly be doubted that the present reaction of feeling among the supporters of the Government was inevitable.

At first the world was told that the Poona murders were the result of a vast conspiracy which rendered the imprisonment of the Natus necessary for the safety of the State. Then came the confession and execution of Damodhar Chapekar, and the declaration of Mr. Crowe, who presided at his trial, that he had found no evidence of a widespread conspiracy. A second murderer has also been captured, but he was the brother of the first. Since then two of the Crown witnesses have been assassinated in Poona, and for this again a third brother of the same family has been arrested. The more the case of the Poona murders is investigated, the more is the guilt seen to be circumscribed by the narrow circle of Damodhar, his brothers, and his associates, and the further is it from those peaceful and respected citizens who, without opportunity of defence or reply, have had to suffer for the wrongdoing of others. But if the persistent attempts, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, to connect the Natus with these terrible crimes have aroused a certain indignation even among those usually most ready to see nothing but good in the action of the authorities, what but contempt could be engendered by the extraordinary shifting of ground in which Lord George Hamilton took refuge? To defend so arbitrary a proceeding as imprisonment without trial first by an accusation of conspiracy to murder, and then by one of diminishing the number of a midwife's patients, shows at once a want of all sense of proportion and a levity in using so terrible a weapon which would be ludicrous if it were not revolting. Nor can it have escaped observation that the Government which was punishing a supposed breach of the law in a manner so exceptional and so un-English was itself guilty of a gross illegality not only in disregarding the claims on the family estate of a third brother against whom no charge was brought, but also in attaching the movable property of the prisoners, for which even the arbitrary Regulation of 1827 gives no authority. Nor could the searching of heart among friends and foes alike fail to be increased by the publication of the correspondence which passed between the elder Natus and the Government. The story of his sufferings, told with so much dignity and so much restraint, and his earnest demand to be put on his trial or at least to be definitely informed of the crime of which he was accused, were certain to tell in his favour and to cause many to ask how the Government could justify the continuance of the present restraints.

But the Government are still recalcitrant. Asked at the recent meeting of the Bombay Legislative Council, "Has not the time, in the opinion of the Government, arrived when the Natus brothers should be set at liberty? How is their health?" the Governor replied:—

Government are unable to commit themselves to any pronouncement as to the time suitable for the complete removal of the restraints which still continue to be imposed on the liberty of the Natus brothers, who are reported to be in good health.

As to the last part of the answer it would appear to be erroneous so far as the elder Natus is concerned, for he has been found by his medical attendants to be suffering from a serious complaint—diabetes—and has been advised, if possible, to leave the district of Belgaum; but there the authorities have decided he must remain. It is worthy of

notice that, according to Lord George Hamilton, Belgaum was originally fixed on because the Natus were supposed to hold property there. This, too, seems to have been an error; yet the original order, thus founded on a mistake, is obstinately persisted in. As to the necessity or utility of confining the brothers to any particular district, let the *Times of India* speak:—

The unexplained and as it to-day seems purposeless restraint which is imposed upon them cannot last for ever, and unless the Government are able to satisfy the public that there are grave reasons of State which require that two men who are permitted to roam at will over a whole collectorate shall be debarré access to their homes and estates elsewhere, they must be prepared for a withdrawal of the tacit and patient confidence with which many of us have until recently regarded their action in this matter. We ourselves seriously doubt whether it is possible to say to-day, as we said in March of last year, that Government might be trusted not to take up the Regulation of 1827 as a plaything. It was as a serious and, as we believed, necessary weapon of social defence that they took it in hand in July, 1897. Who will say this to-day, when this formidable weapon is employed merely in confining to a particular district a couple of men who for nearly a year past have not been deemed dangerous enough to be kept in gaol, and in depriving them of their property when it is no longer thought necessary to deprive them of liberty?

Thus the *Times of India* accuses the Government of subjecting two citizens to purposeless restraint, and of treating the Regulation of 1827 as a plaything. More serious charges have seldom been brought against a Government by its chief organ and supporter in the Press. When our contemporary asks how the peace of the country will be disturbed by allowing two well-to-do Brahmins to come and go as freely in Poona as they have for months been allowed to do in Belgaum, what answer can the authorities make? Yet every hour during which these purposeless restrictions are maintained increases the original injury, and confirms the incredulity which many are beginning to feel for the alleged necessity of the revival of the Regulation of 1827. If the Government persist in their course, even when their own supporters are crying shame on them, and there is nothing at stake save their own obstinate determination never to acknowledge themselves in the wrong, some will be found to doubt whether the Natus were ever so dangerous as to threaten the peace of the country, or whether the case was so critical as to need recourse to so discredited a method as imprisonment without trial. It is to be hoped that those who are responsible and who have shut their ears so persistently to the claims of their victims will listen to the words of their own friends and will take the prudent and honourable course of at last relieving the Natus from all restrictions and imputations, and thus close for ever an episode in the history of English rule in India fertile in suffering, misunderstanding, and estrangement.

OUR LONDON LETTER.

(FROM A PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT.)

THE House of Commons has begun to be interesting by fits and starts, but so far at any rate any interest that its proceedings have evidenced has been due to the private member, who has been enjoying the desolate freedom of moving amendments to the Address. Anyone who knows the House of Commons will agree with me when I say that for keen and general interest there has been nothing to beat the debate on the question whether Ministers of the Crown should or should not be directors of public companies. Naturally enough there was plenty of fun poked at the Treasury Bench, described by Mr. Swift MacNeill as "a sty for guinea-pigs." But while the fun came as an element of relief there was a horribly, almost a tragically, earnest under-current of feeling. The fact is that members felt that in these days we cannot be too scrupulous about the reputation of our public men. There have been revelations of late which have shaken public confidence. It was not pleasant to hear, as I heard, Mr. Beckett, a respectable Tory member and a well-known banker, state openly "the name of a Minister is a valuable commercial asset, as every company promoter knows."

Of course, as Mr. Balfour, apparently much against his will, supported the present system, and as the question was raised on an amendment to the Address, the vote went overwhelmingly against those who suggested reform and a more excellent way. But no one need be deceived by that. You do not always get a fair notion of the real opinion of the House

when it divides on an amendment to the Address, for if the mover of the amendment carried his point it would mean, in effect, a vote of no confidence in the Government. The supporters of the Ministry, therefore, reason in this way: "We may very possibly agree with the proposal before the House, but we do not wish on that solitary ground to wreck the Government," and they vote accordingly. I know as a matter of fact that the feeling on the Tory side of the House is overwhelmingly against this guinea-pig business flourishing on the Treasury Bench. But the vote of the House, for reasons I have already attempted to explain, went as overwhelmingly the other way.

There has been a Home Rule for Ireland debate since I wrote the other day. And here again there is an element of unreality which may not be perceptible to the outsider at the first glance. Mr. John Redmond brought this matter forward once more, and I observe he always does so in a manner more calculated to embarrass the Liberals than to help the cause he loves. There seems to be a chance just now for something like Irish re-union. Every man who loves freedom and fair play will hope that this re-union may come about, for it is really deplorable that so great a force as the Irish party in Parliament should be to a great extent dissipated and wasted in internal tugs-of-war and squabbles. Friends of India and of her many peoples are really vitally interested in this matter, whether they know it or not, for the warm Irish are ready sympathisers with the natives of India. If only these wretched troubles were over the Irish might do something more than sympathise—they might render invaluable help to the little band of those who work and struggle for the cause of India through good and ill report in the House of Commons.

I have suggested that Mr. Redmond's amendment was intended to be mischievous. I may wrong him as to intention, and if I do I am sorry. But however that may be it certainly had one good effect. Conservatives were beginning to snigger about Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and to say that while he had done well in easy circumstances he would find Mr. Redmond had put him into too tight a corner for escape with dignity. I confess I watched Sir Henry with anxiety, but before long I could see there was no need for anxiety. Sir Henry was equal and more than equal to the occasion. I do not think that the Liberal reply to Mr. Redmond's claim that Home Rule for Ireland should be given priority over all questions of reform could have been put more admirably than it was put by the Liberal leader. "In politics," he said, "the element of priority depends alike upon urgency and upon possibility. We have made two attempts to carry Home Rule, and we are proud of those attempts. We are prepared to make them again in favourable circumstances." Here the Tories jeered loudly, and Sir Henry having waited for silence went on coolly: "Well, if anyone supposes that a hostile majority of 140 presents a favourable opportunity I do not." Then turning suddenly to Mr. Redmond, he said in a plain straightforward manner, "No one knows the difficulties of the situation better than the hon. member. No one can add to those difficulties, or remove them, more easily than he." It was an occasion when a straightforward candid utterance was wanted, and Sir Henry supplied that want.

On Monday I listened with the utmost disgust to a Ministerial answer, in which it was acknowledged that by the orders of our officers the remains of the Mahdi had been clawed out from his tomb and had been flung into the Nile! There was some fine explanation about this being necessary in order to strike a blow at the superstitious reverence paid to the memory of the Mahdi. I can never suppose that such a ghastly trick will do other than harm to the persons guilty of it. What will the youngsters whom we are about to educate at the Gordon College think of the people who can stoop to so miserable a form of revenge? And what would Gordon himself have thought of such a specimen of degraded savagery? So indignant have some of the Radicals been made by this wretched incident that they mean to oppose the vote of £30,000 to Lord Kitchener. Of course he will get his money, but I should think he really wishes, now that it is all over, that he had not countenanced this foul bodysnatching.

On Tuesday the House discussed the position of the Bishops in the House of Lords. Mr. Herbert Lewis brought the question forward in an admirably straightforward motion, which asserted that both for their own sakes and for the sake of the country the Bishops should not have seats in the Upper House. There is an old tale about the worthy man who wound up the case by saying that it would be well if the Bishops were seen less in the House of Lords and more in the Lord's House. I remember hearing the case put even more neatly by a peer. The majority of the peers really resent these right-reverend prelates having seats there. This noble lord, not a Liberal either, said to me: "Somehow or other I look on a Bishop in our House like a woman who comes into a smoking compartment. She may have a legal right to be there—but it's hardly the correct thing." Mr. Herbert Lewis is to be congratulated on having initiated the most rattling debate of the Session—with the possible exception of that on the Ministerial directorships—and the Government obtained a majority of only 71, just about half "the normal."

CHRONICLE OF THE WEEK.

THURSDAY, February 16.—In the House of Commons the adjourned debate on the Address was resumed. Mr. Seton-Karr's amendment, advocating enquiry into the large and increasing dependence of the kingdom on foreign imports for the necessities of life, and the danger that might arise in the event of war, was negatived without a division.—Mr. J. Redmond moved an amendment as follows:—"And we humbly assure your Majesty that the establishment of popular self-government in local affairs in Ireland has intensified the demand of the people of that country for legislative independence, without which Ireland can never be prosperous or contented, and which in our opinion is and must remain the most urgent of all questions of domestic policy." The amendment was negatived by 300 to 43.

M. Félix Faure, President of the French Republic, died at the Elysée from an apoplectic seizure. He had been suffering for some time from a heart affection, but the symptoms did not become serious until this morning, when M. Dupuy, the Premier, and other members of the Ministry, were summoned to the Elysée. M. Faure died at 10 o'clock in the evening. The sudden decease of the Chief of the State naturally produced a deep impression in the capital. Paris correspondents mentioned as probable candidates for the Presidency, MM. Brisson, Dupuy, Loubet, Méline, and Cavaignac.

FRIDAY, February 17.—In both Houses of Parliament the leaders of parties expressed, on behalf of Parliament and the public, deep sympathy with the French nation in the loss which it had suffered.—In the House of Commons Mr. Field's amendment to the Address, with reference to railway rates and charges in Ireland, was discussed and withdrawn.—Mr. Michael Davitt's amendment, with reference to the frequent recurrence of severe distress in certain districts of Ireland, was under discussion when the hour for adjournment was reached.

Messages of condolence on the death of President Faure were sent to France by Queen Victoria, the Emperor William, and other Royal and princely personages. Sympathetic allusions to the event were made in the German Reichstag, in the Italian Chamber, and in the American Senate, as well as in both Houses of the British Parliament. The President's death was the one topic of comment in the Paris Press, and the event and its possible political consequences were also discussed in most of the other Continental journals. In both the French Chambers the Presidents read a brief letter from M. Dupuy, formally notifying the fact of the death of President Faure, and each added a few words of deep sorrow for the loss thus suffered by France. The Chambers then adjourned after it had been notified that they would sit as a Congress at Versailles to-morrow for the election of a new President. The funeral of M. Faure was to take place at Père Lachaise next Thursday. Of the various persons mentioned as possible candidates for the Presidency it was thought that M. Loubet was most likely to be elected.

The result of the Londonderry election was declared. Count Arthur Moore (Nationalist) was returned, polling 2,343 votes, against 2,301 recorded for Mr. Herdman (Tory).

SATURDAY, February 18.—The Congress of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies for the election of a President of the French Republic in the room of M. Félix Faure assembled at Versailles. M. Loubet, as President of the Senate, presided, and conducted the usual preliminaries, after which the voting took place, each member of the Congress having to ascend the tribune and deposit his voting-paper in an urn. M. Dénole, M. Drumont, M. Baudry D'Asson, and one or two other members of the reactionary parties, attempted to speak after giving their votes, but were not permitted to do so. The voting having been completed, the sitting was suspended to permit of the counting of the votes. After an interval of 50 minutes M. Franck Chauveau, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Senate, took the Chair, and read out the results. There were 824 votes, 12 blank voting-papers, and 407 was the absolute majority required for election. M. Loubet received 483 votes; M. Méline, 279; M. Cavaignac, 23; M. Deschanel, 10; M. Dupuy, 8; Colonel Montel, 4; M. Rochefort, 2; and MM. Baduel, de Mun, and Tillaye each a single vote. M. Loubet, having received an absolute majority of the votes given, was formally proclaimed President of the Republic for seven years, amid cheers from the Republicans, and counter-demonstrations from the reactionaries.—On his return to Paris President Loubet encountered some hostile demonstrations; crowds assembled in the streets indulged in shouts of "Resign," and a few of the more prominent Anti-Dreyfus leaders made inflammatory speeches; but the disturbances, attributed to the manoeuvres of the Patrie Française League, were suppressed by the police with little difficulty.

MONDAY, February 26.—In the House of Lords a Money-lending Bill was introduced by Lord James of Hereford.

In the House of Commons, Government Bills were introduced (1) to enable and require the Metropolitan water companies to supply one another with water in cases of emergency, and (2) to improve and extend the procedure for obtaining Parliamentary powers by way of provisional orders in matters

relating to Scotland.—The adjourned debate on the Address being resumed, Mr. Davitt's amendment was negatived by 203 to 122.—Mr. Steadman's amendment, asking for enquiry into the complaints of Post-office servants, was negatived by 159 to 91.—Mr. Maddison's amendment regarding railway inspection, and the risks run by men engaged in shunting operations, was discussed and withdrawn.

The Anglo-American Commission after considerable discussion declined, in view of the wide divergence of view that existed on several of the questions which had been considered, to adjourn until Midsummer, in the hope that, after a few months' interval, there might be a better prospect of arriving at an understanding.

A Supplementary Civil Service Estimate was issued. The total amount was £624,914, of which £407,539 was required for the British Protectorate in Uganda, British Central and East Africa, the Gold Coast, and the West Indies.

TUESDAY, February 21.—In the House of Commons Mr. Havelock Wilson's amendment to the Address, advocating the extension of the Workmen's Compensation Act to seamen, was negatived by 206 to 125. The Address was then agreed to.—Mr. Herbert Lewis's motion declaring "that the legislative power of Bishops in the House of Peers in Parliament is a great hindrance to the discharge of their spiritual functions, prejudicial to the commonwealth, and fit to be taken away by Bill" was after an interesting debate (in which Lord Hugh Cecil delivered one of his extremely brilliant speeches) rejected by 200 to 129.

The polling for North-West Lanark took place. The candidates were Dr. Douglas (Radical) and Mr. Whitelaw (Conservative), and Dr. Douglas was returned, polling 5,723 votes against 5,364 recorded for Mr. Whitelaw—a majority of 359.

The Army Estimates, with the usual accompanying statement by the Secretary for War, were issued. The total amount for both effective and non-effective services was £19,528,390, a net increase over last year's Estimates of £1,396,700, exclusive of the Supplementary Estimate for £885,000 issued last week.

President Loubet's inaugural message was read in both Chambers. It asked for the co-operation of Parliament in the performance of the great duties of the chief magistracy, and declared his unalterable devotion to the Republic. The regular transmission of authority accomplished within a few hours of the death of President Faure had been in the eyes of the whole world a new proof of the fidelity of France to the Republic at the very moment when a few misguided persons were trying to shake the confidence of the country in its institutions. The President expressed his anxiety to help Parliament in the necessary work of tolerance and concord, in which the Chambers, the magistracy, and the army were entitled to equal respect. He reviewed the benefits already conferred on France by the Republic, and urged that this pacific and fruitful labour should be calmly continued. Several passages in the message evoked cheers from the Republican groups in the Chamber.

A Reuter from Bombay said that the Sultan of Oman had revoked the grant of a coaling-station to the French under threat of a bombardment of the forts by the British Admiral. The French Consul protested.

WEDNESDAY, February 22.—In the House of Commons, on the motion of Mr. J. Hutton, the Cottage Homes Bill was read a second time and referred to a Select Committee. The object of the Bill was to provide the necessitous and deserving poor after the age of 65 with suitable accommodation and maintenance and so to save them from the stigma of pauperism.

A memorial service for the late President of the French Republic was held in the Church of Notre Dame de France, Leicester Square, London. Among those present were the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York, Lord Hopetoun and Lord Denbigh representing the Queen, nearly every foreign Ambassador and Minister in London, Lord Salisbury, several other members of the Government, and Lord Rosebery. Cardinal Vaughan was among the officiating clergy.

Mr. Justice Romer was appointed a Lord Justice of Appeal, in the room of the late Lord Justice Chitty, and Mr. Cozens-Hardy, Q.C., M.P., was appointed a Judge of the Chancery Division of the High Court in the place of Mr. Justice Romer.

It was reported from Cairo that the Khalfia was still in Kordofan, but had left Shirkeleh, and was moving northward with a considerable force. He had made fierce raids on the local Arabs. In view of possible contingencies the various officers appointed to Sudanese commands had been recalled to their posts.

THURSDAY, February 23.—An Exchange Telegraph Company's Cairo telegram reported: "Khalifa severely defeated friends." The Agency sent out earlier in the day a despatch interpreting the telegram as reporting that the Khalfia had been severely defeated by the friends; but, as will be noted, the "wire" bore another construction.—A Star cable from Cairo said: "The Khalifa's positions are impregnable. He has even now at his disposal 15,000 men, and it is feared that he will soon be at the head of 60,000 resolute followers."—The Exchange Agency also stated that the War Office authorities declined to give any information relative to the movements of the Khalfia.

BRITISH INDIANS IN THE TRANSVAAL.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN SIR W. WEDDERBURN, M.P., AND MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN, M.P.

SIR ALFRED MILNER TO "TAKE UP THE QUESTION."

NOTICE FOR THE REMOVAL OF INDIANS SUSPENDED.

The following important correspondence has passed between Sir W. Wedderburn, M.P., Chairman of the Indian Parliamentary Committee, and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies:—

House of Commons, S.W.

January 13, 1899.

Sir,—With reference to previous correspondence, ending with your letter of November 7 last, I have the honour again to address you regarding the grievances of Indian British subjects in the South African Republic. Matters have now come to a crisis owing to the issue, on November 19 last, of the official notice at Pretoria requiring Indian traders to proceed within a very limited period to specified locations for residence and trade; and I feel bound to bring prominently to your notice the ruinous loss thus inflicted on a peaceable and law-abiding community, and their strong claims as British subjects to the protection of the Colonial Office.

2. The contrast between the position of these Indian traders now, and that which they could claim under Article 14 of the London Convention of 1884, is very striking. Under that Convention they had "full liberty to reside in any part of the South African Republic": to "possess houses, manufactories, warehouses, shops, and premises": and to "carry on their commerce either in person or by any agents whom they may think fit to employ." Relying on these assurances Indian traders have acquired residences and places of business, and established extensive trade connexions; but now their rights as British subjects under the London Convention seem to have disappeared, through no fault of their own; and by the official order now issued they are threatened with eviction from both residences and business premises, and banishment to "locations" such as are allotted to persons outside the pale of civilisation.

3. The process by which this lamentable change has been effected may be traced in the South African Blue-Book; and it will be seen how, by successive encroachments, social and sanitary restrictions, originally intended for uncivilised African labourers, have been gradually extended so as to include middle-class traders belonging to an ancient and orderly civilisation. The difficulty originated with the proviso in Article 14 which excluded Natives (i.e. Africans) from the privileges secured by the Convention of 1884 to all other persons. Very shortly after the Convention was ratified the Transvaal authorities sought to extend the term "Natives" so as to include Indian and Chinese Coolie immigrants; and permission having been accorded by the Colonial Secretary, the Volksraad passed Ordinance No. 3 of 1885, which provided that the Government of the South African Republic should have "the right to point out to Asiatics settling in the Republic their proper streets, wards and locations where they should reside." The Colonial Office required that this Ordinance should be revised, the attention of the Transvaal Government being drawn to the fact that the declared object of the legislation was a sanitary one and only applicable to Coolie immigrants. Accordingly the Ordinance was revised, and in its final form provided that "the Government of the South African Republic might, for sanitary purposes, point out to Asiatics fixed streets, wards and locations for habitation." In this form the Ordinance received the assent of the Colonial Secretary. Then followed the Arbitration of April, 1893, and the Test Case, decided in August last, under which the meaning of the term "habitation" was stretched so as to include business premises.

4. From this brief summary it will be seen that, if the Pretoria Order of November 19 is put in force, the Indian traders will be the victims of three several encroachments, each of these encroachments being in direct contravention of the principles laid down by the Colonial Office. Thus (1) the Colonial Office stipulated that the proposed restrictions should apply only to Coolie (i.e., labour) immigrants, but the rules are being made applicable to resident traders with a considerable stake in the country; (2) the Colonial Office has always

contended that, for sanitary purposes, "habitation" does not include "business place," but by the surprising decision of the majority of the Court in the Test Case, the two terms have been held to be synonymous; and (3) while the Colonial Office recognises sanitary considerations as the only valid ground for these restrictions, there is no evidence to show (nor is there even the allegation) that the proposed banishment of the Indian traders from their residences and business premises has been ordered "for sanitary purposes" as required by the Ordinance.

5. Such being the position of affairs I would submit that the time has fully come for the friendly representations to the South African Republic foreshadowed in your letter of September 4, 1895. In that letter it was contemplated to invite the Transvaal Government to consider whether it would not be wise to "review the situation from a new point of view, and decide whether it would not be better in the interest of its own burghers to treat the Indians more generously, and to free itself from even the appearance of countenancing a trade jealousy" not emanating from the governing class in the Republic. Clearly it is against the interest of the great body of the consumers in the Transvaal that healthy trade competition should be excluded; and we may therefore hope that the governing class in the Transvaal may thus be induced to take a broader view of the question. But I would urge that this argument might be pressed still further from an international point of view. For it will be conceded that the privileges of British subjects under the London Convention should not be taken away unless to benefit the Transvaal; but in the present case the exclusion of these enterprising Indian traders tends to the loss rather than to the welfare of the general population of the State.

6. But it appears to me that the strongest argument is that which may be founded on the provision of the amended Ordinance which limits the executive to action "for sanitary purposes." If individuals of the Indian trading class are insanitary in their habits, and do not amend their ways on due notice, it is reasonable to take stringent measures against them in the public interest. But it is not reasonable, on account of the shortcomings of A in one part of the town, to evict B who has resided, as a good citizen, in another part of the town without inconvenience to his neighbours. In each individual case therefore the sanitary need should be proved; and sweeping measures against a class should not be adopted until the ordinary law applied in individual cases is found to be insufficient. The idea of "locations" may be suitable to native African labourers, but it is manifestly unsuitable in the case of Indian traders who for many years have resided in the towns side by side with the white population, and whose presence has not been shown to be prejudicial to the general health. I submit therefore that a strong protest should be made against the summary eviction and banishment of the whole class of Indian traders, as being unnecessary, oppressive, and unauthorised by the existing law. The time for such a representation seems opportune, as the authorities appear to be now reconsidering the case, a recent *Times* telegram (December 24) stating that "the Executive have issued a circular suspending the eviction of Asiatics pending negotiations for a different settlement."

7. Should it however, in spite of protests, be ultimately decided that, for sanitary purposes, the Indian traders must be removed to a "location," I trust the Colonial Office will not fail to insist that the removal shall be made in the way least liable to cause hardship and loss; that is, the locality chosen should be healthy and convenient, and not further from trading and residential centres than is necessary in order to effect the purposes required.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) W. WEDDERBURN.

To The Right Honourable Joseph Chamberlain, M.P.,
Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies,
Colonial Office, London, S.W.

Downing Street,
February 15, 1899.

Sir,—I am directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of December 7 and January 13 relating to the position of British Indian subjects in the South African Republic.

2. Mr Chamberlain gathers that you are fully alive to the difficulty of dealing satisfactorily with the case, but Sir Alfred Milner is prepared on his arrival at Capetown to take up the question and to endeavour to arrive at some arrangement of a favourable character to the Indian traders. In the meantime the Government of the South African Republic have suspended the notice for the removal of Asiatics to locations on the 1st instant.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) FRED. GRAHAM.

Sir W. Wedderburn, Bart., M.P.

House of Commons, S.W.,

February 21, 1899.

Sir,—In acknowledging receipt of your letter of the 15th inst., I beg to express to you my thanks for the favourable attention you have accorded to the case of British Indian subjects in the South African Republic.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) W. WEDDERBURN.

To the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P.,
Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies,
Colonial Office, S.W.

MR. DADABHAI NAOROJI AT WARRINGTON.

IMPORTANT MEETING.

(FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

WARRINGTON, Wednesday.

A lecture on the condition of India was delivered in the Co-operative Hall, Warrington, Lancashire, last night, by Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji (formerly M.P. for Central Finsbury, London). The lecture, which was delivered under the auspices of the Warrington Liberal Association, was an excellent one, and was listened to with profound interest. This was Mr. Naoroji's first visit to Warrington; but it is expected it will not be the last, as he created a most favourable impression. There was a large attendance. Councillor John Crossfield, J.P., who presided, called upon—

MR. DADABHAI NAOROJI, who on rising was received with applause. He said he was obliged for the opportunity of explaining the real position and the real relations between England and India. Lancashire was especially interested in the Indian question, and it was a very great pity that she did not understand how matters stood. He was not present that night to be pleased with the sound of his own voice and to please the audience. He had come to Warrington on a most serious business, and he had no doubt that the presence of such a large audience showed that they were really and earnestly anxious to hear what he had to say. He did not ignore the good that had been done by the connexion of England with India. An Indian Congress existed; but the Anglo-Indians tried to run it down, although it represented the best fruit of England's connexion with India. The Congress assembled at one time in one part of India and at another time in another part, and it consisted of representatives and delegates from the whole of India. Delegates from all parts met together for a common purpose. Indians had learnt from English literature and from their institutions; and also that the people were not for the king but that the king was for the people. Rulers should be the servants of the people and not the masters; Indians of all classes and creeds, Hindus, Mahometans, Parsees, the richest and poorest, met together once a year in a conference to examine their own condition and to tell the British Government what they ought to do and what they had done which was good or bad. (Applause.) The Indian people had been given liberty of speech, and that was the reason they were anxious that the British connexion should continue for a long time; not that they (the Indian people) professed to be benevolent towards the English people. But it should be a British connexion, and not an un-British one as it was at present. What was the good of the English being there if India was not to derive a benefit from British institutions? Unfortunately there was a dark side which almost destroyed the effect of the bright side and of the connexion between the two countries. In 1894, on the occasion of the Budget speech, he brought forward a motion in the House of Commons, and it was seconded by Mr. S. Smith, that an enquiry should be made into Indian affairs; and after he and Mr. Smith had spoken, Sir Henry Fowler, Secretary for India, admitted that a strong indignant had been made out against the British rule. A Royal Commission was appointed to investigate certain matters. He would not go into all of them, but this was his indictment:—"The British people have desired and clearly and emphatically laid it down that the Indian people should be treated and governed exactly like themselves. We are asking no more than that. We are told we are your fellow-subjects, and that must mean that we must be under the same form of Government. But are we? The British people have not performed the duty of seeing that their policy and solemn pledges were honourably and faithfully carried out. That is my indictment against the whole British

nation. A distinct policy has been laid down, but it has not been carried out by the servants, the executive authority. The main reason why the British people have failed to do their duty is that the Anglo-Indian authorities in both countries have represented all Indian matters from a one-sided and selfish point of view, have kept the British people ignorant of the true and actual state of affairs, and misled them into the delusion that all is happy and rich in India. That is your excuse at present—the excuse for not having looked into matters as you ought to have done. The truth of the present British rule is that it is an evil, un-British, despotic, destructive, alien system of the worst kind, only that it is based on the principle that India must be bled or plundered, and accordingly it is unceasingly and ever unceasingly bled and plundered. The method of carrying out the evil system is political hypocrisy and deliberate transparent subterfuge. The people of India have no voice in the administration, management, and expenditure of their own revenues or of their own affairs generally. The Indian people are not admitted into all the civil and military services—in violation of the most deliberate Acts and resolutions of Parliament and the most solemn Proclamation of the Sovereign—without distinction of race, creed, or colour. Indians, instead of being treated as British subjects, as most solemnly pledged, are treated as helots or slaves. Generally, India is insufficiently governed and, therefore, ineffectually governed. The results of the present evil system of government are the debasement of the people, extreme poverty, and terrible misery; millions of people being swept away by famine and plague, and scores of millions starved owing to insufficient food. (Applause.) After severe struggles with the authorities the Indian people had obtained some small reforms; but the administration of the past few years has snatched away even those few reforms, and authorities are now trying to snatch away the liberty of the Press and posts in the higher educational services, the deprivation of which is one of the most dishonourable chapters in history. (Applause.) There is in fact a general Indian effort to squeeze out the Indians from the higher services. As British subjects we demand that British rule must be based on British principles and British institutions and British citizenship, and not on the present existing despotic un-English, selfish and destructive principles of which the present disaster and misery are the natural and bitter fruit; and unless the present unrighteous and un-British system is thoroughly reformed into a righteous and truly British system destruction to India and disaster to British rule must be the result. (Applause.) The empire has been built up and maintained by Indian blood and money, and more than that, India has been drained of thousands of millions to the enrichment of this country and to the impoverishment of India, and the only gratitude and reward is the poverty and unceasing oppression of the worst kind. Otherwise India would have prospered and the British people would have been enriched ten times more with India's blessing and gratitude instead of her curse. A righteous and honest British rule can alone be beneficial to India and more than beneficial to the English people, and enormously strengthen the foundation of the empire in the affection and gratitude of the people. To our prayers the authorities have lent a deaf ear, and it remains for the British people alone to fulfil their pledges. There will be no longer any excuse if you do not know of these things." (Applause.) That, said Mr. Naoroji, he placed before the public of England as the indictment. The language might be considered strong, but he appealed to them not to judge of the strength or the weakness of the language from mere words, but to say whether they were true or not, and if they were true they could not be too strong. (Applause.) The speaker went into details in order to prove his indictment, and contended that from the first day the English put their feet on the soil of India up to the present day its maintenance had been entirely derived from the Indian people. It was Indian blood that had formed the empire. He granted they did not want Russia. They were at present in the frying pan, but if Russia came they would be in the fire. (Laughter.) If they could induce the British public to do their duty there was a great future both for England and for India. The Indians, at their own advantage, found that it was an extraordinary combination of political circumstances which had never before occurred in any history. For what was good for one country was good for the other, and no one had impressed that fact more emphatically upon the English people than the great Mr. Bright—(cheers)—who always roused in the Indian heart the most devoted gratitude. (Applause.) After an allusion to the unfair manner in which Indian soldiers were treated, Mr. Naoroji contended that the Government of India was despotic and did what it liked, and that the Secretary of State for India was the great Mogul whose will was law. The people were reduced to slavery and starvation, and there were scores of millions of people who did not know where they were to have one full meal in a year. In conclusion, he said such treatment was unworthy of the British name, and he appealed to them for their own sake to ask themselves whether they had done their duty. Was it possible that 300,000,000 of people would remain true to England when they understood the degraded position to which they had been subjected—that they would remain for ever under the heel of the English? They must take care they had not an explosion in their own empire.

The speaker resumed his seat amid loud applause, and a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to him for his able and interesting speech.

Imperial Parliament.

Thursday, February 16.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

REPORT OF THE FAMINE COMMISSION.

East India (Famine).—Copy presented—of Report of the Indian Famine Commission, 1898 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

SHARES IN INDIAN COMPANIES.

Sir SEYMOUR KING asked the Secretary of State for India, whether

he had yet come to any decision as to initiating legislation for enabling Indian companies to open offices for the transfer and registration of shares in this country.

LORD G. HAMILTON: I have been for some time past in correspondence with the Board of Trade and the Treasury on the subject referred to in my hon. friend's question, but the matter is more complicated than is apparent at first sight, and I am communicating these difficulties to the Government of India.

EXCHANGE COMPENSATION ALLOWANCE.

SIR SEYMOUR KING asked the Secretary of State for India, whether he had considered the claims of those officers who up to 1894 were admitted to the benefit of the Exchange Compensation Allowance, the payment of which was suspended by the Indian Government pending an enquiry:

Whether they were entitled under the rules to the compensation: And whether as the enquiry had now been concluded, those officers whose rights were meantime held in abeyance and had since been confirmed would be paid up the arrears which had accumulated during the intervening period.

LORD G. HAMILTON: A decision was given in November last upon the great majority of those cases to which the hon. member's question refers. As regards those in which the decision was favourable, the Government of India are now investigating and settling the claims for arrears.

Upon a comparatively small number of cases the Government of India were unable to come to a decision, and these are now under my consideration.

HEALTH OF BRITISH TROOPS IN INDIA.

MAJOR RASCH asked the Secretary of State for India, whether he was aware that, out of an actual strength of 16,600 British troops proceeding on service in the recent campaign on the North-West frontier, 1,500, or nearly 10 per cent., were incapacitated for service in the field by venereal disease:

And, whether the Government of India proposed to take any further steps to remedy this condition of affairs.

LORD G. HAMILTON: The force, from which the 16,600 British troops were drawn for service in the recent campaign, consisted of 21,439 men. Of these 989 were rejected as unfit for service on account of venereal disease; while a further number of 492 were incapacitated during the campaign for the same reason. The total number of men known to have been thus disqualified for active service is, therefore, 1,481, or nearly 7 per cent. on a total strength of 21,439.

The Government of India are fully aware of the importance of this matter, and have taken and are taking steps with the object of diminishing the prevalence of venereal disease among the British troops in that country.

THE INDIAN MAIL.

SIR SEYMOUR KING asked the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster-General, whether the Postmaster-General was aware that serious inconvenience was caused to firms, private individuals, and journals connected with India when the Indian mail arrived on Saturday, owing to the delay at the Post Office in sorting and delivering the newspapers on Saturday afternoon:

And whether arrangements could not be made to increase the staff assigned to the duty, or in some other way to insure more prompt delivery.

MR. HANBURY: There is no delay at the Post Office in sorting and delivering newspapers brought by the Indian mail when that mail arrives on Saturday afternoon. A sufficient special force is always employed on such Saturdays. It is the practice not to send out on Saturday afternoon newspapers and other large packets for delivery to those firms whose offices are known to close before the time at which delivery could be effected, and if under any misapprehension newspapers have been kept over which might have been delivered the Postmaster-General will be happy to give instructions for their delivery in future on receiving particulars. I may add that this is what has happened at the office in which my honourable friend is interested.

Friday, February 17.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

PLAGUE IN THE KOLAR DISTRICT.

DR. TANNER asked the Secretary of State for India if there was any foundation for the report from Bombay of a plague panic from the southern Kolar goldfields:

And, what steps were being taken to prevent further loss of life.

LORD G. HAMILTON: The latest information I have received is that during the week ending Monday, February 13, there were twelve plague seizures and nine plague deaths in the Kolar district of Mysore. Nothing is said in that report as to any plague panic among the gold-miners. The Mysore State, supported by the British Resident and aided by the Government of India, is sparing neither expense nor effort to combat the plague wherever it appears in Mysore territory.

THE ALLEGED PROCLAMATION FROM KABUL.

DR. TANNER asked the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs whether a proclamation by the Amir of Afghanistan welcoming Russian railway enterprise, and enjoining his subjects to realise the great advantages accruing from the Merv-Kushik line, had been distributed on the North-West frontier of India and posted over Herat on December 26, 1898, and if this had been done with the consent of her Majesty's Ministers.

LORD G. HAMILTON: I have seen some references in the Press to an alleged proclamation of the character described, but I have no reason to believe the report to be true.

DR. TANNER: Will the noble lord say if he, having taken into

consideration what occurs in the columns of the *Times* reported yesterday, cannot really give us more explicit explanation in connexion with this particular report occurring in the columns of the Ministerial paper?

No answer was given.

Monday, February 20.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE RIFLE FIRE IN THE TIRAH CAMPAIGN.

COLONEL WYNDHAM MURRAY asked the Under-Secretary of State for War whether any reports had been received from the General Officer Commanding in India on the subject of the effects of the rifle fire of British and Native infantry, as well as of that of their opponents, during the late Tirah campaign, with comparisons and deductions which might be of future service; and, if so, whether he could lay these reports before the House.

MR. GEORGE WYNDHAM: A report has been made on the surgical history of the Tirah expeditionary force for 1897-98, showing the effects of the rifle fire of the enemy on the British and Native troops. As the enemy were in possession of rifles and ammunition similar to those used by the British troops, a fair estimate can be taken of the effect of these weapons. I shall be glad to show the report to the hon. member.

Tuesday, February 21.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

PETITIONS.

EAST INDIA (Contagious Diseases).—Petitions from Dundee and Openshaw, against State regulation; to lie upon the Table.

INDIAN COOLIES IN UGANDA.

MR. THOMAS BAILEY asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, if he could state to the House how many coolies had been imported from India for the Uganda railway works:

How many were now employed on the line, how many had returned to India, and from what cause, and how many had died during the progress of the works;

And, whether there were any hospital returns available showing the amount of sickness and mortality among the workmen of the railway.

MR. BROADBENT: The number of coolies imported from India for the Uganda railway works has been 14,283. The latest return, that for the month of December last, gives the total number now employed as 12,019; 769 have returned to India on expiration of agreement, 1,015 have been invalided, 480 have died on works. The above figures are an index to the sickness, and mortality and hospital returns are furnished to the Foreign Office.

THE PROPOSED MOVEMENT TOWARDS TIBET.

MR. HEDDERWICK asked the Secretary of State for India, whether his attention had been called to statements in a recent publication, entitled "In the Forbidden Land" (vol. 1, p. 75), to the effect that of recent years the Government of India had had reported, by its own officers, cases of horrible torture inflicted by Tibetan authorities on British subjects captured by them on our side of the frontier; that some of the atrocities committed by the Lamas on British subjects were revolting; that it was a matter of great regret to the Englishmen who visited these regions to think that the weakness of our officials in Kumaon had allowed and was allowing such proceedings still to go on; that the Jong Pen of Taklakot, in Tibet, sends over, with the sanction of the Government of India, his yearly emissaries to collect land revenue from British subjects living on British soil; that the Shokas had to pay this tribute out of fear, in addition to other taxes and trade dues iniquitously exacted by the Tibetans; and that on the slightest pretext the Tibetans arrest, torture mercilessly, fine, and confiscate property of British subjects on British territory:

Whether the reports received by the Government in any way supported these statements:

And whether he could inform the House what was the state of the British territory bordering on Tibet.

LORD G. HAMILTON: My attention has been called to the statements contained in the publication referred to in the hon. member's question. No report on the subject has reached me from the Government of India, but I find from the proceedings of the Lieut.-Governor of the North-West Provinces and Oudh that his attention has since 1895 been given to the alleged exactions levied by Tibetan officials on the British side of the Northern frontier of Kumaon. The frontier has since that year been repeatedly visited by British officers, who have had interviews with the Jong Pen of Taklakot and other officials from the Tibetan side, and have clearly explained to them that no dues can be allowed to be levied by Tibetan officials from Bhutia traders, who are British subjects, within the British frontier. The last letter of the North-West Provinces Government which appears in the proceedings is dated August 22, and states that "the dues collected by the Tibetans from the people of Darma are clearly proved to be not land revenue, but a trade tax, to which this Government has no reason to object. The Lieut.-Governor is gratified to learn that Tibetan outrages on British subjects have ceased."

MR. HEDDERWICK asked the Secretary of State for India, whether Darma, Chandas, and Bias, on the borders of Tibet, form part of the British Empire:

And, whether Tibetan law was enforced within these regions, and the natives driven to bring the greater number of their civil and criminal cases before Tibetan magistrates.

LORD G. HAMILTON: The portions of the district of Kumaon to which the hon. member probably refers, namely, Darma, Chandas, and Bias, are part of British India.

I have no reason to suppose that any other than British law and authority are exercised in these parts.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON INDIAN EXPENDITURE. DELAY OF THE REPORT.

Sir HENRY FOWLER asked the Secretary of State for India what was the date of the appointment of the Royal Commission to enquire into Indian expenditure:

How many sittings were held and how many witnesses were examined:

What was the date of the closing of the evidence:

How many sittings have the Commission held for the consideration of their Report:

And when does he expect to lay the Report upon the Table.

Lord G. HAMILTON: The date of the appointment of the Royal Commission to enquire into Indian expenditure was May 24, 1895.

I learn that the Commission held forty-six sittings for the taking of evidence, and examined thirty-one witnesses. The oral evidence closed on July 21, 1897.

No sittings have since that date been held for the consideration of the draft Report. A large part is, I understand, in print; but I have not been informed when it will be submitted to the Commission, and I am therefore not in a position to name any date for its presentation.

Sir HENRY FOWLER: May I ask the right hon. gentleman whether he intends to take any steps in this matter, the evidence having closed upwards of eighteen months ago? I may say, as a justification for putting the question to him, that the proceedings of the Committee over which I have the honour to preside in reference to Indian currency are seriously hampered by their not being in a position to obtain the decision of this Commission upon the civil expenditure of India.

Lord G. HAMILTON: The Secretary has no control whatever over the proceedings of a Commission of this kind. I think there is an understood rule that when a Commission of this kind is appointed and has taken the evidence necessary to enable it to form a judgment the Report should be presented to the Commission in order that it should come to a conclusion as soon as possible.

Thursday, February 23.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

REPORT OF THE FAMINE COMMISSION.

Sir WILLIAM WEDDERBURN asked the Secretary of State for India at what date was it likely that Sir J. B. Lyall's Report on the Famine of 1896-8, its causes and administration of relief, would be placed before Parliament, together with any minutes or resolutions thereon by the Government of India.

Lord G. HAMILTON: The Report of the Recent Famine Commission was laid on the Table last Thursday. The papers printed on the third page of the Return show that the evidence taken by the Commission will be presented hereafter and that the Government of India have not yet recorded their opinions on the recommendations made by the Commission.

INDIAN COOLIES IN UGANDA.

Sir WILLIAM WEDDERBURN asked the Secretary of State for India whether his attention had been drawn to the mortality among the Indian coolies employed on the Uganda Railway:

And what arrangements were made for their protection both at the port of emigration and in Africa.

Lord G. HAMILTON: The answer given by the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs to the hon. member for Chesterfield will have supplied the information sought by this question. I will only add:

(1) The mortality among coolies employed on the Uganda railway works during 1898 appears to have been about 16 per 1,000 per annum on an average labour force of 12,800 hands.

(2) At the port of emigration the labourers are kept as far as possible apart from all infection; they are medically inspected before they go on board, where their food, clothing, sanitation and medical attendance are provided for. There are hospitals at the base and at different points on the works. Medical men and medical subordinates, European and Indian, are provided for the service of these hospitals and of the labourers. At the most unhealthy season of the year nearly ten per cent. of the labourers were in hospital; at healthier seasons from two and a-half to five per cent. may be in hospital. The medical report of July last says: "The prevailing diseases are malarial fever, diarrhoea, dysentery, liver complaint, scurvy and ulcers. A complication of the last two generally necessitates invaliding." Those who are invalided are sent back to India.

THE PRESS COMMITTEES IN INDIA. RETURN ASKED FOR.

Sir WILLIAM WEDDERBURN asked the Secretary of State for India whether he would furnish a Return showing the number of Press Committees which had been established in India; the names of the places where they had been established; and the number of warnings which they had respectively issued, together with the names of the persons warned and the nature of the warning in each case.

Lord G. HAMILTON: I can give the hon. member in my answer the information he seeks.

The Government of Bombay inform me that these Committees have been established in twelve places, viz., Poona, Ahmedabad, Broach, Kaira, Thane, Ahmednagar, Satara Nasik, Belgaum, Dharwar, Bijapur, Ratnagiri.

These Committees have no power to issue warnings, their functions being to keep the local authorities informed as to what appears in the local newspapers.

THE INCIDENT AT MUSCAT.

Mr. LABOUCHERE asked the Secretary of State for India whether it was a fact that the Seyd of Oman had revoked the grant that he

proposed to make to France under a threat from the British admiral on the station of a bombardment of the forts of his capital:

What was the nature of the contemplated grant:

Whether the French Government had been previously notified of the intended action of the admiral:

Whether there was any treaty between this country and the Government of Oman by which the latter pledged itself not to alienate territory or to grant a lease of territory to any foreign Power without the previous permission of her Majesty's Government:

Whether the relations of this country and of France towards Muscat were based upon the treaty concluded between Great Britain and France in 1862, by which both countries reciprocally engaged to respect the independence of the sovereigns of Muscat:

And whether her Majesty's Government claimed any special right to control the exercise of full sovereignty by the Seyd of Oman within his kingdom which was not possessed by any other European great Power.

Lord G. HAMILTON: (1) In answer to the first question, I reply that the grant which the Sultan proposed to make was contrary to treaty and has not been proceeded with. Only brief telegraphic reports have been received, and the despatches on their way must be awaited before I can give further details.

(2) The grant referred to is understood to have been a lease to the French Government of Bunder Jisshah as a coaling station.

(3) It was a question between the Government of India and the Sultan of Muscat, not between the Government of India and any other Power. It should be added that no hint was given to the Government of India of the transactions that were being completed at Muscat.

(4) The Sultan is under a special obligation to the British Government in respect to the alienation or assignment of any other part of his territories.

(5) The answer to the last question but one is in the affirmative.

(6) The Sultan of Oman has for years been in receipt of a subsidy from the Indian Government, and has on various occasions received the help and advice of that Government in maintaining his authority and quieting disturbances in his territory. The relations existing between him and the British Government are special, though they do not necessarily interfere with the exercise of any sovereign rights he may possess.

BRITISH INDIANS IN NATAL.

Sir SEYMOUR KING asked the Secretary of State for India whether his attention had been called to a memorial, addressed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, from resident natives of India in Natal, who had been engaged in trade there for many years and had acquired considerable interests in land and in personal property, setting forth that, under the operation of the Dealers' or Traders' Licensing Act, allowed by her Majesty on the recommendation of the Colonial Office, the licensing authorities, consisting chiefly of rival traders of British or foreign nationality, were refusing licenses to trade and withdrawing licenses from respectable natives of India:

Whether the Government of India had taken or proposed to take any steps to protect Indian Natives and fellow-subjects from confiscation of their civil and legal rights in Natal:

And whether, as Natal relied to a great extent for its supply of labour upon natives of India, under arrangements which were sanctioned by the Indian Government, that Government would be advised to stop all emigration of Indian subjects into Natal until the local laws were fairly administered to Indian subjects.

Lord G. HAMILTON: I have not yet seen the memorial referred to in my honourable friend's question, which has, I understand, only recently reached the Colonial Office. When it is referred to the India Office, it will receive the fullest consideration from me in Council, both as to the nature of the grievances complained of, as well as the remedy suggested by my honourable friend.

PUBLIC MEETINGS ON INDIAN QUESTIONS.

THE WORK OF THE BRITISH COMMITTEE.

Elsewhere in the present issue of INDIA will be found a special report of an address delivered by Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji at Warrington on Tuesday last, February 21.

On Wednesday, February 22, Mr. Naoroji addressed a public meeting at Preston.

On February 12 a lecturer on behalf of the British Committee delivered an address on "The Ethics of British Rule in India" to the Bradford Lecture Society. There was a large and intelligent audience present, and questions were put and answered at the conclusion of the lecture.

On February 13 a lecturer on behalf of the British Committee lectured on "The Forward Policy" to the Hull Women's Liberal Association in the Gladstone Hall.

On February 14, speaking in Hull on "Current Politics," Miss Garland dealt largely with Indian subjects, and all the subsequent speakers referred to the suggestive and practical hints given on the grave problems awaiting us in India. There was a very large attendance.

On February 15 a lecturer on behalf of the British Committee lectured to a crowded audience in Scarborough on "India and its People." The Rev. C. Grainger presided. The lecture was illustrated with lime-light views.

Meetings on Indian questions have been held during the present week at West Hartlepool and Berwick-on-Tweed.

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