

changed his opinions, or at least have modified them very much. The Punjab, he (the Chairman) was quite sure, is at present a strength to us and not a weakness, and every day the position was growing stronger; and the reason of this was the sound judgment of Mr. Edward Princep and other officers engaged in the settlement of the revenue. A moderate assessment has been the rule, and the result is that the people are contented and prospering, and in the event of any trouble we are sure of the support of the North-West. With reference to the Bombay Revenue Jurisdiction Bill, he might mention that he was present at the meeting of the Council at Simla on the 13th October last, when Mr. Hope re-introduced the Bill, and he heard that gentleman's arguments, which were mainly based on the virtues of uniformity, and that the Bill left a modified intervention which was open also to the new Provinces; and therefore Mr. Hope professed to consider the measure a boon rather than the reverse. He (the Chairman) had a great respect and esteem for Mr. Hope, who was an able officer, but he was bound to say that the time he had chosen for his measure was ill chosen, and, further, that he was certainly not the man who should have introduced it. At the time he (the Chairman) arrived in India there were grave agrarian disturbances. The Zemindars of one village took one of the native revenue officers, and, placing him in a basket, they carried him to a precipice and chrew him over. When two of these Zemindars were afterwards being led out for execution, one of them turned and requested speech with the officer in charge. He said he wished to know whether the muskets of the guard were loaded, and being asked why he desired to know, added that if they were loaded, the officer would perhaps yield to his earnest that a volley should be fired over his grave. The man believed that in ridding the people of the revenue officer he had committed no crime save that of patriotism, and feeling that he was dying in the cause of his country, desired to have it recognized. A time when feelings like these existed among the people, when enquiries were in progress regarding the wrongs under which they alleged they were suffering, was certainly no time for the introduction of the Revenue Jurisdiction Bill. As to the point whether Mr. Hope was the man likely to disarm opposition to such a Bill by bringing it in himself, it would be sufficient to mention that not long ago Mr. Hope increased the assessment of the four villages of Katiawadi, Vishalpur, Jamalpur and Kabilpur from 1,000 rupees to 4,000 rupees, and the Remindars appealed to the Civil Court. Mr. Birdwood declared in their favour. A second appeal in a higher Court maintained the decision adverse to Mr. Hope. While this action was fresh in the minds of the people, it would surely have been better had some one else introduced the Bill. On another point to which the Council of the Association referred

to in the Report,—the Depreciation of Silver,—he would not now enlarge. Opinions on the subject were of the most contradictory kind. On the point of the supposed changes about to be introduced in the Civil Service examinations he did not apprehend that any great revolution was going to take place. Reverting to the first topic mentioned by the Council,—his own visit to India—he might say that ever since he had been connected with the East India Association he had done all that was in his power to aid it, in the interests of England not less than those of India, because he believed the objects of the Association were useful to both countries. With these convictions he had gone to India; and on the 22nd June last year he addressed a meeting in Bombay on the subject. He was rather surprised to find that there was great difficulty in finding a chairman for that meeting. Indian gentlemen declined to preside, not because they did not sympathise with the Association and its objects, but because they were really afraid. He had positive proofs that this feeling was not without sufficient cause; and here he might say that it was a very unfortunate thing that there should exist a party in India imbued with such a fanatical spirit of officialism that it would suppress all independence even of thought and expression. It is surprising that there should be men in India who could encourage this spirit although they themselves had been educated in a country of free thought and speech; but such is the fact, and when he had delivered the address in Bombay he and the East India Association were made the subject of violent attacks in the *Bombay Gazette*, which throughout his tour did all it could to damage him. As to the result of his journey he found in all his *route* that people's minds and energies were fully occupied with preparations for the Prince of Wales's visit. Even in Hyderabad immense preparations were made upon the chance of his Royal Highness coming; a new street was made throughout the City, and many other lavish alterations. While all this was going on he did not think it advisable to attempt anything in the interest of the Association; but he took occasion to ascertain that there were several men of high position and influence who would be willing to contribute to the East India Association; and he had every reason to believe that those contributions would shortly be given. He also understood that Branch Associations would be established in two of the principal places in India; and that they might, if they so thought fit, amalgamate with another powerful Association in Calcutta. He would therefore ask the members to allow him to hold his report in suspense, and he trusted that at the end of this year, or the beginning of the next, he would be able to say something gratifying to the society on the subject.

General Sir George Malcolm moved that the report of the Council be adopted, and in doing so said he would first remark that the East India