

# Viceroy's Address to Legislative Assembly.

## INDIA'S PRESENT PROBLEMS.

### VICEROY'S SYMPATHETIC REVIEW

### APPEAL FOR MUTUAL TRUST BETWEEN INDIA AND GREAT BRITAIN.

Addressing the Legislative Assembly on Monday, the Viceroy said:—"When I appointed this date for the beginning of your session my intention was to appoint the same date for the beginning of the session of the Council of State in order that I might be able to-day to address both Chambers. It was, however, pointed out to me that in the Delhi session, mainly owing to the fact that the Council of State has no part in the voting of supplies the burden of work which falls on the members of the Council of State is considerably lighter than that which falls upon the Assembly and that it would not, therefore, be convenient to summon the two Chambers to begin their labours simultaneously. I have, therefore, been constrained on this occasion to confine my address to members of this Chamber.

#### KING'S PROGRESS.

"For the past two months we have all laboured under the burden of a grave anxiety owing to the prolonged illness of the King Emperor, but by the mercy of Providence recent news shows that His Majesty's progress has been steadily maintained; and we may now reasonably hope that he is on the highway to complete recovery. The universal sympathy that has gone out to the Royal House, and particularly to Her Majesty the Queen, during these dark days has shown in striking fashion how securely King George V, by devotion to duty and personal thought for all his people, has enthroned himself in their hearts. They will continue to pray that for many years he may be spared to rule over them and guide their destinies.

#### MR. DAS AND MR. LAJPAT RAI.

"In the interval that has elapsed since your last session India has lost two notable sons, the one a member of my Council and the other a prominent member of this Assembly. Though they differed in much, they resembled each other in the extent to which they were able to attract to themselves the affection of many outside the circle of their political associates. Of Mr. Das I can speak from the close personal knowledge that came from our work together and which gave me ample opportunity of observing the high and selfless principles by which his life was guided. A firm friend and a wise counsellor, his death is to me a great personal loss. Of Lala Lajpat Rai I can only speak from the standpoint of a far less intimate relationship. It fell to him to play a prominent part in the political life of his country, but there were qualities in him that led many who dissented most sharply from his political opinions to forget much of their dissent in a genuine appreciation of a very human personality.

#### ASSEMBLY SECRETARIAT.

"Honourable members will recollect that after a conference of leaders in this House last September a resolution was passed recommending the setting up of a separate establishment for dealing with the business of this Assembly. That resolution was in the nature of a compromise, which, while not going so far as your President desires, went rather further than the proposals which my Government had already submitted to the Secretary of State. Having regard to the support which the resolution received from all quarters of the House, my Government decided to accept it with certain additions which were imposed by the fact that this House had invited the Governor-General to take the new department into his portfolio. It was understood that in so doing it was the general wish of the House, in conformity with the Standing Orders that the administration of this department by the Governor-General should be deemed to be non-controversial. That being so, it appeared desirable that the Governor-General, in the administration of the new department should be clearly placed in a position where no controversy could arise.

#### SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES.

"For this reason we have amplified the scheme of the resolution by providing for recourse to the Public Service Commission in all cases in which the exercise by the Governor-General of his powers as head of the department might at any time bring him into conflict with the President or with the Assembly. The same protection has also, for equally good reasons, been conferred, with his consent, on the President. The drafting of statutory rules to regulate the conditions of service in the new department now set up will necessarily take time; but good progress has already been made in this task. Meanwhile the Secretary of State has given his consent to the introduction of the scheme on a temporary basis.

#### PLEA FOR INDULGENCE.

"As member in charge of the new department, I would ask the House to be indulgent while the department is in its infancy and not to expect it to attain its maximum degree of efficiency from the first days of its inauguration. There are, indeed, still some gaps in its complement; but, with a view to reducing these inconveniences, the legislative department has made a temporary loan of the services of some of its members, while the President is looking for suitable recruits. The new department, I hope, starts with the goodwill of all sections of the House and, though, as I have said, the conclusion reached does not represent all that the President, or, perhaps, some sections of the House, would have desired, I think we may nevertheless generally congratulate ourselves upon the outcome of our discussions.

#### AFGHAN UPHEAVAL.

#### GOVERNMENT OF INDIA'S POLICY

#### OF NON-INTERVENTION.

"In external affairs everything has been dwarfed by the upheaval in Afghanistan. Of the drama that has unfolded itself during the last few months in Afghanistan I shall say nothing save this that

the policy of Government is, and throughout been, one of scrupulous non-intervention. It is our

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earnest hope that there may be an early restoration of peace and order throughout the length and breadth of that country and that India may again have on her north-western border a peaceful, strong and united country for her neighbour.

During this critical time we in India could not but be proud of the gallant bearing of the British Legation, of the firm control of our tribes by the Frontier administrations and of the fine work accomplished by the Royal Air Force over the evacuation of women and children from Kabul.

#### TRIBUTE TO MR. SASTRI.

"In South Africa our first agent, Mr. Sastri, to-day relinquishes charge of his office and starts on his return voyage to India. By his services to his compatriots in South Africa and to the promotion of friendly relations between India and the Union he has secured a high place for himself in the history of the two countries as a successful ambassador of India and has laid India under a great debt of gratitude. He has left a high standard of statesmanship for his successor to maintain, but I am sure that Sir K. V. Reddi carries with him to his new duties the confidence and good wishes of this House not less than those of the Government of India.

#### HILTON-YOUNG REPORT.

"The House is aware that last year His Majesty's Government appointed a Commission to report on future policy in regard to Eastern Africa. The report has just been published and will require mature consideration. My Government, however, is fully alive to the importance to Indian interests of the decisions which His Majesty's Government may eventually decide to take in this connection, and I am glad to be able to inform you that His Majesty's Government have agreed that before any decision is taken they will give the fullest consideration to the views of the Government of India on all matters affecting India. The Governor of Kenya, moreover, for the purpose of discussion on the report, has, with the approval of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, offered to appoint temporarily to the public service, with a seat on the Executive Council in I. C. S. officer who will be nominated by myself. In order to ascertain the judgment of enlightened public opinion on these matters, I have asked the Hon. Sir Muhammad Habibullah to convene the Emigration Committee of the two Houses of the Indian Legislature at the earliest possible date this session for the purpose of eliciting their views and practical suggestions. I do not doubt that my Government will derive great value from these discussions.

#### LINLITHGOW REPORT.

#### GOVERNMENT'S DECISIONS.

"Since I last addressed the House, the report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India has been published, and, as honourable members know, a conference of provincial representatives assembled in Simla last October to discuss the more important proposals contained in it. The deliberations of the conference revealed a unanimous desire for progress and, though time is doubtless required for action over so wide a field, the fact that public attention has been thus focussed upon this all important branch of national activity will bring real encouragement to all who have the imagination to see what it means in the life of India. The bulk of the work on the Commission's recommendations must, under the existing constitution, fall to the provinces; but for some the responsibility rests primarily on the Government of India.

Of these the most important concerns the establishment of a central organisation for research purposes, and this proposal, after discussion with provincial representatives, my Government has decided to adopt. The duties of the new Council of Agricultural Research will be to promote, guide and co-ordinate research throughout India, to train research workers by means of scholarships and to collate and make available information on research and on agricultural and veterinary matters generally.

#### GOVERNMENT'S MODIFICATIONS.

"As to the structure of this body we propose to modify, in some respects, the recommendations of the Royal Commission. Our proposal is that its chief component parts should be firstly a Governing Body, the principal executive organ of the Council, presided over by the member of the Governor-General's Council in charge of agriculture, and comprising 17 other members, of whom two will be chosen from the Legislative Assembly and one from the Council of State and nine will be nominated by the Government's of the nine major provinces; and secondly an Advisory Council of 39 members whose function will be to give expert advice to the Governing Body and submit for its approval programmes of research inquiry. In addition to these two bodies, it is hoped that the major provinces will establish committees to work in close co-operation with them.

#### A GRANT OF RS. 25 LAKHS.

"As regards finance, we propose to substitute for a lump grant of Rs. 50 lakhs, which the Commission favoured, a lump grant of Rs. 25 lakhs, to be paid in instalments, supplemented by annual recurring grants of Rs. 7.25 lakhs. These sums will vest in the Governing Body who will consider all proposals for research, sanction expenditure and allot funds to meet it.

"It is my sincere hope that the organisation which I have outlined will receive whole-hearted support from this House and will before long start upon its labours which will surely be to the lasting benefit of India's agricultural millions.

"The House will be glad to learn that a generous offer has been made by the four Dominions of Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand to present to the capital of India four stone pillars on the model of the famous Asoka columns. My Government have gratefully accepted

this gift which will fittingly symbolise the common loyalty of the Empire to the person and throne of His Majesty the King Emperor.

#### LABOUR DISPUTES.

#### GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS.

"The past year has been marked by a series of labour troubles which we have all witnessed with deep concern. The tale of loss and suffering involved by them need not be retold here, and we are more immediately concerned to devise means by which such profitless disputes may be avoided. I have on more than one occasion appealed to labour to follow wiser counsels in future and to employers to prove their determination to leave their employees no justifiable ground for complaint. If both parties can combine to establish closer relations with each other and to develop an organisation for settlement of points of difference before they reach the stage of conflict, we may face the future with confidence. Government is anxious to do everything in their power to encourage and assist such efforts. In the Trade Disputes Bill, which is now before the Legislature, we have provided for the establishment of Courts of Inquiry and Boards of Conciliation which may be called into play if disputes get beyond the stage of mutual arrangement. The proposals of Government in this connection and in the other parts of the bill which aim at the protection of the public in certain circumstances from the consequences of labour disputes will shortly come before you, and I trust that wisdom will guide your decision in regard to them.

#### A ROYAL COMMISSION.

"But these proposals will not in themselves reach the root of the matter. I have long felt that the best way to secure the interests both of employers and employed is for Government to undertake a review of the conditions under which labour works and to lend such help as it can in the removal of legitimate grievances. This question has for some time been under the earnest consideration of Government, and I am now able to say that

His Majesty has approved the appointment of a Royal Commission during the course of the present year to undertake such an inquiry. Our intention is that the scope of the inquiry should be wide and that it should, with due regard to the economic position of industry in this country explore all aspects of the problem affecting the conditions under which industrial labourers work.

The personnel of the Commission has not yet been settled, but we shall use every endeavour to insure that it is representative. I am pleased, however, to be able to say that we have secured the services, as Chairman, of Mr. Whitley, lately Speaker of the House of Commons, who has been in intimate touch with labour problems in England and is widely known for his association with the establishment of the councils which bear his name. The announcement which I have just made will, I am confident, be generally welcomed. The conclusions of such a Commission will be of the greatest interest not only to India but to the whole industrial world. We may hope that they will provide us with all basis for the future; and it is essential, therefore, that the inquiry should be as thorough and the personnel as strong as it is possible for us to make it.

#### COMMUNIST MENACE.

#### PUBLIC SAFETY BILL

"But there is a yet more serious side of these industrial troubles on which I feel it my duty to touch. While every allowance must be made for the genuine grievances which the labouring classes feel, there can be no doubt that the unrest of the past year has been due in no small measure to the activities of certain persons whose end is rather to promote anti-social purposes than to secure the betterment of the workman's lot. The disquieting spread of the methods of communism has for some time been causing my Government anxiety. Not only have communist agents from abroad promoted a series of strikes in the industrial world, but the programme which they have openly set before themselves includes undisguised attacks on the whole economic structure of society. All classes alike are threatened by the spread of these doctrines and no Government can afford to ignore this insidious danger. Last session my Government placed before you a measure aimed at the agents from outside India who have been engaged in this mischievous work, but by a narrow margin the measure was rejected.

#### GOVERNMENT JUSTIFIED.

"The anticipations on which my Government then acted have been justified. The object of spreading communist ideas has been steadily pursued and communist methods have been regularly employed. We have watched in the great city of Bombay the industrial labouring population brought into a state of great unrest, excited, prone to violence and often deaf to reason, while in Calcutta we have seen a strike (which appears to have no clearly reasoned basis) indefinitely prolonged. These facts are only symptomatic of a more general movement of which many here have direct experience and accordingly my Government have decided to place before you once more the proposals for dealing with communist agents from abroad which were under discussion last session and further to include in the measure power to forfeit or control remittances of money from communist sources abroad which are not without a very appreciable influence on the activities of the communists in this country and their ability to promote and prolong for their own ends these industrial troubles.

#### SIMON COMMISSION.

#### CO-OPERATION VERSUS BOYCOTT

"I must now address myself to some of the broader features of the political situation. I am not concerned to-day to discuss the question whether, as some honourable members think, His Majesty's Government were ill-advised in deciding to recommend to His Majesty the appointment of a Parliamentary Commission or whether—as I think and have more than once said—those were ill-advised who have chosen to adopt a policy of boycott. Although those who followed this course have thus, as I believe, deprived themselves of an opportunity, of which others have availed themselves, to influence the evolution of

India's political future, each of these questions has now become a historical fact which the historian will weigh with fuller knowledge and, it may be, with more impartial judgment than we can bring to bear upon them.

#### MUTUAL AGREEMENT NEEDED.

"But, whatever may be our attitude on these matters of acute and violent controversy, it would be both unwise and unfortunate to allow them to blur the glasses through which we must try to see the future. We meet not long after the conclusion of many important meetings held at the close of the last year, and this is not the occasion for me to attempt finally to appraise the action taken and the words used in the heat of controversy or under the stress of a critical occasion. It would seem evident, however, that what all people must desire is a solution reached by mutual agreement between Great Britain and India. In the present circumstances, the friendly collaboration of Great Britain and India is a requisite and indispensable condition for a solution.

"It is as much unprofitable to deny the right of Parliament to form its free and deliberate judgment on the problem as it would be short-sighted of Parliament to under-rate the importance of trying to reach a solution which might carry the willing assent of political India. And it is at this stage—while we can still have no means of knowing how these matters may emerge from the Parliamentary discussions—that it is proposed to destroy all hope of peaceful and orderly progress towards agreement, unless, by a fixed date, in time, Parliament should have accorded its approval to a particular solution—the result, no doubt, of earnest efforts to grapple with an exceedingly complex problem and, as such, entitled to serious consideration, but one which important sections of opinion in India have not accepted and which was reached through deliberations in which Parliament had no part or voice.

#### PARLIAMENT, A "REGISTRAR"!

"Such procedure savours rather of intolerance and impatience than of the methods of responsible statemanship and would reduce Parliament to being a mere registrar of the decisions of other persons. That position, of course, is one that, in justice to its own obligations, Parliament could never accept. I cannot predict, any more than any honourable member here, when or in what form the report from those whom Parliament has charged with the duty of inquiry may be drawn or whether further inquiry into specific subjects may thereafter be found necessary. In any case, we may assume that His Majesty's Government will, as, indeed, has always been contemplated, desire to subject any proposals that it may then be disposed to make to full discussion with, and the criticism of, those persons, whether official or unofficial, who may be best qualified to contribute to the ultimate solution.

"In a situation, therefore, that must call essentially for qualities of confidence on both sides and for free exchange of opinion on terms honourable to all, I see very clearly that nothing but harm can flow from a threat that, unless a particular condition is fulfilled, which I believe to be mechanically impossible of fulfilment from the outset, an attempt will be made to plunge the country into all the possible chaos of civil disobedience.

"It is quite certain that no discussions of any kind can promise the least hope of success when either party to them approaches the task in the spirit of hostility and suspicion from which such an ultimatum springs.

#### MR. MONTAGU'S DECLARATION.

"I recognise that, although many leaders and schools of political opinion in India will refuse to walk along the dangerous paths of non-co-operation, many of them openly profess distrust of the attitude of Great Britain towards this country. They say, and would have others believe, that hitherto Great Britain has given no sufficient proof of her intention to fulfil the pledge that Mr. Montagu gave on behalf of His Majesty's Government in 1917 and that Great Britain is seeking to forget or deny the high policy there enshrined.

"In conditions more favourable to cool judgment, I suppose that most persons would admit that British India, as we find it to-day, is a British creation and that it is the British power which has, during the last century, held together its constituent parts. If this centripetal influence is immediately, or too suddenly, withdrawn, is it wholly unreasonable to fear that some at any rate of the parts might fly asunder and the dream of a strong united India—a nation among the nations of the world, as we may speak of the British or American nation—would vanish and be destroyed?

#### DECLARATION OF 1917.

#### "PLEDGE WILL BE HONOURED."

"Anxious, as I am, to see the realisation of this dream, I can hardly hope that any words of mine may suffice to disperse the black cloud of unwarranted mistrust that has enshrouded so much of Indian political thought.

"But I tell this Assembly again, and through them India that the declaration of 1917 stands, and will stand, for all time as the solemn pledge of the British people to do all that can be done by one people to assist another to attain full national political stature; the pledge so given will never be dishonoured.

"And, as actions are commonly held more powerful than words, I will add that I should not be standing before you here to-day as Governor-General if I believed that the British people had withdrawn their hand from that solemn covenant. Those, therefore, who preach that a new generation has arisen in England which seeks to explain away the significance of the 1917 declaration are consciously or unconsciously, but not the less really, misrepresenting the purpose of Great Britain and poisoning the well by which the common life of India and Great Britain is supported and sustained.

#### APPEAL FOR TRUST.

"If there are Indians who are thus tempted to mistrust Great Britain, there are no doubt many in Great Britain resentful of what they will know to be an unfounded and ungenerous accusation, who may mistrust some of those who speak for India. But, if we are thus tempted in the 20th century, both India and Great Britain will be judged in the 21st by the degree to which they have refused to lose faith in one another. Though we may differ

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on all other issues, let us not readily or lightly impugn the good faith of one another, for that is to destroy the very foundation of, and all hope of, better things.

"I would add one or two observations of a more personal kind. Whoever holds the position of Viceroy and Governor-General of India is bound, through his office and conscience, by a double duty he is under the plain obligation of seeing that the King's Government in India is carried on with due respect for the law; and in this sphere he may, at any time, be confronted with issues that are more far-reaching than ordinary political controversy and that are indeed fundamental to all society.

#### RESPECT FOR LAW.

"Respect for law is an attribute of civilisation, painfully and hardly won, and a society which lacks it carries within itself the seeds of its own dissolution. Those, therefore, who can guide public opinion in this country are doing no service to India if they accustom her to think lightly of disobedience to constituted authority whatever the title by which such disobedience may be described.

"In another and not less important capacity, the Viceroy and Governor-General stands as an intermediary between India and Great Britain and as such will constantly endeavour to interpret as faithfully as he may the hopes, the feelings, the desires of the Indian people to those who may from time to time compose His Majesty's Government in Great Britain.

#### PLEA FOR CO-OPERATION.

"That duty I have striven, and shall strive, to fulfil to the best of my ability. It is because the smooth adjustment of these different functions imposed on a single individual does not lie with me alone that I have tried to draw frankly the broad outlines of the present situation as I see them. I have desired, so far as I could, to employ no language which might needlessly offend the feelings of those who take a different view; for I long, as for nothing else, to see the political life of India move down orderly channels to its full term of natural development. To achieve that end we all have our own work to do. On each one of us, in our several spheres in this Assembly and outside, rest very heavy responsibilities, and it is my most earnest prayer, for you and for myself, that under God's guidance we may be permitted during the time that lies before us to help one another in the discharge of those responsibilities."