

# THE SPECIAL CONGRESS.

## OPENING DAY.

### OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

BOMBAY, AUGUST 29.—Though the situation in regard to the sittings of the Congress to-day is much cleared by the definite abstention of the particular Moderate leaders, there are still many outstanding questions regarding the modifications of the Reform Scheme and generally its recognition as a step of advance in the path of responsible Government. Informal Conferences are going on and so far as the Nationalists are concerned, their leaders from Madras, Bengal, Poona and the United Provinces are with much anxious deliberations consolidating the fundamental alterations in the scheme variously dealt with in their respective Conferences. The final conclusions agreed upon are being drafted into a resolution by eminent lawyers and it is hoped they will commend themselves to the Subjects Committee and the Congress.

At another informal conference yesterday an exchange of views and discussions took place on the draft resolutions of the Reception Committee which will go before the Subjects Committee. This draft, it is understood, has left alone the preamble as to the whether the reform scheme constitutes a step in advance or not. It strongly concerns the principle of transferred and reserved subjects, suggests changes in several parts of the Indian constitution to render the scheme acceptable even as a first step towards responsible Government. For the rest, it follows the leaders' manifesto issued by Mrs. Besant, except that the Council of State and the Grand Committee are maintained subject to modifications.—

(By wire.)

### FURTHER DETAILS.

BOMBAY, AUGUST 30.—The Special Session of the National Congress which met yesterday was in many respects a unique gathering despite the prognostications of influential abstentions. The Congress was a most representative gathering. Among the Moderates who deemed it their duty to join the Congress after the abortive attempt to bring about co-operation were the Honourable Mr. Kamath, Sir D. Petit, Mr. Dalvi and others. The huge pandal was quite full and there was among all the delegates unmistakable enthusiasm and earnestness. At the conclusion of the Presidential Address, selection to the Subjects Committee took place and the Subjects Committee met at 5-30 in the evening. As already wired in accordance with a motion made and carried, the Subjects Committee will confer with the Council of the All-India Moslem League at 2 P.M. to-day, while the Congress itself assembles at three. Considering however the heavy and serious work before the Committee and the mass of amendments and suggestions that have been proposed for its consideration it is unlikely that the Congress can do more than meet formally to-day and allow the Subjects Committee to finish the joint deliberations in progress. As it is, only two resolutions have been agreed upon and the most important issues arising out of the Reform Scheme remain yet to be considered. The Subjects Committee sits this morning at 7-30 and will go on without intermission until its work is finished. It is understood that the Reception Committee Draft resolutions confine itself to stating the specific modifications required to render the Reform Scheme acceptable even as a first step. As against this, a number of amendments are being prepared and circulated among the members of the Subjects Committee and others for consideration. Apart from Mrs. Besant's draft there is one which seeks to describe the scheme as a liberal advance on the existing state of things. There is another draft resolution in circulation which seeks to affirm the principles of the Congress demands with reference to the scheme and proposes the appointment of a committee to examine with care and see how far, by modification and amendment, it can be brought into conformity with the principles of the Congress League Scheme. There is another set of amendments proposed by Rao Bhadur Vaidya regarding the Council of State, emergency powers of legislation and Communal electorates. There is a separate resolution regarding the declaration of the fundamental rights by the constitution, while another most important amendment, believed to be under active discussion, is that of the Nationalists already referred to. Apart from the resolution on India's loyalty and on war, the only other decision arrived at by the Subjects Committee yesterday which is subject to the result of the joint Conference with the Council of the Moslem League to-day is the re-affirmation of the Congress League resolution on Self Government in 1916 and 1917.—(By wire.)

### THE DAY'S WORK.

(ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA.)

BOMBAY, AUGUST 29.—An attendance of about 10,000 people marked the opening day of the Special Session of the Congress. A few moderates including Sir Dushaw Petit who remained a Member of the Reception Committee, the Raja Sahab of Mahmudabad, Mr. L. Lalubhai Samaldas and Mr. C. V. Mehta were present. Punctually at 1 o'clock the presidential procession entered the pandal amid cries of Bande Mataram. Proceedings commenced with the singing of patriotic songs after which the Hon'ble Mr. V. J. Patel, Chairman of the Reception Committee, delivered his address. Mr. Hasan Imam's election as President was then ratified and he delivered his address. The Congress then elected its Subjects Committee and adjourned until to-morrow.

### ELECTION OF PRESIDENT.

Mrs. Annie Besant being invited by Mr. Patel to propose Syed Hasan Imam to the chair said that the election of a Mussalman to the chair of the Indian National Congress at a critical juncture in the history of India would make Great Britain realize that the understanding arrived at between the Hindus and the Moslems was a real understanding which was growing day by day. From the High Court of Calcutta Syed Hasan Imam had now come to the High Court of the Indian nation to lead and guide the people of India with the same integrity, independence, judicial calmness and strong commonsense which characterised him as the former judge of the Calcutta High Court. The Raja Sahab of Mahmudabad seconded the motion which was supported by the Hon'ble Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, the Hon'ble Mr. M. A. Jinnah, Dewan Bahadur L. A. Govindaraghavaiyer, Dewan Bahadur Harjandra Vishandas, Mr. S. Chakraborty and the Hon'ble Mr. Khaparde. The motion being unanimously carried Mr. Hasan Imam took the presidential chair amid enthusiastic cheers.

### MESSAGES OF SYMPATHY.

The Congress Secretary then read letters and telegrams from various people including Sir Rash Behari Ghose and Sir Subramanya Iyer sympathising with the objects of the Congress. Mr. Imam then delivered his presidential address which was listened to with great attention and which was published in the "Hindu" yesterday.

### CO-OPERATION OF THE MOSLEM LEAGUE.

At the conclusion of his address Syed Hasan Imam announced that the deliberation of the Subjects Committee of the Congress, the members of the Council of the All-India Moslem League will be present and take part in discussing draft resolutions. The Congress meets to-morrow at 3 P.M.

After the address was finished the Congress proceeded for the election of Subject Committee members.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

BOMBAY, AUGUST 29.—At the close of the Presidential Address, before the delegates proceeded to elect members for the Subjects Committee, an extraordinary Resolution is to be moved authorising it to confer with Council of the All-India Moslem League with a view to arriving at a common understanding and joint decisions on behalf of the country on the Reform Scheme.

## MR. SAMARTH'S LETTER.

BOMBAY, August 29.—In reply to an invitation to attend the Round Table Conference held at the Presidency Association rooms to come to an understanding with the moderate party in regard to the reform scheme, Mr. N. M. Samarth wrote the following letter jointly to Mrs. Besant, Mr. Hassan Imam, the Raja of Mahmudabad and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya:—

Madam and Sirs,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 27th August inviting me to take part in to-day's conference. I am thankful to you for your kind invitation, but I beg to be excused for not responding to it as I am convinced that no useful purpose will be served by such a conference as there is a radical and fundamental difference between persons of my way of thinking and those who hold the view that the Montagu Chelmsford scheme is unworthy to be offered by England or to be accepted by India or that it is not even a first step towards responsible government or that it is a fraud on the people of India etc.

I have the honour to be,

Madam and Sirs,

Your most obedient servant,

(Sd.) N. M. Samarth.

## THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.

### PRESS COMMENTS.

BOMBAY, August 29.—The "Times of India" criticising Mr. Hassan Imam's presidential address at the Congress to-day says:—It is not worth while to follow Mr. Imam through his lengthy remarks of unessentials. He trims himself with such acrobatic ease that it would be superfluous for anyone to perform that office for him. The chief contention of his congress is that impatience ought to be gratified and the president advances it. A man who is incapable of seeing the difference between acceptance and rejection, between extremist and moderate as Mr. Imam professes to be should fear nothing except the day when he wakes to the nature of his delusions. There was a young lady who told Whistler that she painted nature as she saw it. To her Whistler replied "Ah but the shock will come when you see nature as you paint it." So it will be with Mr. Imam when his eyes are opened.

### AT CALCUTTA.

CALCUTTA, August 20.—The Anglo Indian dailies of Calcutta this morning criticised the speech of Syed Hassan Imam, President of the Indian National Congress.

The "Empire" says:—The speech is surprisingly moderate thanks probably due to the firm stand made by saner Congressmen who refused to attend the convention.

The "Englishman" says:—There was nothing exciting in the Congress proceedings. The speech of the president was of the usual portentous length and must have required the usual amount of patience to sit through. One of the chiefly notable remarks made by Mr. Imam was that the proposals had placed them under a great disappointment. That gives the key to the proceedings.

The "Statesman" in the course of a lengthy article observed the speech was apparently written with a view to refuting the idea that the promoters of the gathering were inspired by a resolve to reject the proposals. Mr. Imam looks upon the scheme as disappointing and imperfect. A portion of the defects he assigns to the conflicting bureaucratic and Indian interests. The remainder he traces to a distrust of Indian people. Mr. Imam speaks as if he were somebody's representative, but we are at a loss to discover whose. There is no justification for allegations of bad faith. There is no little or monstrous charge that "our industrial backwardness has been positively encouraged in the interest of British manufacturers". Mr. Imam's remarks on fiscal policy are indeed a tissue of misrepresentation and if there were any "distrust" in the report it would be vindicated by the temper which is revealed in this passage and elsewhere.

The "Indian News" says:—The speech is couched in moderate and temperate language. The arguments advanced by Mr. Imam who attempts to disguise his hostility to the Government under a stream of polished platitudes and who seeks to divide British and Anglo-Indian opinion by playing off non-officials against official classes, are likely to fall very flat upon the ears of those who while ready to concede that some change in the system of Government is necessary, are thoroughly convinced that to enable those changes to have a beneficial effect on all varied interest that are each fighting for with their own hand, it is essential that British supremacy in matters of vital import must be maintained.

The Indian papers reserved comments.