

THE INTERNMENT
OF
MRS. ANNIE BESANT



MRS. ANNIE BESANT

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FOREWORD

A certain notoriety has been given to the internment of Mrs. Besant with, however, an almost entire absence in our press of reliable information concerning the actual occurrences and conditions connected therewith.

In view of the consequent ignorance and misunderstanding of the subject the Canada India League has thought it well to put together in this pamphlet some extracts from the English and Indian Press which deal with the matter. These are quite inadequate to cover the situation but will serve to bring out important phases of the question and perhaps to guide those who are interested to a further study.

THE INTERNMENT OF MRS. BEAUFORT

TORONTO, CANADA,

October, 1917.

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THE INTERNMENT OF MRS. BESANT.

SOME EXTRACTS FROM BRITISH AND INDIAN PAPERS.

Mr. H. Baillie Weaver, General Secretary of the Theosophical Society of England and Wales writes in the editorial pages of two numbers (August and September) of the Vahan the official organ of that section as follows:

July 8th, 1917.

News has reached this country that the Madras Government has made certain Orders on Mrs. Besant, Mr. G. S. Arundale and Mr. B. P. Wadia. It seems to me to be so important that all Fellows of the Theosophical Society, but particularly those who belong to this National Society, should be in full possession of the facts of the case that I intend to set forth the position at length.

The Orders in question have been made under an Indian Act (No. IV. of 1915), which authorizes action of the kind not only against any person, who in the opinion of any civil or military authority, has acted or is acting in a manner prejudicial to the public safety, but also against any person who is about to act in that manner. I do not know whether or how far the Madras authorities were moved to action by some overt act of Mrs. Besant or her colleagues, but under the law as it now stands they were not bound to wait for any such, seeing that they are empowered to take action against any person who they think may be going to commit an act of which they will disapprove. No preliminary proceedings in any Court of Law are necessary before Orders of the kind are made under the Act, and the Act expressly provides that no Order under it shall be called in question in any Court of Law.

In order that F.T.S. may see for themselves that in summarising the relevant paragraphs of the Act I have correctly represented their meaning, I give the same in full, as follows, viz.:

Sec. 2. (I) The Governor-General in Council may make rules for the purpose of securing the public safety and the defence of British India and as to the powers and duties of public servants and other persons in furtherance of that purpose. In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power rules under this section may be made:

(f) To empower any civil or military authority where, in the opinion of such authority, there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that any person has acted, is acting or is about to act in a manner prejudicial to the public safety, to direct that such person shall not enter, reside or remain in any area specified in writing by such authority, or that such person shall reside and remain in any area so specified, or that he shall conduct himself in such manner or abstain from such acts or take such order with any property in his possession or under his control as such authority may direct.

Sec. II. No Order under this Act shall be called in question in any Court and no suit, prosecution or other legal proceeding shall lie against any person for anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done under this Act.

In the issue of the *Gazette of India*, of the 11th December, 1915, are printed the rules which were made by the Governor-General in Council under the above quoted Sec. 2. Such rules are numbered 86 in that issue and Rule 3, under which the orders against Mrs. Besant and her colleagues were made, closely follows the wording of the above quoted subsection (f) of Sec. 2. . . .

The *Times* correspondent cabled a summary of the orders which was printed in the issue of the 19th June last, and has never been called in question by the India Office, though several questions have, as I shall presently show, been asked about the orders in the House of Commons. The summary must therefore be taken to be perfectly accurate. It is as follows, viz.:

In the exercise of the powers conferred on him by Rule 3 of the Defence of India (Consolidation) Rules, 1915, the Governor in Council has directed the service of Orders on Mrs. Annie Besant, Mr. G. S. Arundale and Mr. B. B. Wadia, pro-

hibiting them from attending or taking any part in any meeting, from delivering any lectures, from making any speech, and from publishing or procuring the publication of any writings or speech composed by them, placing their correspondence under censorship, and directing, further, that after the expiry of a brief prescribed period they shall cease to reside in the city of Madras or the district of Chingleput (a large town near Madras), and shall take up their residence and remain within any one of the following six areas: Nilgiri district, Coimbatore district, Bellary district, the Palni Hills, the Shevaroy Hills and the municipal town of Vizagapatam.

The orders have, I understand, already been obeyed so far as place of residence is concerned. . . . Whether they are allowed to see each other, I do not know. I also do not know what funds are at their disposal. I presume that all their private resources have been impounded by the Madras Government and that they have been put on an allowance. I am told that the usual course is to allow a rupee (about 1s. 4d. at ordinary rates of exchange) a day, which seems a small amount, even if the interned persons be (as are our President and her two colleagues) vegetarians, and prices be lower in India than here. Perhaps my information is incorrect upon the point: Fellows will join with me in hoping so.

Fellows will remember how constantly Mrs. Besant has reminded us that neutrality of the Society must in all circumstances be observed and that its organisation and property must not be involved in any political agitation. I entirely agree both from the standpoint of law and of expediency that this is the right view to take and I have done my best during all these anxious months to give due effect to it. Consequently, if these orders have been clearly limited to the political activities of Mrs. Besant and her colleagues, I should not have departed officially from my attitude of passivity.

Obviously, however, they are not so limited: on the contrary they clearly extend to non-political activities as well: in fact they are so wide in their scope as to constitute a bar to all activity of any kind. It is as if the Government of Madras had said to Mrs. Besant and her colleagues: "Because you may say or write something we shall not like, you shall not say or write anything: you shall not even publish anything you have already said or written even before our Orders were served upon you."

In these circumstances I felt at full liberty to take action and I called an emergency meeting of the Executive Committee of this National Society, which was held on Monday, the 25th ult. in the afternoon and was followed at 8 p.m. by a special meeting of the members resident in or near London, such being in my judgment the best way of reaching the greatest number of members in the shortest space of time. Both these meetings were splendid and inspiring gatherings and at both the following resolution was passed with great enthusiasm, in the case of the Committee meeting without a dissentient and in the other case with only one.

That this meeting of the London members of the Theosophical Society in England and Wales most earnestly protests against the Orders of the Governor of Madras in Council made on the 16th June, 1917 against Mrs. Besant, Mr. Arundale and Mr. Wadia in so far as they constitute a bar to their taking part in non-political work, but particularly in the work of the Theosophical Society: it declares that in preventing those persons, but particularly Mrs. Besant, from speaking or writing in the future and even from re-publishing speeches and books composed and published in the past, those Orders deal a very serious blow against the operations of the Theosophical Society in the United Kingdom as well as in India: it maintains that consequently they constitute in fact, whatever may have been the intentions of their authors, a very serious attack on religious and civil liberty; and it calls on H.E. the Governor of Madras to cancel such orders, and in default of his doing so on H. E. the Viceroy to disallow them without loss of time.

At the members' meeting it was agreed that I should take the following steps, viz.:

(1) Send by post a copy of the resolution to H.M. The King-Emperor, the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for India and cable a copy to H.E. the Viceroy of India and H.E. the Governor of Madras;

(2) Ask Mr. Austen Chamberlain in my letter enclosing the copy of the resolution to receive a deputation upon it consisting of the members of the Executive Committee;

(3) Get a report of the meetings circulated throughout the press by means of the Press Association;

(4) Get a letter setting forth the facts of the case printed in some of the leading newspapers of different political shades;

(5) Send a copy of the resolution to each of the Lodges in the National Society suggesting that, if it approve of the terms of it, it should pass a resolution on similar lines and

send it to the persons to whom I was sending it and also to the local M.P. urging him to take action to get the Orders rescinded;

(6) Invite every member of the National Society individually to write to his or her Parliamentary Representative in the same sense, women being as suitable as men for the purpose in view of the probability of the concession to them in a very short time of the Parliamentary Franchise; and

(7) Arrange as soon as convenient and advisable a public demonstration, so as to emphasize the determination of the members of this National Society to get these Orders cancelled.

All these things I have done, so far as I have been able to do them.

The King has replied to my letter and informed me that he has sent it on to the Indian Office: the Prime Minister has so far vouchsafed no reply whatever, though I wrote to him on the 26th ult.: Mr. Austen Chamberlain has acknowledged receipt of my letter but refuses to receive a deputation. I have received so far no communication from the Viceroy or the Governor of Madras.

On the 3rd inst. I wrote and sent by hand to the *Times* the following letter, viz.:

Sir,—In your issue of the 19th June, you publish particulars of Orders served by direction of the Governor of Madras in Council on Mrs. Besant, Mr. G. S. Arundale and Mr. Wadia, which prohibit them

“from attending or taking part in any meeting, from
“delivering any lecture, from making any speech, and
“from publishing or procuring the publication of any
“writings or speech composed by them, placing their
“correspondence under censorship,”

and confine them to residence in certain specified districts of India, which do not include the district in which their homes and the Headquarters of the Theosophical Society at large are situate, viz., Adyar, near Madras.

Had the Madras Government proceeded against Mrs. Besant and her colleagues in connection with their political work only, I should, in my official capacity as General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in England and Wales, have kept silence. Mrs. Besant herself, despite all her eagerness to promote agitation in favour of Home Rule for India which, rightly or wrongly, she believes will lead to that closer union between India and the rest of the British Empire she so passionately desires, has always declared her intention not to identify the Society with that agitation or in fact any other

political movement, and I am bound to follow her example.

But obviously the Madras Government has gone far beyond any step of the kind. It has excluded Mrs. Besant and her colleagues from the Headquarters of the Society at Adyar and so made it impossible for them to take any further part in the local conduct of its affairs: it has further gagged those persons, forbidding them to speak or write about anything in the future, or even to publish anything they have spoken or written in the past on any subject whatever. By so doing, the Madras Government has stopped the educational and theosophical as well as the political work of those persons and dealt a severe blow to several movements which have nothing whatever to do with politics.

In the name of the Theosophical Society in England and Wales I protest most earnestly and strongly against these Orders, which are not only a most uncalled for attack on a Society which has committed no wrong, but constitute an absolutely unjustifiable infringement of the civil and religious liberties of every one of its officials and members.

I beg you, Sir, to extend to me the hospitality of your columns in order to voice this protest. The Act under which the Orders are issued provides that they shall not be called in question in a Court of Law. Further, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for India, has refused to receive any deputation on the subject, and apparently no notice is going to be taken by the Prime Minister or the Viceroy or the Governor of Madras of the resolution passed by the Executive Committee and a meeting of the London members of my Society, which I sent by post or cable to them a few days ago and which called for immediate withdrawal of those orders.

Yours, etc.,

H. BAILLIE-WEAVER,
General Secretary.

The Editor of the *Times* kept that letter until the next day and he then returned it with the information that he could not see his way to insert it.

A letter in identical language (except as to the first line) has been sent to the following daily and weekly newspapers, viz.: *Manchester Guardian*, *New Statesman*, *The Nation*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Westminster Gazette*, *Daily Chronicle*, *Labour Leader*, *India Daily News*, *Christian Commonwealth*.

So far very few of the dailies have put it in, but at least three of the weeklies have done so.

I have not as yet received a full report of the number of lodges which have taken action but already I know that some

have and I also know that good has already resulted from individual pressure on parliamentary representatives.

Action has not been confined to this National Society, its lodges or members. A number of questions have been asked in the House of Commons, and I take this opportunity to offer my best thanks in the name of this National Society to those members of Parliament who have been good enough to speak up for our beloved and revered President, and particularly Commander Wedgwood who has asked more questions than anyone else. I trust I may express this gratitude without doing violence to the neutrality of this National Society, albeit the questions asked raised political issues which I am not at liberty to discuss. The following report copied verbatim from the *Times* of the 27th of June last gives an idea of the sort of questions which have been asked and the sort of answers which have been given.

Mr. Chamberlain (West Birmingham) said, in answer to Commander Wedgwood (Newcastle-under-Lyme) that the Madras Government had prohibited Mrs. Besant from publishing and speaking in public, and had required her to take up her residence in any one of six specified areas.

Commander Wedgwood.—Was this internment of Mrs. Besant referred home and had it the Secretary of State's approval before it was promulgated?

Mr. Chamberlain.—No, Sir. The Madras Government took action on their own responsibility within the powers and duties conferred on them. It was not referred to me, but I approve their act. ((Hear, hear.))

Commander Wedgwood.—Is the right hon. gentleman aware that it is action such as this which tends to strengthen the Home Rule movement in India?

Mr. Chamberlain.—No, Sir. Mrs. Besant has been engaged in a dangerous political agitation, which might become highly dangerous and even disastrous to India. Her operations have come under the notice of more than one Governor, and I cannot for one moment indicate that any doubt has arisen as to the course the Government of Madras has taken in this case.

Mr. Snowden (Blackburn, Lab.).—Is it a dangerous thing to advocate an extension of self-government for India by constitutional means?

Mr. Chamberlain.—That is not what I said and there is no colour for it in the answer that I gave.

Mr. Snowden.—What other offence has Mrs. Besant committed than to advocate Home Rule for India by perfectly constitutional methods, and is it not a fact that throughout she has deprecated anything in the nature of sedition or illegal act?

Mr. Chamberlain.—She has taken part in an agitation and pursued that agitation by means which, in the opinion of the authorities in India and in my opinion, are dangerous to the peace of British India.

Commander Wedgwood.—Does the right hon. gentleman imagine you can suppress an agitation in this way for freedom?

Mr. Chamberlain.—I have no desire to suppress any movement for freedom.

July 23, 1917.

The following questions were asked and orally answered in the House of Commons on the 11th July. I copy from the Official Verbatim Report of that date.

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY (MRS. BESANT).

Sir George Touche asked the Secretary of State for India whether, in connection with the Order in Council of the Governor of Madras prohibiting Mrs. Besant, the president, and Mr. Arundale and Mr. Wadia, two other members of the Theosophical Society, from taking part in any meeting or publishing any writings, placing their correspondence under censorship, and limiting their residence to certain specified areas, excluding Madras, where the headquarters of the Theosophical Society are situated, he and the Government of India have considered the practicability of discriminating between political agitation and activities which require restriction and writings and teachings on theosophy and religion and of so dealing with the two classes of separate activities as to permit Mrs. Besant and her associates to carry on their work in connection with the Theosophical Society while abstaining from political agitation?

Mr. Edmund Harvey asked the Secretary of State for India whether he has received any protest as to the action of the Government of Madras in prohibiting Mrs. Besant from attending any meeting, delivering any lecture or speech, or publishing any writings, and in placing her correspondence under censorship and confining her place of residence to certain districts; and whether he will take steps to secure a revision of the Order of the Governor in Council, by which these restrictions are imposed?

Mr. Chamberlain.—Yes, Sir. The authorities in India are, like myself, anxious to make this discrimination, as to the

possibility of which I made special inquiry, and the Madras Government offered to relax their Orders so far as purely religious or theosophical writings or teachings are concerned. I understand that this concession has been refused by the parties to whom it was offered on the ground, *inter alia*, that it was impossible to distinguish between their theosophical and religious writings on the one hand and their political agitation on the other. Mrs. Besant's communication was, I am informed, violently worded and emphasized the unity of the Theosophical Society with the political aims of other organizations. I see no reason to intervene further in this matter, in which, as I have already explained, the Madras Government is exercising powers vested in it by law.

Mr. Snowden.—Are we to understand from the use of the words "political agitation" in the reply, that it is an offence in India if it is conducted by constitutional means?

Mr. Chamberlain.—No, Sir.

Mr. Snowden.—Will the right hon. Gentleman give this House particulars of the charges against Mrs. Besant and her colleagues, stating wherein they have conducted an agitation in an unconstitutional way?

Mr. Chamberlain.—I have not myself yet received particulars from the Madras Government or from the Government of India. The only communications I have had have been telegraphic communications, the substance of which I have already communicated to the House.

Mr. Snowden.—That being so, why has the right hon. Gentleman associated himself in this House with the action of the Government of Madras?

Mr. Chamberlain.—Because the Government of India and the Government of Madras are responsible for the preservation of law and order and the security of persons and property in that country, and I have confidence in the discretion with which they exercise the powers with which they have been invested.

Mr. Herbert Samuel.—Will my right hon. Friend consider, when the dispatches have been received by mail, whether it will be practicable to lay on the Table of the House any Papers which will give the reasons for the action taken, and describe precisely what the action was?

Mr. Chamberlain.—Yes, Sir; I will certainly consider that. I will make no promise as to laying Papers, but I will certainly consider it.

Mr. King.—Has the right hon. Gentleman not had example enough in connection with Mesopotamia not to trust too implicitly in the Indian Government? Has he not suffered himself from that very thing?

On the 13th July, Mr. Jinarajadasa dispatched to Major Graham Pole the following cable, viz.:

Order served sixteenth prohibiting Besant publishing books by her now or already published or for which has written foreword introduction Government now offers permit publish solely Theosophical Religious copies provided each examined passed official deputed Government. Besant refuses discriminate any work hers not spiritual, therefore rejects humiliating offer, stop all sale Besants books also Arundale's. Acknowledge receipt.

I think that there is a mistransmission in this cable of one word and that altogether the meaning is a little obscure. I have carefully gone over it and somewhat amplified its wording and I now append what I believe to be its exact meaning.

The order served on the 16th June prohibited Mrs. Besant from publishing books written by her, whether new or already published, or books of either category for which she has written the foreword or introduction. The Government now offers to permit her to publish copies of works solely on theosophical and/or religious subjects, provided each work has been examined and passed by an official deputed by the Government. Mrs. Besant refuses to discriminate against any work of hers as not being spiritual and rejects the humiliating offer. Stop all sale of Mrs. Besant's books and also of Arundale's. Acknowledge receipt.

On the 18th July, Major Graham Pole sent to Mr. Jinarajadasa the following cable in reply to his preceding cable of the 13th July, viz.:

Cable received. Madras Orders have no effect here. Do you wish me to prohibit Theosophical Publishing House from selling Besant's and Arundale's books. We are taking other steps but this may hinder us here. Please reply.

On the 19th July, Mr. Jinarajadasa sent the following cable to me, viz.:

Chamberlain's statement that president Theosophical Society in letter identifies society with organizations with political aims should be justified by publishing her actual words. We know such statement is contrary (to) all she (has) said (and) written since (she) became president. She cannot publish under internment orders (and therefore) cannot repudiate (the) statement. Press for publication (of her) letter so that (the) statement may be justified. We owe it to her (and to) the Society.

On the 20th July, Mr. Aria (Recording Secretary at Adyar) sent the following cable to me:

Executive Committee cabling Premier demanding publication President's unmutilated letter to prevent irritation large Theosophical membership in allied neutral countries caused by Chamberlain's misrepresentation.

The Executive Committee referred to in Mr. Aria's cable is the Executive Committee of the international Theosophical Society or, as we more commonly call it, the Theosophical Society at large which has its headquarters at Adyar, Madras.

On the 23rd July I sent to Mr. Jinarajadasa the following cable in answer to his preceding cable of the 19th July, viz.:

Thanks cable 19th—everything possible will be done.

Members may be quite sure that Major Graham Pole, who is acting in this matter as Mrs. Besant's solicitor, and I will leave no stone unturned, in order to arrive at the exact truth. We do indeed, all of us, as Mr. Jinarajadasa says, owe it to our President and to the Society to do our utmost in the matter. I should like, however, here and now to place on record my absolute conviction that Mrs. Besant never "emphasized the unity of the Theosophical Society with the political aims of other organizations," as, prompted by the Indian officials, Mr. Chamberlain affirmed in his answer above quoted.

A charming telegram has been received from Sir Rabindranath Tagore, but as it is on political lines I think I ought not to give the text of it.

(In the interval between the two issues of the Vahan Mr. Austen Chamberlain, owing to well known circumstances, resigned his position as Secretary of State for India and was succeeded by Mr. E. S. Montagu)

Aug. 20, 1917.

On the day after I penned the addition to my last "Outlook," i.e. on the 24th July, I wrote and sent the following letter, viz.:

To the Rt. Hon. E. S. MONTAGU, H. M. Principal Secretary of State for India, India Office, Downing Street, London.

SIR,—I shall be greatly obliged if you will kindly accord me an interview in connection with the case of Mrs. Besant and her two colleagues.

I am the General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in this country and, as such, I am in a position to assure you that, wherever the Society is represented (and doubtless you know that it is an international organization with national branches or presidential agencies in the allied countries as well as in other parts of the world) pain and bewilderment are being felt by reason of the official statements, which are being made against our president.

In particular the allegations voiced by Mr. Chamberlain on the 11th inst. in the House of Commons, absolutely contrary as they are to everything which Mrs. Besant has ever spoken or written as president of the Theosophical Society, have aroused wide-spread astonishment and indignation. Such allegations—unless accompanied by convincing proof of their correctness—cannot fail to endanger very seriously the reputation of the British and Indian Governments for fairness and straightforward dealing.

Can you possibly make it convenient to receive me, in company with Mrs. Besant's solicitor who has recently been in India and is especially well-acquainted with the facts of the case, on Monday the 30th inst. some time in the afternoon?

May I beg you to reply to my country address as above instead of to my official one?

I have the honour, etc.,
(Signed) H. BAILLIE-WEAVER.

To this letter I received the following answer:

28th July, 1917.

SIR,—In reply to your letter of the 24th instant I am directed to say that the Secretary of State for India will be glad to see you personally at 3.30 p.m. on 30th July.

He would prefer, in the first instance at any rate, to see you alone.

I am, Sir, etc.,
(Signed) J. W. HOLDERNESS.

On the 30th July I saw Mr. Montagu. He received me most courteously and listened with careful attention while I urged upon him the desirability of supplying me with an exact copy of Mrs. Besant's answer to the offer of the Madras Government, upon which Mr. Secretary Chamberlain's statements on the 11th July, in the House of Commons (quoted in my last "Outlook") purported to be based. In the upshot, Mr. Montagu informed me that he had cabled to India for that document and would on receipt of it send it to me. I thought I had on that occasion also asked for the Government's offer to which it was a reply, but apparently I had not made myself clear upon the

point. In the course of the conversation, Mr. Montagu mentioned the general political situation and I did my best at his request to convey to his mind the motives actuating Mrs. Besant in the conduct which has led to her internment, so far as I am myself acquainted with them.

On the 2nd inst., I wrote and dispatched the following letter, viz.:

To the Rt. Hon. THE HON. E. S. MONTAGU, etc.

SIR,—When I was talking with you on Monday, the 30th ult., I referred to emphatic pronouncements by Mrs. Besant against any action calculated to compromise the neutrality of the Theosophical Society. You asked me to give you instances of such. Accordingly I send you herewith two extracts, the one from *New India* newspaper and the other from the *Theosophist*, both of which publications at the dates in question belonged to Mrs. Besant, though the former, as you know, has now passed out of her ownership. I have no copies here of the issues of the said publications and therefore cannot send them to you to-day, but I will with pleasure cause them to be forwarded to you if you so desire, and meanwhile I certify the extracts as correct.

In thinking over the conversation I had with you on the reason animating Mrs. Besant in her attitude towards the Indian Government before she was interned, it struck me that that reason might well be summed up in the following sentence, viz.: "Much as the Indian Government may object to what I am doing, it will object still more to what will happen if I do not do it." As however I told you on Monday, I have never discussed the matter with Mrs. Besant either by word of mouth or by letter and therefore I think that it would be of great advantage if you would consent to receive Major Graham Pole, either alone or in company with me as you may prefer. Major Graham Pole is a solicitor who was serving in Flanders until he was invalided out of the army, and he is now acting professionally for Mrs. Besant. He is a personal friend of hers and at the end of last year went out to India for the express purpose of taking her instructions on a number of matters, and he knows her views and feelings, as few do, on Indian politics as on other subjects.

I have the honour, Sir to be, etc.

(Then follows correspondence between Mr. Baillie-Weaver and the India office in which he acknowledges the receipt of Mrs. Besant's letter to the Madras Government and expresses his disappointment at not receiving also the Madras Government's offer of July 3rd, apparently designated G.O. 884.)

On the 6th inst., news reached me that the President was

ill. I telephoned to the India office, and begged to see Mr. Montagu as soon as possible. He was away, but on Wednesday, the 8th inst., he received me. I explained to him that I had not come with reference to the matter of our previous correspondence, as I craved leave not to discuss Mrs. Besant's answer to the offer of the Government until I had seen the exact wording of the latter, assuming, of course, that he was going to supply me with it. He said he would, adding that, unless there were some unexpected objection, he intended to publish the whole of the facts relating to the internment of Mrs. Besant.

I then mentioned to him the news as to the President's illness, and he promised to cable at once to Lord Pentland, the Governor of Madras, to supply further information and take all needful measures.

No further news being received from any quarter, Miss Bright on the 9th inst. cabled to Mr. Jinarajadasa. This cable was held up by the military censor for a reason of which I am ignorant. On the 12th inst. I wrote to Mr. Montagu and begged him to give the necessary instructions to remove the embargo on the aforesaid cable of Miss Bright and enable it to go through and he answered.

On the 14th inst., Miss Bright received the following letter from the military censor:

MADAM,—Your letter of the 11th instant has been forwarded to me, and in reply I would inform you that after necessary explanation had been afforded, the telegram to which you refer was authorised for transmission to India.

Yours truly, (Signed) G. WRIGHT,
(Colonel) Military Censor.

On the same date I received the following letter from the India Office:

WHITEHALL, S.W. 1, 14th August, 1917.

DEAR SIR,—Mr. Montagu asks me to inform you that he has communicated with the Governor of Madras, who informs him that Mrs. Besant has accepted an invitation to change her place of residence, and is proceeding with her two colleagues early next week to Coimbatore. The services of the District Medical Officer have been placed at their disposal.

Yours Faithfully, (Signed) ALAN PARSONS

On the 16th inst., Miss Bright received a cable from Mr. Jinjaradasa informing her that during his visit to Ootacamund at the beginning of the present month he had found that the President was eating and sleeping badly and that her vitality was low, but that Mr. Ramaswami had seen her later, viz. on the 11th inst., and found her condition much improved.

On the 16th inst., I wrote and dispatched the following letter, viz.:

August 16th, 1917.

ALAN PARSONS, ESQ., etc.

DEAR SIR,—I am obliged for your letter of the 14th inst.

Will you please give my compliments and best thanks to Mr. Montagu for the information he instructed you to send me, and also for his intervention in the matter of the censored telegram, which has now been allowed through?

Yours faithfully, etc.

On the 18th inst., I received a communication from Mr. Jinarajadasa dated the 20th ult., from which it is apparent that Messrs. Arundale and Wadia are suffering from their internment as well as the President, who, however, suffers from it the most, experiencing an acute sense of confinement, and feeling the sudden cessation of her intense activities like a mental blow. "There is the atmosphere," said Mr. Jinarajadasa, "of being bottled up, and, as she told one or two people, she feels like a lion in a cage." She is, of course, able to bear such a blow as this in a way that others of like temperament and activities could not hope to rise to, but nevertheless we must all strive our utmost, in our several ways, to procure her release and that of her two colleagues as soon as possible.

It appears that the Government of Madras has now published Mrs. Besant's answer to its offer above referred to. It would indeed have been foolish any longer to withhold it, if only because Mr. Montagu had cabled for it in order to give it to me. That Government has not, however, so far as I can make out, published the wording of its offer to her, which is the document Mr. Montagu has promised to supply to me as above stated. When I receive it, I will publish it and the answer to it in the VAHAN, and will then comment upon both documents.

In closing this subject for the present I am glad of the opportunity to say how great have been the courtesy and consideration shown me by Mr. Montagu and his officials, and how much I appreciate them.

I trust that all Lodges are already well advanced with their preparations for Mrs. Besant's birthday on the 1st October, which this year we shall celebrate under very special conditions calculated to stir the emotions of every fellow of the Society as perhaps they have never at the celebration of Mrs. Besant's birthday been stirred before. In addition to what I wrote in my "Outlook" in the July VABAN I suggest that all Fellows should in preparation for the keeping of the birthday have the President frequently in their thoughts at odd moments during every day, as well as during meditation, and should send out to her full love and sympathy whether they approve of her political activities or not. She is suffering for what she conceives to be the only right course of conduct she can take, and is setting us, as ever, that wonderful example of selfless devotion to duty, which—great though be her other benefits to us—is the most precious of the gifts she has given us.

NEUTRALITY OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

During the last few years Mrs. Besant has made many statements on the platform and in various theosophical publications expressing and defining her views on the work of the Theosophical Society; the liberty of members and her own rights as an individual. The following are typical extracts from these writings:

Presidential Address, Adyar, Dec. 26, 1914.

I want to ask each of you, as members of the Society to guard the liberty of thought within the Society as its most precious possession, and to guard that neutrality of the Society of which I spoke in my public lecture. Remember we have members of every religion and every line of work; we have a number of public servants, who would be compromised if the Government here identified the Theosophical Society as a whole with any special line of political work and propaganda. It is our duty to protect them, and to guard the Society for the future. . . . Make the public understand that nothing your President does, outside or inside her Theosophical work, binds

the Theosophical Society; that even within it her translation of Theosophy is not endorsed by all, and that every member has an equal right with hers to translate Theosophy in his own way.

Theosophist, Jan. 1915.

And since the T.S. is international, it can only suggest great principles, and leave its members to apply them for themselves. It can lay down Brotherhood, but whether that shall be cultivated and made practical by Individualism or Socialism, by Toryism, Liberalism, or Radicalism, by Monarchy or Republicanism, by Autocracy, Aristocracy or Democracy—on all this the T. S. pronounces no opinions. It can only say: "Son, go and work for Brotherhood; think out the best way for yourself, and act."

Theosophist, March 1916.

The question is again raised as to the "neutrality" of the Society in politics, and I am asked for a "ruling." . . .

For the "ruling," for what it may be worth—seeing that no member of the Society need accept it—I think that the T.S. as a body has no right to declare on one side or another in any political, social, educational, or doctrinal question; that it must not collectively declare itself monarchical, republican, autocratic, anarchic, absolutist or democratic, nor carry on any propaganda on behalf of any of these views. That it must not declare itself Individualist, Socialist or Communist, in favour of, or against child-marriage, in favour of, or against perpetual widowhood, woman suffrage, vivisection or anti-vivisection, vaccination or anti-vaccination, and so on. That, educationally, it must not declare itself for or against religious and moral education, for or against free and compulsory education. That, religiously, it must not declare itself Hindu, Parsi, Buddhist, Christian, Muhammadan, nor must it even make the doctrines it exists to proclaim such as the possibility of the knowledge of God, re-incarnation, karma, etc.,—binding on its members. Its collective attitude is that of study, not of belief and believers and unbelievers of every kind are admitted, without challenge, on an equal footing. Even a unanimous vote could not make belief in re-incarnation a condition of admission. As a Society, in its collective capacity, it is bound by its Memorandum of Association, laying down its objects, and by that Memorandum only, with the Bye-laws as passed in 1905, and amended since from time to time. As regards Lodges they have somewhat greater freedom, since any seven members may make a Lodge with its bye-laws, and may restrict the membership of their Lodge; we have Buddhist and Musalman Lodges, Ladies' Lodges, and so on. I have no power to refuse to charter them, because they choose to limit their membership. I trust that opinion is plain.

But if I am asked, ought a President, or a General Secretary, or a Fellow, to carry on a vigorous propaganda for or against any of the above views, or any others, my answer is equally clear. That no man loses his liberty as a man and a citizen by becoming a Fellow of the Theosophical Society, and that if he be elected to any office therein, his liberty is not curtailed, unless he accepts restrictions laid down in the by-laws regulating the conduct of the holder of the office, or any special conditions agreed to before his election. It is of the essence of the Society to have men and women of all opinions working it in, working together for the objects of the Society, and free to work against each other on anything outside those objects. Colonel Olcott and Madame H. P. Blavatsky took Pansil and became Buddhists, joining a particular religion, and the Colonel carried on an active Buddhist Propaganda and organized Buddhist Schools. He was accused of "Compromising the neutrality of the Society," but he claimed his right to his views and his practice as a free man, although he was President, and firmly maintained his individual liberty. He was, I think, perfectly right, and I hold further, that Lodges are perfectly free to discuss any subject they please, to invite any lecturer, to study and debate any question.

ibid. Sept. 1916.

I have not given one political address under the auspices of any Lodge of the T. S., nor circulated through its organization one political pamphlet. When an effort was made to send out from the Lodges a resolution on my exclusion from the Bombay Presidency, I stopped it as unconstitutional the moment I heard of it.

MRS. BESANTS LOYALTY

Although she has ever been a champion of right and the uncompromising opponent of all oppression, no question has ever been raised with regard to Mrs. Besant's loyalty. She has ever labored in her own way for the best interests of the British Empire. The slogan of the two Indian papers founded and edited by her was "For God, Crown and Country." Her patriotic feelings and her views in regard to the British as a world empire are well shown in the following extract from an editorial written by her for THE THEOSOPHIST, November 1914:—

"(Great Britain) . . . embodies—though as yet but partially realized—the Ideal of Freedom; of ever-increasing Self-Government; of Peoples rising into power and self-development along their own lines; of a supreme Government 'broad-based upon the People's Will,' of fair and just treatment of undeveloped races, aiding not enslaving them; it embodies the embryo of the splendid Democracy of the future; of the

new civilization, co-operative, peaceful, progressive, artistic, just and free—a Brotherhood of Nations, whether the Nations be inside or outside the World Empire. This is the Ideal; and that Great Britain has set her feet in the path which leads to it is proved, not only by her past interior history with its struggles towards Liberty, but also by her granting of autonomy to her colonies, her formation of the beginnings of Self-Government in India, her constantly improving attitude towards the undeveloped races—as in using the Salvation Army to civilize the criminal tribes in India—all promising advances towards the Ideal. Moreover, she has ever sheltered the oppressed exiles, flying to her shores for refuge against their tyrants; the names of Kossuth, Mazzini, Kropotkin, shine out gloriously as witnesses in her favour; she has fought against the slave-trade and well-nigh abolished it. And at the present moment she is fighting in defence of keeping faith with those too small to exact it; in defence of Treaty obligations and the sanctity of a Nation's pledged word; in defence of National Honour; of Justice to the weak; of that Law, obedience to which by the strong States is the only guarantee of future Peace, the only safeguard of Society against the tyranny of brute strength. For all this England is fighting, when she might have stood aside, selfish and at ease, watching her neighbours tearing each other into pieces, waiting until their exhaustion made it possible for her to impose her will. Instead of thus remaining, she has sprung forward, knight-errant of Liberty, servant of Duty. With possible danger of Civil War behind her, with supposed possible revolt in South Africa and India, with shameful bribes offered for the standing aside, she spurned all lower reasonings, and, springing to her feet, sent out a lion's roar of defiance to the breakers of treaties, uttered a ringing shout for help to her peoples flung her little army to the front—a veritable David against Goliath—to gain time, time, that the hosts might gather, to hold the enemy back at all costs, let die who might of her children; called for men to her standard, men from the nobles, from the professions, from the trades, men from the plough, from the forge, from the mine, from the furnace; and this not for gain—she has naught to gain from the War—but because she loved Liberty, Honour, Justice, Law, better than life or treasure, that she counted glorious Death a thousand-fold more desirable than shameful existence brought by cowardly ease. For this, the Nations bless her; for this, her dying sons adore her; for this, History shall applaud her; for this, shall the World-Empire be hers with the consent of all Free Peoples, and she shall be the Protector, not the Tyrant, of Humanity Because these things are so, because the fate of the next Age of the World turns on the choice made now by the Nations, I call on all who are pledged to Universal Brotherhood, all Theosophists the world over to stand for Right against Might, Law against Force, Freedom against Slavery, Brotherhood against Tyranny."

THE GOVERNOR AND MRS. BESANT

The following account has been given by Mrs. Besant to the Press of her interview with the Governor of Madras on June 16, prior to the service upon her of the order of internment:—

Lord Pentland.—I have come down from Ooty, Mrs. Besant, in order to show my great consideration for you and to speak to you myself and give you an opportunity for consideration.

Mrs. Besant.—What am I to consider?

Lord Pentland.—That is for you to decide, Mrs. Besant. You may ask me for time to consider and see me again tomorrow. You might like to consult your friends.

Mrs. Besant.—The only two people I shall consult would be Sir Subramania and Mr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, and, as we know each other's opinions, I do not see what would be gained by consulting.

Lord Pentland.—If you would like to ask for time for consideration, I will give it to you.

Mrs. Besant.—For what reason am I to be interned?

Lord Pentland.—I cannot discuss that, Mrs. Besant.

Mrs. Besant.—In the Supreme Council, Sir Reginald Craddock stated that no one was interned without a full statement of the offence for which he was interned, and without being given a full opportunity for an explanation or defence. I did not think at the time that it was true, because some of my own friends had gone and I knew they had had no such opportunity. But I am very grateful to Your Excellency for proving it to be false.

Lord Pentland.—I cannot discuss it, Mrs. Besant.

Mrs. Besant.—I can only act according to my conscience and leave the rest to God.

Lord Pentland.—We must all do that.

Mrs. Besant.—I have nothing to regret in anything I have written or in anything that I have said, and, unless Your Excellency tells me what you wish me to consider, I am at a loss to know what to suggest.

Lord Pentland.—That is for you to consider, Mrs. Besant.

Mrs. Besant.—I have heard it said that Your Excellency was going to offer me the alternative of going to England.

Lord Pentland.—For the period of the war I will give you a safe conduct to England to take you through.

Mrs. Besant.—I do not intend to go to England. We all understand from Your Excellency's speech that you object to the Congress programme and that it is identical with the programme of the Home Rule League.

Lord Pentland.—I cannot reopen the subject, Mrs. Besant.

Mrs. Besant.—I think I should say to Your Excellency that the Home Rule League is simply supporting the Congress programme. (Here she read from the resolution passed at the Lucknow session of the Congress in December last).

Lord Pentland.—I don't know what that is.

Mrs. Besant.—It is the reform resolution passed by the Congress.

Lord Pentland.—I have not seen it.

Mrs. Besant.—Your Excellency, this is the resolution of the Indian National Congress. (After a pause): In your Excellency's Press Communiqué just issued you have stated that deliberate appeals have been made to the young to join in an active political agitation. People consider that that is aimed at me, but it is the exact opposite of my printed and spoken statements.

Lord Pentland.—I don't know anything about that, Mrs. Besant. It applies to whomsoever it would suit. You must understand, Mrs. Besant, that we shall stop all your activities.

Mrs. Besant.—I suppose so. I think I ought to say to Your Excellency that at the present time the Madras Presidency is absolutely quiet and untroubled. Your proposed action will turn it into a condition of turmoil like that of Bengal.

Lord Pentland.—I cannot discuss that, Mrs. Besant.

Mrs. Besant.—It seems to me that as Your Excellency has no proposals to make, and I have none, I am wasting Your Excellency's time. Will you permit me to take leave?

Mrs. Besant then rose, and Lord Pentland walked with her to the door. On the way he said: I wish you to consider, Mrs. Besant, that we cannot discriminate, and the whole of your activities will be stopped. Mrs. Besant replied: You have all the power, and I am helpless, and must do what you like. There is just one thing I should like to say to Your Excellency, and that is that I believe you are striking the deadliest blow against the British Empire in India. On nearing the door she added: You will pardon my saying that, as you are acting as the Governor, I have no personal feeling against Your Excellency.

MRS. BESANT'S FAREWELL LETTER

The day before she received the Orders for her internment (June 16th) Mrs. Besant published in "New India" a letter "To My Brothers and Sisters in India." From this are selected the following few paragraphs.

I wrote this to leave behind me, when I thought I was going to Ooty. Now, as I have to see H. E. the Governor to-morrow, I think it safer to print it to-day, lest I should be interned and unable to speak. . . .

My real public life dates from my first public lecture on "The Political Status of Women," for the Co-Operative Institute in August, 1874.

Since then my life has been given wholly to the service of the public, as I have seen service, so that the deprivation of the liberty to render service is the greatest loss that can befall me. I know that the selfish and the unpatriotic cannot realize this, but those who have a similar Dharma, they will understand. Apart from the joy of service, life has no attractions for me, save the happiness that flows from a few deep and strong personal attachments. To surrender liberty and touch with those I love is to me worse than death. But to live free and with them, a coward and dishonored, a traitor to Dharma and to India, would be hell. I take the easier path.

. . . . The Defence of India Act was never intended to be used to prevent public political speech, free from all incitement to or suggestion of violence, and accompanied with no disturbance of any kind. My paper could have been stopped by the Press Act, by forfeiture of security, and confiscation of press. . . .

What is my crime, that after a long life of work for others, publicly and privately, I am to be dropped into the modern equivalent of the Middle Age *oubliette*—internment? My real crime is that I have awakened the National self-respect, which was asleep, and have made thousands of educated men feel that to be content with being "a subject race" is a dishonour. Mr. Lloyd George said truly that Ireland's discontent was not material, it was due to the wounding of National self-respect, and therefore could not be cured even by prosperity. . . .

I write plainly for this is my last word. I go into enforced silence and imprisonment, because I love India and have striven to arouse her before it was too late. It is better to suffer than to consent to wrong. It is better to lose liberty than to lose honour.

I am old, but I believe that I shall see India win Home Rule before I die. If I have helped ever so little to the realisation of that glorious hope, I am more than satisfied. GOD SAVE INDIA. VANDE MATARAM.

ENGLISH OPINION

(Leeds Mercury)

It is a somewhat curious coincidence that at the very moment the damning Report of the Mesopotamia Commission

was being issued to the public, with all its amazing revelations of incompetence and mismanagement on the part of the Government of India and the India Office at Home, the House of Commons should have been discussing the order of the Madras Government in interning Mrs. Annie Besant for maintaining in her Press and on her platform in India, the rights of free speech on matters affecting the internal politics of India.

For more than a generation Mrs. Besant's name has been known throughout the world as one of the most fearless and out-spoken defenders of the rights of free speech and human liberty. In India to-day she probably exercises upon Indian native opinion an influence possessed by no other living European man or woman. Her loyalty to the British Crown has never been questioned, and her strenuous support of the Allied cause in the war has been proclaimed in countless publications; while her work on behalf of Indian religious life and education has received the approval of Provincial Governors, of Viceroys, and of the King himself. Yet because of her strenuous advocacy of Home Rule for India, the whole of her great public work of every description has been brought to a standstill, by an order of the Governor of Madras prohibiting her delivering public addresses or attending public meetings or publishing any writings or speeches on any subject whatever, placing her correspondence under censorship, and compelling her to reside in one or other of half a dozen places specified by the Order.

This order is more drastic than anything perpetrated in the name of Government since the evil days of the Star Chamber, and it is certain that the last has not been heard of it in the answers which Mr. Austen Chamberlain gave to Commander Wedgewood in the House of Commons this week. It may be that the present is not a desirable moment to advocate Home Rule for India; but it is certain that the last has not been heard of this Order, for it involves a bigger problem than merely the personal liberty of one distinguished lady. The whole question of the freedom of British citizens throughout the world is raised, if this decision of the Madras Government is allowed to stand, and if a person is to be cut off from every form of activity, because the Government may regard one aspect of that activity as being undesirable and injudicious.

THE ATTITUDE OF INDIA

The Home Rule propaganda is merely one of the latest results of decades of earnest work on the part of the Indians themselves towards self-government, and Mrs. Besant can by no means be considered the leader but simply one among many.

The attitude of India is well expressed by the reprints given below. The letter by Sir Subramaniam Iyer, written shortly before the internment, was widely circulated through the Indian Press. The article, "The Recent Madras Internments," is an editorial from the *Modern Review*, one of the leading Indian periodicals, and "The Joint Demand of the Congress and Moslem League" shows the attitude of these important and representative bodies.

TO MY COUNTRYMEN

We have all read the speech of H.E. the Governor of Madras to his Legislative Council, in which he foreshadows measures for the suppression of the Home Rule propaganda, and asks for the support, in the measures taken, of all who have personal or hereditary influence. I answer that appeal, being a responsible public man, having held high judicial office in the State, having been recognized and rewarded by the Crown and honoured by my University, and being an old man, of trained caution in coming to a decision, and of mature judgment. I therefore think it is my duty to the Government to state my position.

Before I was raised to the bench I was a Congressman and to me home rule is no new thing. I believe and have long believed that its early establishment is vital for the welfare of the country and the stability of the Empire and that it is, therefore, necessary to carry on a constitutional and educative agitation for it as ordered by the Congress at its last session. Believing this, I gladly accepted the honorary presidentship of the Home Rule for India League, honorary only because my health forbids active and strenuous work. I cannot retrace my steps. *I will not resign my office even if the League be declared unlawful. I am ready to face any penalties which may follow on my decision.* In the words of the Congress, in the reconstruction of the Empire after the War, Home Rule is to me a civic duty and *this duty I will discharge. I call on you my countrymen to do the same.*

S. SUBRAMANIAM, K.C.I.E., LL.D.,
Retired Acting Chief Justice of
Madras High Court.

SIR RABINDRANTH TAGORE'S MESSAGE

Sir Rabindranth Tagore telegraphed July 4th:—Kindly convey my heartfelt sympathy and gratitude to Mrs. Besant and tell her that her martyrdom for the cause of suffering humanity will produce more good than any small favours that might have been thrown to us to silence our clamour.

THE RECENT MADRAS INTERNMENTS *(The Modern Review)*

We have no hesitation in condemning in an unqualified manner the internment of Mrs. Besant, Mr. Arundale and Mr. B. P. Wadia by the Government of Madras. It is unjust and unstatesmanlike, and an infringement of the right to endeavour by all lawful means to bring about constitutional changes. It is a conspicuous example of a wrong use of the provisions of the Defence of India Act. Neither Mrs. Besant nor her associates had done anything which could justly bring them even in an indirect manner under the operations of that Act. They had not conspired with the enemy, nor had they done anything else to subvert the British Government in India. They had not put any obstacles in the way of the vigorous prosecution of the War or done anything to make the position of India or Indians unsafe. On the contrary, Mrs. Besant's denunciation of the barbarities of the Germans was among the fiercest in India, her appeals to young Indians to enlist in the regular army or to join the Defence Force were most earnest, forcible and telling, she had enlisted the largest number of recruits to the Defence Force in the Madras Presidency and her exhortations to the people to subscribe to the War Loan are well-known. She had always insisted on political agitation being carried on in a perfectly constitutional manner. The Government of Madras have not told her for what offence she has been interned. Anglo-Indian papers say that her writings and speeches brought the Government into contempt. If that was her offence, she could be prosecuted under the ordinary and penal and press laws of the country; she herself had more than once challenged the bureaucracy to proceed against her in that way. Why was it not done? It was suggested in Lord Pentland's speech in Ootacamund that officials had been calumniated by some persons, among whom Mrs. Besant was no

doubt meant to be included. If that was her offence, there were the ordinary penal laws of the country at hand. But the Madras Government and its officials did not avail themselves of these laws. Perhaps they were not sure of the result of a prosecution and also wanted to avoid publicity and prevent the public excitement which are always the concomitants of such trials. But if the judicial tribunals are not to be resorted to because they do not always see eye to eye with the executive, laws and courts need not exist. Let the will of the executive be the only law of the land. As for the prevention of excitement, there is not less but more of it now than if there had been a public trial.

Perhaps the executive do not realize that their ukases cannot produce the same conviction in the minds of the people as an open and fair trial does; or probably they do not care much for public opinion.

Our clear opinion is that neither Mrs. Besant nor her associates have done anything wrong. Some people find fault with her strong and passionate language. But the question is not whether her language was strong, but whether it was truthful. We think it was. When one feels strongly one must use language which is proportionately forcible and charged with feeling. And the political condition of India is such and many things which are done and happen in India are also such that it is natural for all just and liberty-loving persons to feel deeply and strongly. Mrs. Besant is a free born woman, brought up in the bracing free political atmosphere of an independent and free country. Unlike ourselves, she has never been accustomed to speak with bated breath and whispering humbleness, and therefore never minced her words. And she was right. It may be natural or easy for a certain class of our countrymen to mistake servility for courtesy, sobriety or moderation, and, therefore, to condemn strong language even when it truly indicates the strength of a person's justly roused feelings; but British statesmen, holding high offices in India, who were accustomed to the atmosphere of free and fearless criticism at "home," ought not to find anything strange in the use of such language. There is nothing in the Indian press to compare with the rabid language to be found in many British party papers. Perhaps their autocratic and bureaucratic sur-

roundings and the fact of their not being responsible to the people of India make the rulers of India thin-skinned and impatient of criticism. And we, too, are to blame. We seem, either expressly or by implication, to consider all Englishmen immeasurably superior to us and to worship them as if they were so many gods or godlings. The principle of reciprocity ought to guide us in our dealings with them. We ought certainly to be courteous, but the degree of our courtesy should be the same as theirs towards us.

As we have never been among the associates or followers of Mrs. Besant in any of her many fields of activity, as we have occasionally criticised her sharply, as we are not formally connected with any Home Rule League or Congress Committee, we feel it all the more incumbent upon us to say that we feel sincerely grateful to and admire Mrs. Besant for the invaluable political services she has rendered to India. Since the day of her active participation in Indian politics, she has been the most active, strenuous, fearless, and hopeful worker in the cause of India's political regeneration. She has brought new hope, courage and inspiration to many other workers in the same field.

These internments will not serve the purpose which Government may have in view. In the course of Mrs. Besant's interview with Lord Pentland, as reported in the *Hindu*, His Lordship said: "You must understand, Mrs. Besant, that we shall stop all your activities." That is true, but only literally. Mrs. Besant will no doubt be unable to act in her own person, but her spirit will walk abroad, and the Home Rule or Self-Government propaganda promises to be carried on all over the country in spite of her internment. In fact that unwise and arbitrary step has brought a new accession of strength to the movement. Many influential and intelligent and leading men and numerous other persons have joined the Home Rule League; and that, whatever Anglo-Indian papers may tauntingly say, means much.

THE JOINT DEMAND OF THE CONGRESS AND THE MOSLEM LEAGUE

Important news is to hand from Bombay. A joint conference of the All-India Congress Committee and the Council of the All-India Moslem League met in that city on Saturday and

Sunday last (July 28 and 29). It was summoned to consider the situation created by the repressive policy of the Government of India and the internment of Mrs. Besant and others, and was attended by representatives from all parts of India. A lengthy representation was approved for submission to the Secretary of State, of which the following summary is given in a Central News telegram.

The history is traced of the agitation of the Congress and the League for self-government, culminating in the joint scheme of reforms passed at Lucknow last December. It is pointed out that this scheme does not ask for full and responsible self-government, nor for complete autonomy at the close of the war, but for certain necessary reforms which constitute a definite step in the direction of self-government within the Empire.

Reference is then made to the circular issued in March last by the Government of India, which outlines the policy of repression to be pursued in connexion with the Indian demand for reform and which was followed by pronouncements by Sir Michael O'Dwyer and Lord Pentland exaggerating the nature of the Indian demands, threatening repression if the agitation does not cease, and declaring that reforms of a minor character only could be granted after the war. The hopes and expectations which Indians were thus told not to entertain have been cherished by them for more than a generation, and have been strengthened by the assurances of British statesmen since the beginning of the war, made in part appreciation of India's spontaneous rally to the cause of the Empire and unstinted help in money, men and munitions, and encouraging India's hope for a full share of the liberty, justice, and political equality for which England and her Allies are carrying on this titanic struggle. It is declared that the Government, by telling the people that the reforms would fall far short of their expectations, are prejudging the issue, and forcing their own conclusions on the people of India in supersession of the authority of the British Parliament, with whom alone the final decision must rest.

The authorities (it is added) have failed altogether to realise the strength of feeling in the country. The storm of indignation created by the internments of Mrs. Besant, Mr.

Arundale, and Mr. Wadia, with the obvious intention of suppressing all agitation for constitutional reform, can only be allayed, and public confidence restored, by adopting the following four remedies:

An authoritative pronouncement pledging the Imperial Government to a policy of making India a self-governing member of the Empire, and enjoining agents and servants of the Crown to make honest and strenuous efforts to achieve that end at an early date; the taking of immediate steps to sanction the congress and league scheme of reform, giving effect thereto at the close of the war; the publication for immediate discussion of the proposals which the Government of India are understood to have submitted to the Secretary of State; and a complete reversal of the policy of repression, and as an earnest thereof the immediate release of Mrs. Besant, Arundale, and Wadia.

An appeal is made to the Imperial Government to concede these demands before the situation becomes deplorably complicated.—*London "India," Aug. 3, 1917.*

MRS. BESANT ELECTED PRESIDENT

"India," (London, Eng.) Sept. 7th, 1917.

A cable has been received in London announcing the election of Mrs. Besant to the Presidency of the next Congress, which will meet at Calcutta in December next. It is added that the nomination received the "almost unanimous support of all parties." Meanwhile, the petition for the release of Mrs. Besant from internment has met with no success, in spite of the fact that it has been signed by a large number of prominent public men in India.

CONCLUSION

This brief pamphlet is a small effort to make known to those unfamiliar with the subject, the real aims and work of that remarkable personality who, through her service to India, has contributed so much to promote the best interests of the British Empire.

The following appeal from India to Britain, in her own words, will be a fitting conclusion:

O English Nation! Great and free and proud. Cannot you see? Cannot you understand? Cannot you realize that your Indian brothers feel now as you would feel if a foreigner ruled in your land? That to be a stranger in your own country, an alien in your own land, with no rights save those given by

grace of a government not your own, your inferiority taken for granted, your capacities weighed in alien scales, and measured by the wand of another nation—you could not bear such a state, such an outlook. India is patient, as you would not be. She does not want to break the link; she wants to remain part of the Empire; but an equal part, a Self-Governing Community, standing on a level with the Self-Governing Dominions. Is this passionate longing, sedition? Is this ineradicable hope, treason? You dare not say so, you who bred Hampden, and Sidney, and Milton, you whose glory is your Freedom, you who boast of your Empire as an Empire of the Free. Who dared to ask if you were fit for freedom? Charles I. asked it. James II. asked it. History records the answers that you gave.

Is India fit for Freedom? She claims it as her Right. You will not say her, Nay. She proves her equality in death on the battlefield. Will you refuse it when the peace she has made possible, broods over your homes? Would they have been as safe from the German, if Indian breasts had not formed part of your shield?

What does India want? She wants everything that any other nation may claim for itself. To be free in India, as the Englishman is free in England. To be governed by her own men, freely elected by herself. To make and break Ministries at her will. To carry arms; to have her own army, her own navy, her own volunteers. To levy her own taxes; to make her own budgets; to educate her own people; to irrigate her own lands; to mine her own ores; to mint her own coin; to be a sovereign nation within her own borders, owning the paramount power of the Imperial Crown, and sending her sons to the Imperial Council. There is nothing to which any man can aspire in his own land from which the Indian must be shut out here.

A large claim, you say. Does the Englishman ask less for himself in England? If yes, what is there strange that an Indian should ask the same for himself in India? What is the radical difference between them which should make an Indian *content* to be a thrall? It is not the "angle of vision" that needs changing. It is the eye, purified from pride and prejudice, that can see clearly, and the heart, purged from arrogance, that can beat with healthy strokes.

England and India hand-in-hand. Yes, that is our hope, for the world's sake. But that it may be so, Justice must replace inequality; for India can never be at rest, till she is free.

Who pants and struggles to be free,
Who strives for others' liberty,
Who, failing, still works patiently,
He truly prays.

Who loving all, dare none despise,
But with the worst can sympathize,
Who for a truth a martyr dies,
He truly prays.

Who, when a truth to him is known,
Embraces it through smile or frown,
Who dares to hold it, though alone,
He truly prays.

In musing strength must come to dare,
Petitions are but empty air,
Brave action is the only prayer,
Thus learn to pray.

MRS. ANNIE BESANT (1875).

ADDENDA

MRS. BESANT'S LETTER

No copy has been received of the Madras Government's offer made to Mrs. Besant and her colleagues, but their replies were made public August 10th, and the following is Mrs. Besant's letter:

"I beg to state that I am as unable now, as was His Excellency the Governor on June 16th last, to discriminate between my activities, nor will I implicitly admit that while my so-called religious works are harmless, my educational, social and political writings justify the tyrannical action of the Madras Government towards my two colleagues and myself. All I write and speak is equally theosophical and religious, being directed to the evolution of the spiritual intelligence in man, exerted in the spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical departments of human life. They all form part of one great movement for human progress and liberty and order. I cannot separate religion from life, nor shut it up in a cell from which it may be released after due trial and strict examination by the Governor-in-Council or his officers. Nor could I submit books on subjects the most sacred to me to the scoffing of unbelievers. I am grateful to His Excellency the Governor of Madras for

the true insight which realized that all liberty, religious, educational, social or political, is one, is equally dangerous to an autocracy, and must be crushed. He has thereby made the present struggle one for liberty in all departments of human life, not for this or that political opinion. The Theosophical Society cannot identify itself with any special creed, religious, social or political, but it can and ought to stand for the sacred right of free speech for all opinions which do not excite to crime and can see that His Excellency's instinctive attack on religious liberty shows the true spirit of autocracy, and hatred of all freedom. It has therefore allied itself in this struggle *in entente cordiale* with the National Congress, the Moslem League and the Home Rule League in one solid body united in resistance to autocracy, and in defence of the liberty of the people, and I, as President of the Theosophical Society, will conclude no separate peace. As I observe that the Government Order has been sent to the Editors' tables, I presume that you will also forward this letter to the editors, as it explains why I cannot take advantage of the relaxation of clause (d) of the order of the internment."

A PRESS COMMENT

We are glad that the Government of Madras have after all thought fit to publish the letters of Mrs. Besant, and her two colleagues to the Government, in which they declined to avail themselves of the "relaxation" of the original orders of internment. Mrs. Besant has expressed the view that she has always held in regard to the relation of Theosophy to politics and other matters of vital human concern. She does not identify the Theosophical Society with the aims and objects of any political organization, but declared that it cannot but stand for human liberty in whatever sphere of activity it may be attacked. This was pointed out in our columns on the 31st July, and has been known to all who have paid any attention to her speeches and writings. In the House of Commons, Mr. Chamberlain referred to this letter of Mrs. Besant as violently worded; but we fail to discover even the least tinge of violence in the published letter, which is nothing more than a clear statement of her position. Such are the ways of irresponsible officials!—"New India."

MRS. BESANT RELEASED

Bombay, India, Sept. 17.—According to a private wire, Mrs. Annie Besant, head of the Theosophical Society, and George Arundale and B. S. Wadia . . . have been released from internment by the Madras Government.—*Can. Press Dispatch.*

BOOKS BY MRS. ANNIE BESANT

"How India Wrought for Freedom."

"India—A Nation."

"For India's Uplift."

"Wake Up, India."

"India."

Pamphlets.

"India and the Empire."

"Citizenship of Colored Races in the Empire."

"Self-government for India."

"The Future of Young India."

"The Political Outlook."

Books on Mrs. Besant.

"Mrs. Besant and India."—Bepin Chandra Pal.

"Life of Mrs. Besant."—Nateson.

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293 Huron St., Toronto, Can.

