

so far as this question of Indians overseas is concerned, we stand solid and united. We have our own domestic quarrels; we have moderates and extremists; we have non-co-operators; and we have Hindus and Mohammedans. But so far as this question is concerned, let me tell you with all the sincerity that I am capable of that we stand absolutely united. Do not be misguided by what appears in certain papers here which attempt to show that there is no feeling on this question. We attach far more importance to the honour of our nationals in other parts of the Empire than probably you realize.

#### Question of "Izzat."

We express that feeling in the vernacular of our own country by a comprehensive and delicate phrase, which I have no doubt will readily be understood by Lord Curzon and His Highness the Maharajah—that phrase is *izzat*. There is not a man either among the princes or among the humblest subjects of His Majesty who does not attach great importance to that question of *izzat*. When *izzat* (which means honour) is at stake, we prefer death to anything else. That is our sentiment, and it is in that light that I present my case to you.

#### India's Position in the Empire.

Do not forget that my country, India, is the one country which makes the British Empire truly Imperial. I take pride in that. I do not indulge in the slightest degree in reflection upon the dignity or honour or position of any one of the Dominions, but I do claim that it is my country which makes the British Empire truly Imperial. One-fifth of the human race, with a far more ancient civilization than your own, to which eloquent reference has been made by Lord Peel, joins with you in acknowledging the suzerainty of our common Throne. That allegiance with us is a real living thing. Shake that allegiance and you shake the foundations of the entire fabric, with consequences which it is difficult to overestimate.

#### Function of the Conference.

Might I explain to you here the considerations which will guide me in presenting my case to you? In my humble judgment, the one function of this Conference—the highest advisory body of the Empire—is to bring about a good understanding between the various units that constitute the British Commonwealth, to strengthen the ties which unite, or ought to unite, the different units of the Empire with their different outlook and their different religions. If this Conference fails to achieve that end, then let me say it fails to justify its existence in the eyes of the Empire. But to achieve that end it seems to me that it is absolutely necessary that we should open out our minds to each other with entire frankness. Any mental reservation on an occasion like this, and round this table, would, in my humble judgment, amount to nothing short of treason against the King and treason against the Empire. It is in that spirit of frankness, in that spirit of candour, that I will venture to present to you my case, and, even though I may use now and again expressions to indicate the strength of my feeling and the feeling of my countrymen, I beg of the Dominion Prime Ministers not to misunderstand my spirit.

#### Indian Sentiment on Problem not confined to Intellectuals.

Let me tell you at once that the feeling on this question in India is deep-seated and widespread. Let me also remove a very wrong impression, and I am glad that Lord Peel has referred to this question for I desire to reinforce his arguments as an Indian. Twenty-seven years I have been in public life; thirteen years I have been connected with the Legislative Councils, and I have sat in the Viceroy's Cabinet. I have never witnessed before what is happening in India to-day. Five years ago it may have been possible for you to say that a wide gulf divided the masses from the classes. Let me now give you this warning: The classes lead the masses as never before. India has rapidly changed, and that is the outstanding feature of the situation there. The intellectuals, or, if you like to call them, agitators, have gained ascendancy over the masses. What the intellectuals think to-day the masses will think to-morrow. This question now before us, let me tell you, affects directly the masses, for it is from the masses mainly that most of our population has gone to the Dominions. I belong to a province which has supplied a considerable number of men to the various Dominions, and I know their feelings. You can condemn the agitators, you may condemn the intellectual classes—I will not quarrel with that; but remember they have got power now with the masses.

#### Influence of Vernacular Press.

Do not forget the growing and increasing influence of the vernacular press. I do not justify or vindicate its attitude in every respect. I will, however, state the facts. It now penetrates into the innermost recesses of our villages, and every village has got a reader who reads for the illiterate people the vernacular newspapers. I have been reading extracts from the vernacular Press of my own country, and, while I do deprecate the wild language in which it has indulged, let me tell you frankly that it is seething with indignation over this question, and that is affecting the whole outlook of my countrymen in the villages.

#### Seriousness of Situation.

Any inequality of Indian nationals enters like iron into our souls. For Heaven's sake, whether you find a solution or whether you do not find a solution, do not dismiss this statement of mine as mere sentimental nonsense. It is an absolute fact; and I am here to interpret to you the present position of my countrymen in regard to this question: it cuts to the quick our national pride and our