

I will say, furthermore, that while, on the one hand, I have nothing to beg, and I will not beg, I also make no demands, as I have no demands to make. But the Motherland, whose salt I eat, the land whose soil has given me birth, tells me that it is my duty to place in plain, untarnished, but candid form in words before you all the facts of our case, such as I know them.

Publicity.

And now, Prime Ministers, I have one request to make, and that is that every word I utter or have uttered to-day in my statement may be cabled in full to my countrymen, and in no hashed or pruned form. I do not desire this because I seek cheap notoriety by making "gallery shots," but because my countrymen have the right to know every word I say in their name. They may have some things to criticize and others which they may not entirely like. It is in justice to them, speaking, not as their representative, but as one of them, that I therefore do not wish to say anything behind their backs, seven thousand miles away, which I will not gladly say to their face.

British Empire stands for Justice and Freedom.

I will now proceed. We believe that the greatest assets to the British Empire lie in its championing the cause of freedom and justice. It is because I feel, my country feels—rightly or wrongly—that freedom and justice are at stake as exercised, or perhaps as understood, that I want to speak these words. I hope they will be in the interests of the Empire, and it will be something done—if nothing more—if misunderstandings and misapprehensions that do exist are somehow removed. It will be all the greater glory to you all—and I speak of no tinsel glory, but the glory of the heart—if the British Government and the great Dominions will show by words, and prove by action, that they mean to assist one of their sisters who is old in age, but also at present the weakest member on the chess-board of the political game.

Despondency in India.

I hear wails from India itself—and now I speak principally of that two-thirds—conveying the feelings of despondency. The words of my fellow-brethren, of my country, seem to ring in my ears: Are we going to progress steadily, progressively, yet not too slowly towards our goal, which the other sister nations have been more fortunate in already achieving—the goal of having the power to govern our own country as a loyal and integral part of the Empire? Are we going to be helped affectionately and with kindly feeling to the goal which has been pronounced publicly by the British Government, and more than which we do not aspire to, of being a loyal self-governing Dominion within the Empire? Is everything going to be done to accelerate our progress, or is our progress, under various pretexts, to be retarded and delayed? Have we a long number of years before us of a great furnace to pass through, from which Ireland has only just emerged?

Sometimes I am afraid this despondency has been seen to give rise to despair, which has resulted in giving exhibitions in many places of those hideous atrocities at which the British Government, as the custodians of our country, do not feel happy, and of which we, as its sons, are certainly not proud. If India had some more definite proposition before it than having to wait every ten years for its destiny to be enhanced, if it had reasonable assurance of rapid but progressive advancement, I believe that self-government, which is the goal of us all, for two-thirds India could be achieved early and smoothly. I add this despite anything that may be said to the contrary, that the achievement is possible within a very much shorter period than some people would like to have us believe. I know, and I do not need to be told, that it depends to a great extent on India's capacity herself. I agree; but surely you do not desire to throw India entirely on her own resources? Does she not look to Britain to give her periodical and sustained assistance, so that my country may be, as it has been in the past, really and genuinely a grateful and loyal partner of your wonderful heritage?

Solution of Constitutional Problem in India.

I am speaking of self-government for two-thirds India, and in dealing with this subject I hope I may seek your indulgence for another few moments. The solution, I firmly believe, will not lie in grafting Western principles of political government on to the East with a stroke of the pen. Already many old bottles have cracked into which this new wine has been poured. I would much rather you get India round a table in confidence, and work out, with her sons, plans and methods that would be best suited to her environment, by which she can obtain her goal in the most rapid but at the same time most peaceful and loyal manner. I say it is possible, and probable of early success, and you will be doing something for three hundred millions of human beings, that will cement them to you with gratitude and brotherly feelings.

The world was not built for academic or pious assurances spread over a number of years, the fulfilment of which may well pass over a lifetime. But what seems to me is this—and that is why I have mentioned this subject, and in connection therewith I will say no more—that the whole problem, if viewed with breadth of vision and imagination, is really, oh! so simple. It is not such a hedgehog as may be conceived by those who do not come in close contact with it; and it is really still capable of a solution which will leave a stronger England and a loving India.

In the end, in this connection, I will only say this much: Many unpleasant incidents have taken place in India of late years. I have no desire to lift before you the veil to disclose tales of woe or wails of lamentation. Many mistakes have undoubtedly been made on both sides. So far as India's side of the picture is concerned, it will be a regrettable spot on India's fair name; and I say this in all solemnity: that any grievances which India may have had, and did have, were allowed to be involved in interfering with the welcome given to the Royal Heir to the British throne—namely, the Prince of Wales—when he was touring in British India.