

(February 3, 1930)

## Affairs in India

BY SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND

VICE-PRESIDENT SMITH:—Gentlemen, we are indebted to the youngest of the learned societies of Canada for this opportunity to welcome and to hear Sir Francis Youngusband. Sir Francis has come to Canada to represent the Royal Geographical Society, of which he is a past president, at the Congress of the Canadian Geographical Society. Fortunately he has been willing to come on from the meeting at Ottawa to study the geography of Toronto. Sir Francis, we know, is a very versatile person. It is not enough to say he is a famous explorer and author. One must add at least soldier, journalist, diplomat, and distinguished public servant. Probably we know him best for his early explorations in Central Asia and Europe and for his famous expedition in Thibet. Sir Francis is known among Asiatic lands and peoples. Today he is going to talk to you of that great collection of people who together make up the Indian Empire. It is a very opportune time to speak about India for there are perhaps now no more anxious and no more difficult problems facing the British Empire than the problems of India. I have great pleasure in welcoming on your behalf Sir Francis to the Canadian Club of Toronto. Sir Francis.

SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND:—Mr. President and gentlemen, first of all on this last day that I shall be spending in Canada, I should like to thank you all for the very kind welcome which has everywhere been given to me. It touches me very deeply to know that you here in Canada have given such a warm welcome as you everywhere have given to a strange man who has come amongst you. It is the kind of thing that warms the heart and sends one back to the old country full of anxiety to do one's best for the

rest of one's life for the great Empire to which we all belong.

Well, I am sorry to say that since I have been here in Canada I have been talking a good deal too much about myself. And on this last day I am going to give myself a rest and speak to you upon what I have much more dearly at heart, and that is the welfare of India. In India I was born; in India I have spent twenty of the best years of my life and in India my father and three of his brothers served. Both my brothers and all my cousins served in the military and civil services and I have a nephew still out there. So you can understand that families like us who have been so identified with India are very deeply interested in what is going on at the present time, and I am more than delighted to find that you here in Canada should be taking such an interest as I have everywhere found in what is going on in that distant part of the Empire. Because it is quite impossible for you or even for the people in England to understand the details of the problems out there, but you might at any rate acquaint yourselves with and be interested in the general situation.

Recently in the papers you have heard a great deal about the situation out there and no doubt it is exceedingly serious; but I should like you to remember that of course you are hearing the extremist point of view, and what makes the best headlines in the papers. Well, the doings of Mr. Gandhi and his followers are very serious, there is no doubt. There is no doubt that Gandhi does represent a great many people in India. He is a man of very eccentric character. I have known him thirty years out in South Africa, and I have followed his career ever since and I know he really has the good of India at heart. There is no mistake about that, and he has a following of millions and millions and he is doing his best according to his lights for the welfare of his country. That you may take for certain. But that is not the whole bill. It must not be supposed that Gandhi, although he represents millions of Indians, represents the whole of India; because India has a population of 320 millions of very varied races and two great religions, Hinduism and Islam. Of course there are very varied degrees of civilization in the country. So

although Gandhi does represent many millions of Indians, he by no means represents the whole country. So I would like to speak to you this afternoon about other peoples in India who by no means agree with Gandhi in working for the severance of the British connection.

That is what Gandhi and his followers have declared, that they are out for the complete separation of India from Great Britain. Not all Indians by any means agree to that. First of all you have the great division of the Mohammedans, Moslems, about seventy-five millions of them. Well, they do not all agree with Gandhi. They do not at all want to be left with a majority of Hindus over them. If the Government of India was put entirely into the hands of the Hindus the Mohammedans would by no means agree with them. You have seventy-five millions at least not agreeing with Gandhi in asking for severance from the British Empire. Then as to the Hindus, I would like to say here that the Hindus as a body are an exceedingly capable lot of men, and of recent years they have been coming to the front. They have some remarkably able men. Some of them have been here speaking to you in Canada, and you have been able to judge of them. And there are many of those whom we now call Moderates, who do not all agree with Gandhi in asking for the severance of the British Empire. There are among them men who have been working with us for many years; and they have had experience of the responsibilities of government and are not at all inclined to dash off into running India in the straight away, as Gandhi wants to have it. He wanted severance on January 1 of this year. Well, these moderate men know perfectly well that anything at all immediate would be quite impossible for them to carry out. So these moderate men by no means, as I say, follow Gandhi. They have had their conference.

They had a conference down at Madras in which they agreed to co-operate with the government of India and the British government in working out the reform of the situation, which is now under consideration. They passed resolutions but very little of that appeared in the papers. You hear a great deal about the extremists, about the separatists, but very little about the resolutions passed by the Moderates. And then again there are the chiefs of India, the Maharajas

and other rulers of the semi-independent Indian states. Well, they have a population getting toward eighty millions. These states are ruled by their own rulers who have been there in existence for hundreds and hundreds of years. Their independence has been respected by the British government. First of all you have the state of Hyderabad, with between ten and twelve million inhabitants in the south of India. The ruler is the descendant of one of the viceroys under the old Emperors. When the Mongol Empire began to break up the viceroys of Hyderabad became hereditary rulers and the present Nizam is a descendant of what would have been viceroys of the Empire. Then there are the great chiefs like the Maharajah of Mysore, with its population of five or six millions, in the south of India. Well, it was governed by ourselves for a great number of years, I think for fifty or sixty, but in the 80's of the last century we handed it back to a descendant of the old ruling family and it is now a state and a very flourishing state indeed, governed by its own ruler. And then you have the Mahratha states like the Gaikwar of Baroda, the ruler of Holkar and the ruler of Indore. They are great chiefs. They are descendants of generals under the last Mahratha army which contested with us for supremacy in India when the old Mongol Empire broke up. And others like Kashmir, in which I was resident for three or four years before I left. That is a big state on the northern frontier of India, governed by a very intelligent ruler, and the great state of the Punjab, and other states, very interesting states indeed, including that very picturesque state of which the rulers believe that they are descended from the sun. They have been there hundreds and hundreds of years. All these chiefs, and there are something like eight hundred of them, have stated quite definitely that they will follow the British connection. They passed that resolution in assembly only a few months ago and the reason for it is very clear. It is because for many years past our sovereigns have shown an extraordinary interest in the welfare of these chiefs of India.

I have been there with the chiefs for many years of service in India and I have had evidence after evidence of the strong sympathy between our sovereign, whether it was Queen Victoria or King Edward, or King George, with the

chiefs of India. I noticed a caste feeling between one monarch and another. They look at things in a different way from what we do and often when a resident who has been on the spot and has been inclined to be a bit hard on some of the passing iniquities of the chief, the sovereign has put in a word in the chief's favor. There is a kind of fellow-feeling between them. It is a very valuable thing, because there are a number of things which we residents have had to wink at and shut our eyes to now and then but always you find one sovereign inclined to side with the other. Well, that has had a great effect and these chiefs, when they have come home to England, have always been received by the sovereigns with extraordinary courtesy and consideration. That astonished them because a small chief out in the east expected to be treated as dirt by a chief who is just a little bit bigger than himself. But when these chiefs came to England they saw Queen Victoria. They saw the wonderful surroundings. They saw the greatest men in England showing the utmost possible deference to her. They were enormously impressed, and still more impressed when, instead of treating them as so much dirt, she treated them with every consideration, asked after their welfare and showed her knowledge of their concerns. It was the same with King Edward, and exactly the same with King George; and the result has been that the chiefs have passed this resolution, stating their desire to keep up the connection with the British Crown. I cannot say that they have told me that they love us residents, British officials; they look upon us as rather a nuisance. But they have said to me that they are loyal to the sovereign. And that is a very important factor in the situation which you perhaps did not hear much of in the newspapers.

What I want to bring to your notice is that in the year 1917 we declared quite definitely that our goal in India was the gradual conferring upon the people of India of responsible self-government as, and when, they become fit for it. That was a very very important pronouncement and you will realise what it means, if I contrasted what we might have done with what I have observed in other parts. I have spent a great many months, even years, in the Chinese Empire, in Chinese Turkestan and in Thibet, and I have

seen how the Chinese treat associated states. In Chinese Turkestan you see the Chinese build forts, solid walled cities, alongside the native Turkestani towns. The Chinese strongly entrench themselves. They hold the country and preserve order, but they do not interest themselves in the least bit with the people of the country. That is no concern of theirs. They preserve order and they appoint head men or at any rate approve of the election, but as for improving the conditions of the people, improving the communications or the irrigation, or concerning themselves with the education of the people, they do not bother their heads. But they just keep the country quiet and otherwise do not trouble themselves. That is the Chinese way and if the Chinese had been in India they would have done the same. You would have had great Chinese forts and the Indians left entirely to themselves; and they would have remained there for centuries and centuries. But we have adopted the other line.

I contrast that with what has been the traditional policy of the French. If the French had been in India they would have adopted a line which possibly may have been better, but at any rate is not ours. They would have tried gradually to turn the Indians more and more into Frenchmen; and when they got up to a certain standard, they would have treated them exactly as any other Frenchmen, given them the right to send representatives to the chamber of Deputies in Paris. It would have been a much more centralized system than ours, and possibly may have been better. They would have regarded India as a province of France. That would have been the general line. In Canada here we in England do not try to keep you Canadians Englishmen and regard Canada as a province of England. We like you to be Canadians, following a Canadian nation. Well now, that is our line in India. It is precisely what we have done all over the Empire and that is to let the people of the country develop on their own lines, develop their own nationality, and in the end we hope, as events will go, to see India govern itself, as Canada is governing itself, as Australia is governing herself.

Now that is a very big step to take, to declare that that is the ultimate goal of our efforts. But nevertheless it is

only the continuation of what we have been doing in India for over a century. One hundred years ago we did set to work gradually to educate the people, and they are a very intelligent people and only anxious to take every means of education, and we took them more and more into the administration of the country, into the government offices; and certainly the advance which has been made since I first went to India forty-eight years ago is extraordinary. We now have on the viceroy's council of six, three Indians, and on all the councils of the provincial governments, almost, the majority are Indians. There are Indians on the council of the secretary of state for India in London. There has been an Indian made a peer, sitting in the House of Lords, who was an under secretary of state for India. These assemblies out in India, where they practically have fiscal autonomy, can put on their own customs duty; and as a matter of fact they have put on some which are by no means beneficial to trade, but the greatest step of all which has been taken, although I do not think they realize it, is getting for India a seat in the League of Nations. India comes with Canada and Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and Great Britain to the League of Nations, sits down and gives an independent vote just like anyone else. Well, that is a very great step of which I do not think they have realized the full significance. So I think you will see that we in India are doing our best in a very very great work indeed, but it is an exceedingly delicate one; and I think I may say to you with perfect confidence, that we have at the present time an exceedingly able lot of men dealing with the Indian situation. The viceroy of India, Lord Irwin, is the very best type of Englishman. He has won the confidence of the Indians to a degree which I think is far greater than any other viceroy in my knowledge. I came out straight from the Cabinet. He has identified himself to an extraordinary degree with the aspirations of the Indian people, and I think you will find that he has won to his side all the moderate element in India and that is a very important thing for him to do.

And then, although I am myself a Conservative, I have the greatest confidence in the present labor government in its dealings with India. We have at the Indian office a

Secretary of State for India, a very able man, a very straight man, Mr. Wedgewood Benn. He also has certainly won for himself in the short time he has been there the confidence of the Indian people. They felt that in him they had a man who was interested in India. He doesn't take it as a cool thing being sent to the India office but he is really extraordinarily interested in the country and realizes the magnitude and delicacy of the task which is before him. And the Labor Government as a whole do have an interest in India. I think it is quite remarkable, the amount of interest and the amount of attention they have paid to the country. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, who has been several times out to India, first as a private traveller and also on commissions, certainly knows India and is extraordinarily interested and doing his best for it at the present time.

Then we have the Simon commission which has been out in India for the last two winter seasons, collecting opinions of all kinds, and whose report we hope will be published certainly within the next few weeks. Well now, that is a very important mission. Sir John Simon gives up a very lucrative legal practice and also a great position in the House of Commons to devote himself for two years to this great task. He was chosen by the Conservative government although he is himself a Liberal and the Commission was composed of the Liberals, Conservatives, and Labor and has the confidence of all three parties. And in England, I am delighted to say, the three parties are combined on the question of India. They feel the exceeding importance of the question and that they must sink all political differences in that great task.

But finally I should like to say that although the political side is looming very large indeed at the present time, the real question between us and India is on the spiritual side. The Indians, fundamentally, do not care very much about politics or about business or about sport. But what they do care about is religion and fellowship. They care for the things of the spirit and they unfortunately think that we westerners of all kinds, whether British or Europeans, think a great deal more about the material things than about the things of the spirit. And that irks

them. They kick about it. They do not like being so intimately connected as they are with a people who, as they think, set such little store by spiritual things. Well, that being so, it is very important that we should on any occasion that may arise show them that, although outwardly we appear to think only of material things, we do fundamentally and at bottom care for spiritual things, just as much as they do. That is a very important point. I give you an instance. When the present viceroy of India landed at Bombay it was on Good Friday but setting aside all matters of ceremony, he went straight away to the cathedral to attend divine service on Good Friday. Well, that had an enormous effect on the Indian people. They are not Christian, but they said: "here is a viceroy ruler over us who does care for his own religion, and that had enormous effect, and that is why he has won to a remarkable degree the affection of the Indian people.

And I should say in conclusion that the Indian people, in spite of all this talk that is going on now, are an exceedingly affectionate people. I have served out there, and we know how tremendously attached these Indians do become to us. We have had Indians after Indians and I have certainly found it so in my own case, and I have found it with chief after chief, as well as soldiers who accompanied me on expeditions. They are an exceedingly affectionate people; and I believe the heart of England does at bottom go out very warmly indeed to the heart of India, and certainly the heart of India, as soon as it gets a chance, will show itself going out to the heart of England and the whole Empire. I thank you very much indeed for the kind attention you have given me.