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THE POLITICAL IDEAS OF

SIR ALFRED COMYN LYALL

(1873-1903)

35

by

PARVEEN HASSAN

A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF LETTERS

IN THE UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM.

JUNE, 1962.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Preface	i
Introduction: (1) The Nature of the I.C.S. 1857-1917	1
(2) Life and Career of Lyall	15
<u>Chapter 1:</u> Views on India and the Indians	29
<u>Chapter 2:</u> Education	60
The Native Press	75
<u>Chapter 3:</u> Indianisation of Services	87
(a) Civil Service	89
(b) Judicial Services and the Native Jurisdiction Bill	97
<u>Chapter 4:</u> Decentralization	111
Local Self-Government	121
<u>Chapter 5:</u> Self-Government	140
<u>Chapter 6:</u> India and England	164
Conclusion	195
Glossary	204
List of Abbreviations	205
Biographical Notes	206
Bibliography	214

## PREFACE

Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall was one of the most distinguished Anglo-Indian administrators of the second half of the 19th century. The present thesis examines the political ideas of this remarkable administrator whose advice and opinion were highly treasured by the Government of India throughout his later official career, as Home Secretary to the Government of India from 1873 to 1874, as Agent-General to the Governor-General in Rajputana from 1874 to 1878, as Foreign Secretary to the Government of India from 1878 to 1881, as Lieutenant-Governor of North-Western Provinces from 1882 to 1887, and finally as Member of the India Council in London from 1888 to 1903. Lyall contributed his quiet yet considerable share of ideas pertaining to a successful functioning of the Government of India.

It is almost impossible to regard Lyall as a representative of a particular school like, for instance, of the 'Soldier-Politicals', represented by Stephen and Strachey, or a specific tradition like the 'Punjab Tradition' built up by James Thomason and John Lawrence. Lyall's views were wholly independent of any party or group. However, he can, with safety be termed as a protagonist of the Imperial creed of his age.

In presenting Lyall's ideas, I have been compelled to be selective. Lyall's share of ideas in matters like the foreign policy of the

Government of India with regard to Afghanistan, Russia and all the Central Asiatic problems, which could, in and by themselves form, enormous studies, have been purposely left out. My purpose has been to relate Lyall's ideas on the administration of India to those of his contemporaries in a period which saw the rise of Indian Nationalism. It may be noted that Lyall started his official career around 1857, the year which marks the beginning of modern India.

The present work is a study of the ideas of an Anglo-Indian administrator and not of a high public functionary appointed directly from Britain for a short term of years. The distinction is important, since studies have hitherto been made of some Indian Viceroyalties, but the vast field which pertains to a study of the ideas of official Anglo-Indians, who spent nearly thirty to forty of the most fruitful years of their lives in India, has remained almost unexplored. The diverse material on this subject contains an enormous wealth of information for the research worker in social sciences and is indispensable for an objective reconstruction of India's past.

In spite of my efforts, unfortunately, I have not been able to consult the Lyall Papers which are in the custody of a descendent. The Lyall Collection, available in the India Office Library consists of six letters, out of which two are written by Sir Alfred Lyall. The scattered and scanty information about Lyall in the relevant

volumes of manuscript collections like the Northbrook, Lytton, Cross (for Lord Dufferins' correspondence) Hamilton, and Morley Collections in the India Office Library have been consulted for this work. This material has been supplemented by Ripon Papers in the British Museum, Cromer Papers in the Public Record Office and Stephen Papers in the University Library, Cambridge. It may be pointed out here that Lyall's biographer, Sir Henry Mortimer Durand has drawn his information entirely from the Lyall Papers and according to him, he has not tapped any of the Official sources. On my part, I have tried to cover Lyall's official correspondence, his minutes and memoranda, despatches and State papers, most of which were found in the above mentioned manuscript volumes. Also available therein were some private letters written to Stephen, Morley, Cromer and others. The principal source of this work has been Lyall's books and his numerous articles contributed to various Reviews and Journals. Several published and unpublished sources have added to the material.

My research has been supervised by Professor W.H. Morris-Jones, Head of Department, Social Studies, University of Durham, and to him I am extremely grateful for his able guidance and his keen interest in my work. I also owe a debt of gratitude to my kind teacher Dr. Abdul Hamid, Professor of History, Government College, Lahore, Pakistan, for inspiring my interest in the subject.

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Nature of the Indian Civil Service 1857-1917.

The importance of the Civil Service in the working of a modern State can hardly be over-emphasised. Its significance is all the more marked in the case of India because upto the Independence and Partition of the Sub-Continent into two sovereign states, India was governed by a bureaucratic or quasi-bureaucratic form of government. At the apex of all the services stood the Indian Civil Service - the oldest Civil Service in the world.<sup>1</sup> From 1857 up to 1917, the heart and soul of the British Administration in India was the Indian Civil Service.<sup>2</sup> During this period it constituted both the government and the administration, in other words, both the policy-framing and the executive body. Writers on this subject agree that the I.C.S. has never had a parallel anywhere else in the world. Lloyd George described it as the 'steel frame' of the Indian administration. It formed, as it were, the centre-piece and the prime-mover of the whole system of public services.<sup>3</sup>

One reason why the Indian Civil Service assumed prime importance in Government was the rather unusual structure of the Government of India. It was a vast hierarchy with its base in India, but its official

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1. Ghosal, Ashoy Kumar: Civil Service in India under the East India Company, London, 1950, p.12.
  2. Blunt, Sir Edward. The Indian Civil Service, London, 1937. pp.82-3.
  3. Ghosal: op.cit.

apex in London in the person of the Secretary of State for India. He was a member of the British Cabinet and his term of office depended upon the fortunes of party politics. A Council of India, consisting of fifteen members, was established in London to advise the Secretary of State, but its influence waned after 1870 and the position of the Secretary of State became more and more important in relation to the other elements of the Government of India. The Parliament embroiled in Irish problems and other domestic and foreign issues had little time for India and generally gave the Secretary a free hand.<sup>1</sup>

The head of the British Government in India was the Governor General styled the Viceroy when acting as the direct representative of the Crown, usually appointed for five years. He was assisted by an executive Council, but the powers of this body were very limited. For administrative purposes British India was broken up into units called the Provinces, each under a Governor or a Lieutenant-Governor. The Provinces were divided into Divisions, and these in turn were further divided into Districts. The District was the basic administrative unit and the key figure in Indian administration was the District Officer.

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1. Thompson, Edward and Garratt, G.T.: Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India, London, 1934, p.466.

The influence of some strong Secretaries of State like the Duke of Argyll, Lord Salisbury and Lord Hartington was considerable and control from Whitehall probably reached its highest point when Lord Morley was Secretary of State. During his term of office, the Viceroy was regarded as 'the Secretary of State's Agent in India'.<sup>1</sup> These men were of considerable political consequence and of a different calibre from most Presidents of the Pre-Mutiny era. Their position in the Cabinet led them to exercise an increasing control over the political activities of the Government of India, and their ability to do so was heightened immensely by the opening of direct telegraphic communication in 1870. The days were over when a Governor-General like Lord Wellesley, could get his own way by presenting the home authorities with a fait accompli. Even afterwards, sometimes a Governor-General like Lord Curzon could completely overshadow the Secretary of State. During Curzon's term of office, the Secretary of State described himself as 'The Viceroy's Ambassador in England'.<sup>2</sup> All influence coming from the top, however, was temporary. The Civil Service in the absence of a regular organ of control grew up to be a bureaucracy with all its virtues and vices.

Vices apart, the I.C.S. was a remarkable body of intelligent, conscientious and hard-working officials. Its high standards of

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1. Blunt: The I.C.S., op.cit., p.85-6.

2. ibid.

admission and excellent remuneration attracted some of the most capable young men from Great Britain. The I.C.S. has also probably been the most literary administrative service in the world. Its gifted members have left monumental works like the Imperial Gazetteer, Census Reports, Settlement Reports, District Gazetteers, and above all their own Memoirs. They have also been frequent contributors to newspapers, periodicals, reviews and journals. Sir Alfred Lyall, the subject of our study, is an eminent member of this scholar-official body.

The most distinctive feature of the I.C.S. was the participation of some of its members in the politics of the country. They did not regard their jobs as merely administrative. But according to some writers, like Finer, a public servant is not expected to dabble in politics at all. He is not supposed to take sides with any political party and his professional ethics demand complete impartiality. Public officials are officials, they are not politicians or statesmen. The modern system of ministerial responsibility and of changing political executives unequivocally demand that civil servants shall do their work without personal public blame or praise, with a view to help government of any party complexion.<sup>1</sup>

This, however, was not true in the case of the I.C.S. High public functionaries, being away from the actual scene, the civil servants had

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1. Finer, Herman: The Theory and Practice of Modern Government, the abridged, one volume edition, London, 1954, pp.714-720.

to face the immediate political problems. Besides, they were trained with a specific mission, which was the maintenance of British rule over India. It is well worth pointing out that their training was very comprehensive and it entailed severe regimentation. Sir Bampfylde Fuller writes in his book entitled Some Personal Experiences:-

"The examinations were strict. My final examination included twenty eight papers of three hours each, and half this number of vica-voces. I went out to India with a fair class-room knowledge of Sanskrit, Persian, Hindustani and Hindi, some acquaintance with Arabic and stuffed with law, political economy and Indian history." It seems that this varied mental equipment coupled with a strict probation period, aimed at providing them with sufficient understanding of the country's problems, so that they could discharge their duties to the satisfaction of their masters.

The original aim of the British in India was economic, but the gradual transference of power from the Company to the Crown changed it into a political one in 1857. There is no doubt that British rule brought in its train the educational and social renaissance of the natives, it was nevertheless, incidental to the above aims, i.e. economic and political. From 1857 onwards, the British, in general, and the Indian Civil Servants, in particular, were expected to employ all their resourcefulness to advance the political influence of the Crown. It has already been mentioned that some of the members of the I.C.S.,

participated in the country's politics, which distinguished the I.C.S., both in theory and practice, from civil services of other countries.

Apart from doing their routine administrative duties, most of the I.C.S. men were very much aware of the political developments of their time, in which they took an active part, and made their influence strongly felt. Men like Sir George Campbell, Sir Richard Temple, Sir John Strachey, Sir Alfred Lyall, Sir Charles Aitchison, Allan Hume, Sir W.W. Hunter, Sir Henry Cotton, Sir Bampfylde Fuller and Sir Michael O'Dwyer were full of political ideas and some intelligent and resourceful ideologies of government.

The most powerful political organisation in India, the Indian National Congress was founded by a Civil Servant Allan Hume. Political education for India remained one of the sustained interests of Hume's life. Soon after the inception of the idea of Congress, Hume went to England for the purpose of consulting friends and sympathisers in the Parliament and outside. He gained promises of support on behalf of the Ripon Reform Policy from liberal members of the House of Commons like John Bright and James Caird. He returned to India in time for the inaugural meeting of the Indian National Congress, which opened in Bombay on December 27, 1885; the first of a long series of annual gatherings held ever since.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ratcliffe, S.K.: Sir William Wedderburn and the Indian Reform Movement, London, 1923, p.59.

Sir William Wedderburn, another distinguished member of the service, was always concerned with the creation and improvement of political institutions. As a complete Liberal he believed without reserve, in the principle of self-government for India. The extraordinary position he attained in India, the unreserved affection and trust which the people of all ranks reposed in him, came to him as a result of his constant sympathy for the Indian people.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Henry Cotton, a remarkable member of the I.C.S., states, "I never made any concealment of my opinion; everyone knew that I identified myself with Lord Ripon's policy and I was already described as a White Baboo."<sup>2</sup> He championed the Indian cause in collaboration with his friend and colleague, Sir Henry Harrison, who was most devoted to the people of the country and who was genuinely sympathetic towards the aspirations of the educated classes. In the stormiest days of the Native Jurisdiction Bill controversy, Harrison and Cotton arranged a mixed dinner for the Indians and the English, and Cotton made a speech breathing the spirit of equality.<sup>3</sup> It was Sir Henry Cotton who first visualized the ideal of the Federated States of India.<sup>4</sup>

1. Ratcliffe: op.cit., pp. 176-7.
2. Cotton, Sir Henry: Indian and Home Memories, London, 1911, p.187.
3. Woodruff, Philip: The Men Who Ruled India, The Guardians, p. 175.
4. Durai, J.C: The Choice Before India, London, 1941, p.85

Civil servants like Sir Bampfylde Fuller and Sir Michael O'Dwyer remained steadfast Conservatives regarding India, throughout their official careers and afterwards. Criticising British policy with regard to constitutional and political reforms Fuller wrote, "We should not have abdicated the control, which could alone keep peace amongst sectarian animosities, and committed ourselves to sentimental reforms which have thrown the country into disorder, have involved countless prosecutions and punishments and much loss of life, and have finally lost for England the confidence of Asiatics. Prospects which twenty five years ago seemed as stable as the course of a canal are now as uncertain as the behaviour of the flooded Ganges."<sup>1</sup> Likewise Sir Michael O'Dwyer wrote in his book India as I Knew It, one of the most remarkable writings of his time on India, "Could there be a more pitiful exhibition of the incapacity, the irresponsibility, and the intellectual dishonesty of many of those who arrogantly demand that we should entrust to them the governance of 320 millions of people?"<sup>2</sup> That such a question could be asked by a Provincial Governor as late as in the twenties of the present century is really startling. Similar other passages in the book portray his feelings about the Home Rule Demand of the native politicians.

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1. Fuller, Sir Bampfylde: Some Personal Experiences, London, 1930, p.1.
  2. O'Dwyer, Sir Michael: India As I Knew It, London, 1925, p.412.

With regard to the problems pertaining to the government of India, the views of the Indian Civil Servants have been considered by some writers as only next in importance to the views of the people of India.<sup>1</sup> In political reforms, due consideration was shown to the views of the I.C.S. Their views, like those of the Hindus, Muslims, other minorities and factions, had to be accommodated. Pointing out the difficulties in drafting the Act of 1909, Lord Morley wrote to Lord Minto "the subject is grave; to keep in step with you is all important; to present a front that won't offend the Bureaucracy nor the non-official Anglo-Indians, nor the Mohammedans, nor the right wing of the Congressmen is no joke."<sup>2</sup> The Bureaucracy, if unsuited for evolving any general policy, was remarkably effective in passively resisting any innovations of which the majority of officials did not approve. No Viceroy, with his limited term of office, could hope to accomplish much against the wishes of the Bureaucracy.

The four decades, following the year 1857 may be thought of as the golden age of the bureaucratic machine in India. The comparatively easy defeat of the uprising of 1857 was taken by most of the British as a justification for their rule. Sir Percival Griffiths in his book called The British Impact on India writes, "The Anglo-Indian Bureaucracy in the second half of the nineteenth century, though efficient and devoted to the welfare of India, became a ruling caste outside the main current of Indian life and feeling." It is interesting to notice that even

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1. Barker, Sir Ernest, The Future Government of India and the Indian Civil Service, London, 1919, p.2.
  2. Morley: Recollections, Vol.11, p.28.

today this attitude of isolation exists in the case of the higher civil servants of India and Pakistan. Professor Morris-Jones very aptly remarks, "The cast of mind of the Higher civil servant is still distinctive and he still tends, for reasons of taste and convenience, to restrict his social intercourse to the circle of his fellows."<sup>1</sup>

"Stracheyism" was the representative feature of this age. Sir John Strachey was the most powerful influence in the Civil Service, the tower of strength upon whom Viceroy's like Lord Mayo (1869-72) and Lord Lytton (1876-80) leaned for support.<sup>2</sup> The essence of Strachey's Indian Imperialism was an empire resting on power. He believed in direct rule and the observance of impartial law, and he rejected as base the notion of buying support of any particular classes like the peasantry and the Indian Aristocracy. The end to be achieved was a good and efficient government.<sup>3</sup>

A great wave of Liberalism came over India with the ascendancy of the Liberal party in England and the despatch of Lord Ripon to India in 1880. This period, however, was not to last long and the tide of Imperialism surged back again. In the later nineteenth century came the influence of the new Imperialism and with it the halcyon days of the "White Man's Burden" a term which implied the conviction that it was the right and the responsibility of Europeans in general, and the British in particular, to extend their rule and culture to all corners of the earth.

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1. Morris-Jones, W.H: Parliament in India, London, 1957, p.11.

2. Stokes; Eric: The English Utilitarians and India, London, 1959, p.282.

3. Stokes: op.cit., p.310.

The political role of the I.C.S. became more obvious, and at times, very difficult with the rise of Indian nationalism. The formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 complicated the problems of Imperial rule. The task of adjusting the aims and ambitions of the British Government with the political aspirations of the educated classes of natives, was a singularly difficult one. Perceptive civil servants like Sir Alfred Lyall started to issue warnings of dangers ahead. Bureaucracy found the political situation increasingly difficult to handle. The year 1917 marks a turning point in the role of the I.C.S. The British Government in 1917 committed itself to a policy which was formulated in the famous statement "the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire." It was felt that as India progressed towards responsible government the Civil Service must abandon its old place and adjust itself to the new situation. The Civil Service was no longer to be the 'Government' as before, but to become merely the 'administration'. The seat of authority in India was to be removed from the Civil Service to the legislature, in order to build up the system of Government accordingly. Ramsay Macdonald said "Wisdom compels us to see not very far off the end of the Civil Service as we have known it."<sup>1</sup> The position of

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1. Macdonald, J.R: Government of India, 1919, p.113.

the civilian further changed with the Government of India Act, 1935. Instead of taking action he could merely advise. The civilian who used to serve by ruling learnt to rule by serving.<sup>1</sup>

After having some idea of the nature and character of the I.C.S. from 1857 up to 1917 we can now make an effort to see what sort of political ideas some of the Civil Servants had. Lord Morley and some other writers are of the opinion that some of the administrators contributed a considerable share towards the growth of Imperialism of the late nineteenth century. If any central thread can be picked out of the tangled skein of the political ideas of the later nineteenth century, Imperialism would appear to be the most prominent. It has been described as the 'dominant political creed'<sup>2</sup> and as a 'widespread political theory'<sup>3</sup>.

During the Imperialist phase, Indian service attracted a few rare minds who brought the highest currents of European thought to play upon Indian problems and who, in their turn, brought back ideas nourished by Indian experience into English intellectual life. The most remarkable among them were Sir Henry Maine, Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, Sir Alfred Lyall and Sir William Wilson Hunter.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Blunt: The I.C.S., p.78.

2. Trevelyan, G.M: British History in the Nineteenth Century and After, London, 1937, p.397.

3. Barker, Sir Ernest: Political thought in England 1848-1914, 1947 ed., p.14.

4. Stokes, E.T: The Administrators and historical Writings on India, South Asia Seminar, Paper, p.3.

Maine and Stephen were high public functionaries. Maine had served as Law Member to the Government of India (1862-9) when Stephen succeeded him as Law Member (1869-72). Lyall and Hunter were both Indian Civil Servants. Grant-Duff wrote to Lord Dufferin the following about Lyall:- "You admirably describe Lyall - how astonishingly few men of literary genius the Indian services produced! He is the best in 200 years!"<sup>1</sup>

Sir Alfred Lyall and some other administrators have not created a special "Ism" in recent political thought. However, as far as originality and creativeness in the realm of political theory is concerned, there are remarkably few principles, though sometimes regarded in modern times as startling novelties, which were not anticipated in the ancient and mediaeval writings.<sup>2</sup> The process of borrowing, consciously or unconsciously, seems to have been going on in recent times and really original political theories are few and far between. It has mostly been a matter of reinterpretation of the classic works of genius and the application of old ideas to new circumstances. At any rate, politics is the art of making adjustments, since political ideas and institutions can be adapted to the changing needs of the times and climes. True, the political ideas of Lyall are not of the same quality and kind as those of Maine, Dicey, Green and Laski who represent modern

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1. Grant-Duff to Dufferin, 28 July, 1887: Dufferin Papers, MSS 526/174.

2. Hearnshaw, F.J.C: The Social & Political Ideas of some Representative thinkers of the Revolutionary Era, Vol.6, London, 1931, p.7.

political thought in England; but it is to be remembered that these thinkers were all academic men, who spent their lives in studies and theorizing. Lyall, on the other hand, was a busy public official and it is remarkable that despite his heavy routine duties he could lift his mind above his immediate preoccupations and think on subjects like indigenous institutions, education, Indianization of services, decentralization, self-government and the relations of India and England in times to come. Some of these subjects, i.e. decentralization; self-government and the relations of a free State with a dependency, are obviously political, while others, like the study of a different people and their native institutions, the effect of Western education on Eastern minds, and the Indianization of Services also had important bearing on the politics of the country.

Political ideas do not necessarily emerge from the quiet of the college cloister of the Professors; they also spring from, and have reference to immediate political experience.<sup>1</sup> Lyall's name may not be included among the established political thinkers of his time and country. He himself had no pretensions to offer a conscious and coherent political theory. A careful study, however, reveals that he had some political ideas which the present writer will endeavour to show.

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1. Stokes, Eric: The Political Ideas of English Imperialism, An Inaugural Lecture given in the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. London, 1960, p.8.

## 2. Life and Career of Lyall.

The Lyalls spelt their name in various ways, such as Lyles or Lylls and whether there was any connection between the Lyles, Lylls and Lyalls is not known. One thing is certain that the Lyalls belonged to the Border population of Scotland which gave much trouble to the English of the northern counties. In 1761, one George Lyall bought some land in the Castle Gate of Berwick-on-Tweed, built a house in Greystonelees and entered into business. After his death his eldest son, John Lyall, who was well educated, came to England and settled down at Findon in Sussex. He married Jane Comyn of an old Scottish family. They had five sons. The eldest, George, who succeeded to the property at Findon became a director of the East India Company and was twice elected Chairman. He was also twice elected a Member of Parliament for the City of London. The second son entered the army and died a Lieutenant-Colonel in India. The youngest son, Alfred Lyall, who was a Rector, married Mary Broadwood of Sussex; also originally from the Scottish Border. Their second son, christened Alfred Comyn Lyall, in memory of his father and grandmother, is the subject of our study.<sup>1</sup>

Lyall was born on the 4th of January, 1835, at Coulsdon in Surrey. Following in his father's footsteps, Lyall joined Eton when he was ten years old. During his school years, Lyall distinguished himself as a keen student. At the age of seventeen he went up for the Newcastle

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1. Durand; Sir Henry Mortimer: Life of the Rt.Hon. Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall, Edinburgh and London, 1913, pp.1-7.

Scholarship. He could have got a scholarship at King's College, Cambridge, a little later but he decided to take up an Indian career.<sup>1</sup> Lyall's family did not have a long record of service in India as those of Beadons, Rivett-Carnacs and Cottons. One of his uncles had an army career in India, and by that time his elder brother, Walter, had also joined the Indian army and was urging him to follow. Lyall's love for romance and colour drew him to the Indian career. Later, his younger brother James, afterwards Sir James Lyall, Lieut.-Governor of the Punjab followed and thus the Lyalls had a considerable number in the Indian Service.

In 1853 Lyall got from his uncle a nomination to the East India Company's College at Haileybury. This institution had produced some remarkable civil servants. Sir George Campbell, Sir Richard Temple and Sir John Strachey were all products of the Haileybury tradition, which meant "a high standard of personal conduct, a sense of the magnitude of the tasks ahead, an ideal of loyal service to India as well as England."<sup>2</sup> Sir George Campbell spoke of Haileybury in very complimentary terms and for him the life at Haileybury was always a very pleasurable recollection.<sup>3</sup> For Lyall, however, it was a "well-organised humbug".<sup>4</sup>

1. Durand: op.cit., p.17.

2. Harrison, J.B: 'Notes on W.H. Moreland' South Asia Seminar, A Paper, p.6.

3. Campbell, Sir George: Memoirs of My Indian Career, Vol.1, pp.8-9.

4. Durand: Lyall, op.cit., p.21.

He finished his course at Haileybury in 1855 when he was twenty and at the end of the same year he left for India, arriving at Calcutta in January, 1856. He was to choose between a posting in Lower Bengal and going to the North-Western Provinces. He made a choice for the latter, as life in the North Western Provinces meant more adventure and promotion.

Lyall started his official career as Assistant Magistrate, Bulandshahr, a district of Meerut Division, in the Lieutenant-Governorship of the North-Western Provinces. Soon after entering service he was to witness the historic outbreak of 1857. He took active part in mutiny operations and the stirring events of 1857 and 1858 opened his eyes to many new things which he would not have learnt otherwise. It served as a valuable experience to him in later years for his mind was made more alert to certain ways and habits of the natives during those two years.

In 1861, after putting in five years of solid hard work, Lyall went to England on his first furlough. On his return in 1863, he was posted to Agra, one of the most interesting and historic cities of India, as Assistant Magistrate. After a year, that is after putting in eight years of service, in the North-Western Provinces, Lyall was transferred to the Central Provinces with an independent charge of a district, Hoshungabad. His fiery chief in the Central Provinces was Sir Richard Temple. Temple was a vigorous administrator, with enormous

powers of work, always going on extensive tours over the country under his control. The pace of Temple's work alarmed Lyall at times and for his temperament it was both comic and distasteful. Lyall always preferred to drive his own coach slowly.

In 1865, Lyall was appointed Acting Commissioner of Nagpur for six months, which was a big post for his age and experience. In 1867 he was sent to Akola to act as Commissioner of West Berar for a year. He was confirmed in his post the same year which was very creditable for a man of 33 years. During his Commissionership, Lyall wrote a Census Report which, though an official document, contained some matter not usually found in such reports. He sent it with an apology and an explanation. "..... I must again ask to be excused for entering upon matters theological, on the plea, that even these statistics may have some positive value. If, for example, we could ascertain by our periodical census that the numbers of ascetics and religious vagrants were rapidly diminishing and that during the same period the free thinking or independent sects were fast increasing (as I believe them to be) either by the creation of new sects or the reinforcement of old ones, we should thus be able to chronicle a remarkable phase in the development of national thought and convictions. Such signs and tokens might even be allowed to have a kind of political importance."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Lyall, A.C: Report of the Census taken in the Hyderabad Assigned Districts. (From Commissioner West Berar to the First Assistant Resident Hyderabad) Akolah, 18th April, 1868. p.17.

The Berar Census Report, as it is usually called, formed a foundation for Lyall's "Asiatic Studies" perhaps the best known and most valuable of his published writings. During his service in the Central Provinces Lyall helped with the preparations of the early District Gazetteers which led to the writing and compilation of that great work "The Imperial Gazetteer of India" by Sir W.W. Hunter. Sometimes the view taken that the Indian Gazetteers owe their origin to Sir W.W. Hunter is erroneous. The Gazetteers were first started in the Central Provinces in Sir Richard Temple's time and the suggestions to compile these records came from Rivett-Carnac and Major Baldwin, a Deputy Commissioner. An order was issued to compile the Central Provinces Gazetteer, the first one of its kind. It was edited by Charles Grant. Later, Lyall undertook the Gazetteer for Berar. The Government of India did not fail to appreciate the merit of these beginnings and decided to extend the system to the whole of India. Sir W.W. Hunter was then put in charge of the work.<sup>1</sup>

The first object of the Gazetteers as Lyall observed, was to present a statistical account of the province, its people, its social state, economy and natural resources; with some narrative of its antecedent history as framework and background to the picture. The second object was to encourage and promote the compilation for each province of something like what is called in England a "County History".

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1. Rivett-Carnac, J.H: Many Memories of Life in India at Home and Abroad. London, 1910, pp.113-5.

The fulfilment of the main object of such a publication could come when some of the educated natives "often contracting some tincture of real literary taste" were to collect and preserve the annals of their provinces.<sup>1</sup> The gazetteers were very useful documents; none will dispute that for the good management of the district, local knowledge is necessary. The more detailed and intimate such knowledge is, the better it is for the people of the district. When such knowledge is merely acquired by individuals, it is apt to be of a fugitive character, owing to those frequent changes which are inevitable in administration. It constantly happens that when an officer has acquired much knowledge of his district by travelling and communication with other people, he is transferred to another place by requirements of the service. The result is that he carries all his knowledge away with him; his successor has to study everything ab initio. Thus it became important that the multiform facts of local interest and value were recorded by all who had the means of knowing them.<sup>2</sup> The encouragement given to officials for compiling District Gazetteers and later entrusting the charge of the great Gazetteer of India to Hunter, certainly shows imagination on the part of the Government of India.

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1. Gazetteer For the Haiderabad Assigned District, Commonly Called Berar, Bombay, 1870. Edited by A.C. Lyall, Commissioner of West Berar.
  2. Gazetteer of the Central Provinces. Nagpore 1867-8. Compiled by A.C. Lyall, Civil Service, Major Dodds, Director of Public Instruction and C. Browning, Inspector of Schools.

In 1871 Lyall went to England on a long leave and during this furlough, he made the valuable acquaintance of several men of mark; Sir Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant-Duff, Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, Sir Henry Maine and Lord Morley. By that time he had also started writing for the Fortnightly Review, which was his favourite pastime in later years. In 1872, he returned to India and resumed his previous charge of Commissionership of West Berar.

It was in 1873, that Lyall filled one of the most coveted appointments at the Centre. During the Viceroyalty of Lord Northbrook, he was offered Home Secretaryship to the Government of India. It was an exceptional honour for a man of thirty eight and Lyall had proved his worth to earn it. Lyall's term of office as Home Secretary, however, did not last long and in 1874 he was appointed as Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana on a promise from the Viceroy that he would be appointed Foreign Secretary as soon as a vacancy occurred.<sup>1</sup>

In Rajputana, the nature of Lyall's work was quite different. Previously all the appointments he held were of an administrative nature. His present job, that of Agent to the Governor-General was of a political and diplomatic nature. He had an excellent opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge of native states and to make the acquaintance of many Rajput nobles and chiefs. For some time Lyall remained quite happy in Rajputana,

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1. 'Lyall to Sir J.F. Stephen', 3rd. June 1877, Aboo, Rajputana  
Stephen Papers, Ad. MSS.7349/3.

but later when the charm of novelty wore thin, Lyall's restless mind craved for some change. He felt jammed in a remote corner of India. He wrote to Lord Northbrook "..... I may perhaps venture to say that I should be sorry if my eventual return to the head-quarters of Government were to become definitely cut off..... the best years of my Indian life have all been passed in the outlying provinces; and my private inclinations would lead me to place much value upon some office in which I should not be so entirely apart from general English Society as I am in Rajputana."<sup>1</sup>

He expressed similar feelings to Stephen. "I am afraid Lord Northbrook did me no good by sending me down here with the promise he could not perform, of the Foreign Office..... Of Indian affairs generally you probably hear quite as much in London as I do at Aboo."<sup>2</sup> He requested Stephen to approach Lord Lytton on his behalf for the Foreign Secretaryship and Stephen did so. He had great appreciation for Lyall's intellect and literary qualities.

In 1878, Lyall was appointed Foreign Secretary by Lord Lytton. Lyall was extremely happy as he had once described the post to George Lyall as follows:-

"It is by far the most considered of all the Secretaryships and is

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1. 'Lyall to Northbrook' 5th October, 1875, Aboo, Rajputana. Northbrook Collection. MSS.Eur.C.144/17.
  2. 'Lyall to Stephen', 3rd. June, op.cit.

held to be the blue ribbon of the Civil Service."<sup>1</sup>

Lyall's term of office as Foreign Secretary was very successful. One of his closest friends and colleagues, Sir Evelyn Baring, afterwards Lord Cromer, observes that as Foreign Secretary Lyall came out of a situation of extreme difficulty, in which the reputation of many men would have foundered, with credit and distinction. In spite of the fact that Lyall was associated with a policy to which Lytton was strongly opposed, the latter, recognising Lyall's ability, had chosen him. Lyall never concealed his opinions but at the same time kept his mind open to new ideas and impressions. What Lytton termed "the Lyall habit of seeing both sides of a question" proved rewarding for Lyall, as Foreign Secretary. In 1878, he was "quite in favour of vigorous action to counteract the Russians" but two years later in 1880, he made the characteristic comment that he "was mentally edging back towards old John Lawrence's counsel never to embark on the shoreless sea of Afghan politics." On the whole Lyall came out of the difficult test with flying colours.<sup>2</sup>

In 1880, Lord Ripon who had succeeded Lord Lytton as Viceroy, recommended Lyall's name for the Knighthood of The Bath. Formerly, there was some reluctance to grant the decoration to Lyall due to the

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1. 'A.C. Lyall to George Lyall', 1875. Lyall Collection, MSS.Eur.D.552/14.
  2. Cromer, Evelyn Baring, Earl of: 'Sir Alfred Lyall' Political and Literary Essays. London, 1913, First Series, pp.99-100.

prevailing opinion that Lyall was one of "Lord Lytton's men" - Lytton being anathema to the new Government. However, Lord Ripon's recommendation was as strong as any sent by Lytton, thus Lyall achieved the great honour of a K.C.B.

Lyall was often criticised for being able to work for both the Viceroys of conflicting policies. In 1882, Lyall became the Lieutenant-Governor of North-Western Provinces where he had started his official career as Assistant Magistrate nearly a quarter of a century earlier. This was the highest rung of the Indian official ladder; undoubtedly the top-niche for a civil servant.

During his Lieutenant-Governorship, two controversial issues, the Ilbert Bill, as it is commonly called, and Local Self-Government Scheme, arose. Both of them were connected with Lord Ripon's general Reform Policy and they are discussed in detail in Chapters III and IV with special reference to Lyall's political ideas. Here it is interesting to note what Lyall wrote to Cromer on the Ilbert Bill controversy. He admitted that he gave the Viceroy "rather lukewarm support" and he said "I have intrenched myself behind cautious proposals and am quoted on both sides."<sup>1</sup>

In 1887, Lyall's 31 years old official career in India came to a close. Lyall's achievements as Lieutenant-Governor of the North Western Provinces were later recognised by Lord Lansdowne in a warm tribute.

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1. Cromer: op.cit., p.99.

Following are some of his words:- ".....He will certainly long be remembered as the Lieutenant-Governor who gave these provinces a University, a Legislative Council, and a Rent Law suited to the requirements of the country, an act which..... is a standing monument to the tact and ability with which Sir Alfred Lyall handled that most difficult question..... He was above all things, a student, and a thorough student, from the day of his arrival in India until the day when he left it..... He was one of those who are not content with knowing the surface of human affairs, but who seek rather to search out the sources of events, and the great principles which underlie them. His knowledge was consequently exceptional in its extent and thoroughness; it gave him an exceptional insight into the life and character of the people..... To culture of this kind Sir Alfred Lyall added a remarkable literary ability which gave a charm to everything which proceeded from his pen. There can be little doubt that had he preferred such pursuits to those of official life he would have risen to the highest ranks among modern writers of the English language."<sup>1</sup>

In 1887, Lord Dufferin wrote to Lord Cross:- "When a general vacancy occurs, I hope you will not forget that Sir Alfred Lyall is a claimant for a seat in the Indian Council at home. He will not give you a positive

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1. Speeches by the Marquis of Lansdowne, Lansdowne Papers, MSS.Eur.D.558/4, No.XII.

opinion upon any question, but he will put all the aspects of it before you with wonderful analytical acuteness."<sup>1</sup> In 1888, soon after his arrival in England, Lyall was offered a seat in the Council of India, Dufferin again wrote to Cross:- "...I am delighted that you have elevated him to the Council..... he would prove a great acquisition of strength to the India Office generally. His mind is philosophical, analytical, and pessimistic, with a considerable dash of cynicism. He will not give you a very strong opinion on any subject, nor is he always constant in his views, but he will put before you in a very clear manner everything that is to be said on one side or the other. He certainly possesses great literary genius and what does not always co-exist with that quality, he is a shrewd hard-headed, industrious administrator."<sup>2</sup> Lyall was unquestionably a man of ideas but there are many differences of opinion with regard to his being a man of action. We shall observe later why Lord George Hamilton, for instance, thought that Lyall was not a man of action.

In 1902, came perhaps the greatest honour of Lyall's life when he was made a Privy Councillor. It was, indeed, an exceptional honour as Rivet-Carnac observes with interest the fact that in the whole history of the service, the number of its members who for their successes in India

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1. 'Dufferin to Cross', 1887, The Cross Collection, MSS.Eur.E.243/22. Vol.2, p.193.
  2. ibid. 30th January, 1888. MSS.Eur.E243/24, Vol.4.

received this honour could be counted on one hand. They were, Warren Hastings, Mountstuart Elphinstone, Lord Lawrence, Sir Richard Temple and Sir Alfred Lyall. In Temple's case the reward was rather for his Parliamentary than his Indian Services.<sup>1</sup>

Lyall retired from the Indian Council in 1903, after fifteen years of service. Lord George Hamilton recorded his impression about Lyall as follows:-

"Lyall retires this week from the India Council. I shall feel his loss greatly; he is not a man of action, his mind is too subtle and critical to induce him to run risks, but his knowledge, sagacity and breadth render him at times an invaluable aid, and his reputation with other departments and Anglo-Indians make him a most effective negotiator."<sup>2</sup>

In all, Lyall's connection with India had been for nearly half a century from 1856 to 1903. He, however, remained in touch with Indian affairs right till his death in 1911. His vast intellectual range included subjects like poetry, religion, history and politics. Lyall was by nature a poet, eminently sensitive, perceptive, and meditative. His verses written in India have delighted his readers, and he has been considered next only to Kipling as regards poems about India. Lyall was a keen and thorough student of Indian Religions; his Asiatic Studies

1. Rivett-Carnac: Many Memories, London, 1910, p.125.

2. 'Lord George Hamilton to Lord Curzon', 14th January, 1903.  
Hamilton Collection: MSS.Eur.C.126. Vol.V, pp.8-9.

is regarded an excellent piece of work. He brought his acutely analytical intellect to the task of comprehending the Indian habit of thought and so far as it is possible for any Western to achieve that very difficult task, he may be said "to have got to the back of the Oriental mind." A contemporary writer says "The profoundest mind after Maine was that of Lyall" and his British Dominion in India is sufficient to give Lyall a high place among the historians of India. The book is termed "a genuine work of philosophic history which has stood the test of time." Lyall was always a student of politics and he was interested heart and soul, in the Indian political affairs as well as the political happenings in other countries.

CHAPTER 1

VIEWS ON INDIA AND THE INDIANS

The principle that there must be an important relation between man and his physical environment arises from Montesquieu's political philosophy. Montesquieu was probably the first political philosopher to relate the theory of the empire of climate to the character, laws, and manners of nations in a systematic manner.<sup>1</sup> According to Montesquieu, climate determined the fundamental nature of national character. His theory regarding the effect of climate on morals is particularly interesting. However, there are some sweeping generalizations, i.e. the Northern people are morally superior and virtuous, because their senses are dull; the Southern people are immoral and unchaste because their passions are violent. Montesquieu said:-

"In northern countries we meet with a people who have few vices, many virtues, a great share of frankness and sincerity. If we draw near the south, we fancy ourselves removed from all morality; the strongest passions multiply all manner of crimes, everyone endeavouring to take what advantage he can over his neighbour, in order to encourage those passions."<sup>2</sup>

1. Fletcher, F.T.H: Montesquieu and English Politics (1750-1800); London, 1939, p.93.

2. Montesquieu: The Spirit of Laws; Vol.1, Book XIV, p.270.

Montesquieu's general conclusions about Asia were that in this Continent, the strong nations were opposed to the weak. The warlike, brave and active people imposed themselves upon those who were 'indolent, effeminate, and timorous'.<sup>1</sup> The one must therefore conquer, and the other be conquered. Montesquieu remarked:-

"..... There reigns in Asia a servile spirit, which they (the Asiatics) have never been able to shake off, and it is impossible to find, in all the histories of this country, a single passage which discovers a free soul: we shall never see anything there but the heroism of slavery."<sup>2</sup> His impressions of India followed from his views on Asia. The Indians were, according to him, naturally cowardly people. Nature had framed these people of a texture so weak as rendered them timid, at the same time, their imaginations were formed so lively, that every object made the strongest impressions upon them. As a good education is more necessary to children than to those who arrived to maturity as a result of understanding, so the inhabitants of India and other southern climates were in much greater need of it. It was quite obvious because the greater their sensibility, the more essential

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1. Montesquieu: op.cit, The Spirit of Laws.

it was for them to receive proper impressions, to imbibe no prejudices, and to let themselves be directed by reason.<sup>1</sup>

Interesting as they are, Montesquieu's generalizations are far from being the picture of accuracy and are obviously tinged with the flavour of exaggeration.

For Lyall, who tried hard to understand India, the country offered a field of remarkable interest. He regarded India as "the most complete and perfect specimen" which was left of the ancient civilised world. While going through his writings, one is forcibly struck by Lyall's interest in the indigenous institutions and the diverse peoples of India. Like Henry Lawrence and Bartle Frere, Lyall also saw the value of Indians as individuals, and the worth of Indian institutions. Unlike an overwhelming majority of the official Anglo-Indians, Lyall was not contemptuous of native ways and habits. He was an ardent admirer of Sir Henry Maine, and it is said that he owed much to the latter's influence and example. Before turning to Maine's influence on Lyall, and Lyall's own views on India and the Indians, it would be useful to have a glimpse of some notable writings on India, preceding those of Maine and Lyall.

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1. Montesquieu: op.cit., Book XIV p.271.

The most striking work is James Mill's History of British India published in 1817. About Book II ('Of the Hindus') it has been observed by Duncan Forbes that:-

"... No reader of the Second Book of the History of India can fail to notice the marked lack of sympathy for every aspect of Hindu civilisation which is displayed there."<sup>1</sup> The same writer adds, "It may be imagined how irresistibly attractive this all-too-easy short cut to the understanding of a strange country must have proved to the intelligent young officials seeking information about India for the purposes of administration. It was the sort of simplified, cut and dried history which never fails to appeal to the non-historian, and moreover it cast a mantle of philosophical respectability over a crude, self satisfied insularity."<sup>2</sup>

It is ironic to see that Mill's extravagant judgements as expressed in his History were transmitted to the readers by a man who had originally sought to correct them. H.H. Wilson adopted the method of adding long footnotes to Mill's text and these footnotes being in very small print, were not read, and thus to a large extent his purpose, as a critic, was defeated. The book went

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1. Forbes, Duncan: 'James Mill and India', The Cambridge Journal; Vol.V, No.1, October 1951. p.25.
  2. ibid, p.28.

through five editions up to 1858, and was perhaps the most important single influence moulding English opinion about India for the fifty years from its publication.<sup>1</sup> Mill sought to prove that the abject condition in which the English found the natives, in particular, the Hindus in the eighteenth century, represented their normal condition throughout their history. He ridiculed the hypothesis put forward by Sir William Jones that a high state of civilization existed among the ancient Hindus. A contemporary Indian writer, observes with regret, that the views held by Mill were primarily based upon ignorance, and that this sort of prejudice clouded the visions of subsequent English historians of India, the difference being one of degree, not of kind.<sup>2</sup> Mill's 'Europocentricism' and contempt for India are considered extreme, even by European writers.<sup>3</sup>

The second important publication in point of time, was Mountstuart Elphinstone's History of India published in 1841. Elphinstone was much more sympathetic to the Hindus, but even so, his mind was not completely free from prejudice. The Book contained

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1. Spear, T.G.P: 'Western Historical Writing in the Era of the Nationalist Movements.' South Asia Seminar, A Paper, p.2.
  2. Majumdar, R.C: 'Nationalist Historians' South Asia Seminar, A Paper, p.2.
  3. Forbes, op.cit.

such passages as:

"The most prominent vice of the Hindus is want of veracity, in which they outdo most nations even of the East." Elphinstone's History was a standard text book in the examinations of the Indian Civil Service in England, and in the Universities of India, as far back as 1866, or perhaps even earlier.<sup>1</sup> Such writings played a real part in setting the intellectual tone of British administration in India in a major portion of the nineteenth century.

Sir James Fitzjames Stephen and Sir John Strachey shared James Mill's political outlook towards India. Stephen regarded Strachey as a brother in arms and there was a strong affinity in the ideas and attitudes of the two men. Neither had any appreciation of Indian culture. Both of them believed in the strong imposition of British rule. India was to be held in firm, confident hands in order to complete the civilising mission. Stephen and Strachey believed that the English were secure as long as they exhibited the qualities of their forefathers - "the masterful will, the stout heart, the active brain, the calm nerves, the strong body."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Majumdar, op.cit.

2. Stokes, Eric: 'The Administrators and Historical Writing on India', South Asia Seminar, A Paper, p.5.

There was no room for human warmth between the ruler and the ruled. They condemned Henry Lawrence's affection for the Princely classes, and John Lawrence's love for the simple village communities. Their distrust of the sentimental attachment of the paternalists to Indian peasantry, however, did not prevent them from sharing the paternalist's dislike of the Indian educated classes. According to them, British Government in India rested on force and not consent.<sup>1</sup>

The essence of Stephen's book Liberty, Equality, Fraternity is, strong government administered by efficient laws. Stephen reinforced the authoritarian tradition of John Austin and Thomas Hobbes. The so-called modern democratic state did not have liberty and equality as its basis, on the contrary, it was a mighty despotism in the hands of a gifted minority, who wielded absolute power. Stephen's political convictions were confirmed by his Indian experience. The glory and grandeur of an enormous Indian empire gave ample justification for assuming complete Imperial authority.

In his book India, Strachey discusses his ideas in a very open manner. He is more explicit than Stephen in the avowal of the aims and objects of the British Government. He writes:-  
 ".... our duty is plain. It is to govern India with unflinching

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1. Stokes: The English Utilitarians and India, London, 1959.  
 pp.282-3.

determination on the principles which our superior knowledge tells us are right, although they may be unpopular."<sup>1</sup> Strachey was a typical bureaucrat. Wilfred Scawen Blunt offers the following comment on him:-

".... The Maharaja at Ahmednagar talked about various Englishmen he had known, Sir John Strachey among others, whom he laughed at for his airs of grandeur. On one occasion he had come to pay a visit and had taken offence because the servants were not all at the door to receive him, and so had gone home. I told him he would laugh more if he could see Sir John Strachey in England, glad of anybody who would take the trouble to say 'How do you do' to him... Yet the officials fancy the natives rate them at their own pretentions."<sup>2</sup>

Sir Henry Maine's writings mark a deviation from the chief intellectual currents of his time. He exercised a profound influence in forming "an important historical view of Indian history."<sup>3</sup> And in shaping the legal system of India, Maine had more to do than any other single man. He was probably the first writer who thoroughly perceived and explained the immense value of India as a

1. Strachey, Sir John: India, Its Administration and Progress, London, 1903, p.506.
2. Blunt, Wilfred Scawen: India Under Ripon, A Private Diary, London, 1909, pp.142-3.
3. Stokes: South Asia Seminar, op.cit., p.6.

living illustration of the ways and ideas of early civilizations.

Maine observed:-

"..... it certainly seems to me that two kinds of knowledge are indispensable .... knowledge of India and knowledge of Roman Law - of India, because it is the great repository of verifiable phenomena of ancient usage and ancient juridical thought."<sup>1</sup> His residence of more than six years in India added to his exact information regarding the curious and much-misunderstood phenomena seen in the various communities and castes of India. This was a country where for centuries political institutions had scarcely existed, and in which for that very reason, the people had created for themselves a system of religious ordinances and social usage, stronger than anywhere else in the world. In such a country as India, Maine's office, as a jurist and legislator, was to guide and regulate the process by which the separate groups were gradually dissolving into a great territorial nationality, under the influence of a government that had introduced certain principles of modern polity. The problem was to do this without abruptly discarding personal laws and traditional sanctions. Maine pointed out that great caution was needed in pressing Western reforms wholesale on an Oriental Society, as there was the great risk of its 'too rapid

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1. Maine: 'Village Communities', Quoted in Life and Speeches of Sir Henry Maine, Edited and Selected by Whitely Stokes, London, 1892, pp.38-9.

disintegration'. There was a need to devise 'a modus vivendi and a point of conciliation between ancient and modern ideas'. And it was also vital to arrest 'the trituration of societies'.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to Maine, there was a certain dullness and dimness attaching to all things Indian but this very obscurity seemed to enhance the effect of turning upon them the light of genius, for in certain hands the confused and opaque materials of Indian history and government became clear, interesting, and picturesque. Sir Henry Maine was a pre-eminent example. Following are some very weighty remarks of Iyall on Maine.

"In just such a swift and penetrating spirit he seems to have read India, the sacred literature, the ponderous histories, the innumerable volumes of official records, and the heavy bundles of papers that came before him as a member of the Government. He could throw a succession of rapid glances over its diversified social and political formation, and his remarkably accurate apprehension of its salient features commanded the admiration of all who knew the difficulty of such intellectual exploits. The local expert who, after years of labour in the field of observation, found himself with certain indefinite impressions of the meaning or outcome of his collected facts often found the whole issue of the

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1. Stokes: The English Utilitarians and India, p.315.

inquiry exactly and conclusively stated in one of Maine's lucid generalizations. Or else a suggestion thrown out, or a line of research indicated, would set the explorer on the right course, and show the real scope of the introduction. And while he thus cast into orderly form a jumble of facts, or pointed with his driving rod to the sources of discovery, he never made the mistake of employing the incoherent, changeable, and inconsistent notions of primitive people to buildup clear-cut positive theories. To such theories, which are epidemic in India, he invariably applied the tests of actual evidence and comparative experience, he gave to fictions their proper place and value, and by detaching, what was fit to survive from what had lost its reason of existence, he did much toward reconstructing the whole history of early Indian institutions on the basis most favourable for preserving their modified continuity."<sup>1</sup> Maine's method, his writings, and his speeches had a strong and lasting effect upon all subsequent ways of examining and dealing with subjects connected with history, law and Indian politics.

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1. Lyall: 'Sir Henry Maine', The Law Quarterly Review.  
Vol.IV, No. XIV. April, 1888, p.130.

It is said that 'the profoundest mind after Maine was that of Lyall'.<sup>1</sup> India had a kind of uncommon attraction for a man of Lyall's intellect. During the second half of the nineteenth century the problem before the English Government of India was the adjustment of the mechanism of a modern state to the habits and feelings of a vast, mixed multitude in various stages of development.

Lyall like Maine did not believe in applying Western methods wholesale to India, and Maine's message was often reiterated by him. He saw India as a vast and a colourful picture showing many features and incidents of early history. In India, he observed a sequence of society in different stages, of different political institutions, and different conceptions of sovereignty. Lyall wrote:- "The country affords a field of remarkable abundance for the collection and verification at first hand of living specimens of various types, especially for the study of early ideas on the subject of religion and rulership, and for observing the general movement of Asiatic society, which appears to be not unlike ancient European society in a state of arrested development."<sup>2</sup> To a

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1. Stokes: South Asia Seminar, A Paper, p.8.

2. Lyall: Asiatic Studies, First Series, p.x.

thinker like Iyall, India was not merely a land of regrets, flies, heat and discomfort, it was a fascinating field to be explored carefully for its immense value.

Iyall was extremely interested in the study of Hindu thought and philosophy. To his eager, restless, and subtle mind, Hinduism with its endless mysteries, complexities and enigmas seemed more satisfying than Islam.

To observe a contrast, it would be worth pointing out that for a thinker like James Mill, and for administrators like Sir Bampfylde Fuller and Lord Cromer, it was not worthwhile trying to solve the multifarious enigmas of Hinduism.

As mentioned earlier, James Mill's views on Hindus have invoked a lot of criticism from various quarters. Mill's views, it is generally observed, spring from ignorance and prejudice.

Likewise, Fuller may also appear a harsh judge of the Hindus. He considers Hinduism to be a vulgar and a grotesque religion full of ugly and vile practices.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Cromer observes:-

"Personally I think that a book of the Iliad or a play of Aristophanes is far more valuable than all the lucubrations that have ever been

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1. See Fuller, Sir Bampfylde: Studies of Indian Life and Sentiment. London, 1910.

spun by the subtle minds of learned Hindu Pundits."<sup>1</sup>

Cromer agreed with Dr. Barth who said in his book entitled Religions of India:-

"Hindu thought is profoundly tainted with malady, of which it will never be able to get rid, of affecting a greater air of mystery the less there is to conceal, of making a parade of symbols which at bottom signify nothing..., it is next to impossible to say exactly what Hinduism is, where it begins, and where it ends."<sup>2</sup>

Lyall rendered a great service to his countrymen when he tried to expound the true nature of Hindu religious belief. The very fact that he tried to make a thorough and detailed study of Hinduism in his Asiatic Studies shows his keen interest in the people of India and the indigenous institutions. India's case was distinct in one respect, it showed polytheism in full growth flourishing among a people of ancient culture. However, the prevalence of polytheism did not ensure the continuance of paganism in India for an indefinite period. Lyall anticipated great reforms in Hinduism under the modernising influences of the English. Lyall could, in his own time, perceive a system of enlightened morality gradually evolving among the Hindus as a result of Western education and

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1. Cromer, Evelyn Baring, Earl of: Political and Literary Essays, 1908-1913, London, 1913 First Series, p.88.

2. ibid.

general enlightenment among the people.<sup>1</sup> Recently there have been some revealing observations regarding the future of Hinduism under the impact of the West.<sup>2</sup> The recent propaganda in India through various media, such as films, for instance, aims at discarding religion altogether in times to come. It seems that the people of India who are predominantly Hindus have realised that if India is to march on the road of moral and material advancement, it must sweep away the endless inhibitions imposed by Hinduism, which happens to be the oldest religion in the world. A considerable number of Indian intellectuals today are either atheists or agnostics. The wave of scepticism has been so strong in India that sometimes, one notes with surprise that a few Muslims are also carried away by it.

Under the pseudonym of Vamadeo Shastri, Lyall tried to explain the complexities of Hinduism:-

" The vanishing of polytheism will simply clear away a harmless illusion, as when on a stage actors take off their masks and costumes, and speak with their natural voice, it will uncover Nature working according to regular laws to be understood of any-one, and beyond Nature there will be nothing sensibly visible at all, except the dark stage curtain..... the mainspring that moves the puppet - show

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1. Lyall: Asiatic Studies, First Series, pp.36-8.

2. See Spear, T.G.P: India, Pakistan and the West, London, Second Edition, 1952.

of popular idolatory, is pantheism, and it is with Pantheism, not Polytheism, that a rising morality will have to reckon..."<sup>1</sup>

These lines show Lyall's insight and his habit of incisive analysis.

On the whole, it appears, that as a people, Lyall liked the Hindus more than the Muslims. He preferred the speculative and timid Hindu to the headstrong and fanatical Muslim.

"There is always something very laughable to me in the way these Hindus will walk off with their enemy's property the moment that he is down. Plunder always seems to be their chief object, to obtain which they will perform any villainy, whereas the Mohammedans only seem to care about murdering their opponents, and are altogether far more bloody-minded."<sup>2</sup> After reading Lyall's private correspondence to his friends and relations, Durand comes to the conclusion that Lyall definitely disliked the Muslims. He often said that he hoped to see the expulsion of the Turk from Europe.<sup>3</sup> He went as far as to say that he would like "to join in a regular crusade against them (the Muslims) in any country where Christians dwell."<sup>4</sup> Such strong feelings, when manifested by the calm dispassionate Lyall are

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1. Lyall: Asiatic Studies, Second Series, p.11.
  2. Durand: Life of Lyall, p.67.
  3. ibid, p.68.
  4. ibid, p.86.

indeed startling.

Lyall tried hard to learn about the various tribes, religions, and social customs of the Hindus but apparently he could not muster enough enthusiasm to study Islam. He had the following comments to make on Islam:-

" The clear, precise, and unmistakable nature of the Mohammedan belief, carrying one plain straight line up to heaven, like a tall obelisk pointing direct to the sky without shadow of turning, has maintained general unity of Mohammedan belief in a country where sects take root and spring up as easily as bamboos.<sup>1</sup>... But the institutions of Islam are, after all, barbarous through their very simplicity."<sup>2</sup>

In Lyall's writings, one sometimes finds stray pieces showing his reluctant admiration for Islam, for instance, he remarks:-

"... The Mohammedan faith has still at least a dignity, and a courageous unreasoning certitude, which in Western Christianity have been perceptibly melted down... by long exposure to the searching light of European rationalism... the vigour and earnestness of the high message announced so unflinchingly by Mohammed conquer the hearts of simple folk, and warm the imagination of devout truth

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1. Report of the Census taken in The Hyderabad Assigned Districts, Akolah, 1868, p.13.
  2. Asiatic Studies, Second Series, p.106.

seekers...."<sup>1</sup> The fact that Muslims were good warriors was attributed, by Lyall, to Islam. "There is something in their religion that makes warriors of them."<sup>2</sup> In this respect, Lyall merely corroborated the generally prevalent notions regarding Islam in the Western world.

Here, it is interesting to notice that some Civil Servants like Sir William Wilson Hunter looked at the Muslims in a different light. Hunter wrote his book Our Indian Musulmans in 1871. The object of this book, according to Hunter himself, was to bridge the gap between the Rulers and the Ruled. He traced the past history of the Indian Muslims and pointed out some of the requirements of a 'persistently belligerent class', who were often declared as a source of permanent danger to the Indian Empire. Hunter's attitude towards the Muslims is sympathetic and manifests a good deal of understanding. By virtue of his interest in the Muslim community of India, and a proper study thereof, his judgements on Islam are also less harsh, as compared with those of Lyall.

Hunter observes:-

" The truth is, that when the country passed under our rule, the Moslems were the superior race, and superior not only in stoutness

1. Lyall: Asiatic Studies, First Series, p.289.
2. Durand: Lyall, p.69.

of heart and strength of arm, but in power of political organisation, and in the science of practical government."<sup>1</sup> Hunter mentions the fact that before the country passed to the English, the Muslims were not only the political but the intellectual power in India. They possessed a system of education which, however inferior to that which the British established, was infinitely superior to any other system of education then existing in India. The fact that the Muslims lagged behind in education and general advancement was because of their reluctance to receive Western education. For Hunter, this was quite understandable for "an ancient conquering race cannot easily divest itself of the traditions of its nobler days."<sup>2</sup>

Hunter pointed out that the Muslim grievances against the Government were well-founded. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the condition of the Indian Muslims was really pitiable. Hunter's personal experience as member of the Bengal Civil Service showed him that the Muslims of Lower Bengal were treated with neglect and contempt.<sup>3</sup> The Muslims therefore had just ground for complaining that the Hindus were given a preferential treatment in matters like education, endowments, and employment in

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1. Hunter, Sir William Wilson: Our Indian Musalmans, London 1871, pp.167-8.
  2. ibid, p.175-6.
  3. Hunter; op.cit, p.172-4.

both Government as well as non-official services. Hunter brings out detailed statistics to substantiate his points in support of the Muslim grievances which he establishes as being valid. It is interesting to note that Iyall does not seem convinced by Hunter's account of the Indian Muslims. Iyall thought that 'the British Government was somewhat hastily charged' by Hunter.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from Hunter, Sir Bampfylde Fuller's name was also associated with the Muslims. Fuller's pro-Muslim attitude invited considerable comment and criticism from some of his colleagues. Referring to Fuller's administration in Bengal and the partition of the province, Sir Henry Cotton remarks "For the first time in history the principle was enunciated in official circles: Divide and Rule. The Mohammedans were officially favoured in every possible way. 'My favourite wife' was the somewhat coarse phrase used by Sir Bampfylde Fuller to express his feelings."<sup>2</sup>

It was a common practice for some of the I.C.S. men to take sides with the two major communities of India. With the emergence of the Indian National Congress in 1885, the communal tension began to increase and some of the I.C.S. men started exhibiting their likes,

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1. Iyall: Asiatic Studies, First Series, p.290.

2. Cotton, Sir Henry: Indian and Home Memories, p.317.

dislikes, and preferences regarding the Hindus and the Muslims.

The religious problem was the most difficult one to solve for the English in India. Having no roots in the country, the rulers often felt as if they were sitting on a religious volcano.<sup>1</sup> The mutiny of 1857 had shaken to its foundation the whole fabric of English Government in India. A great convulsion reveals the hidden strata that underlie the surface, and it was seen that the first question on which all others rest was that of religion. Some Englishmen thought that as Christians, it was their duty to be true to their own religion. If they were not true to it, God would surely punish them. As a matter of fact they thought that the Mutiny was a punishment for neglecting their own creed. What attitude should the English as Christians, and their Government as a Christian Government maintain towards the overwhelming multitudes of other religions?

It was on this question that opinions differed. It was urged by some that faithful allegiance to Christianity involved a condemnation of all other religions as being fundamentally false. The Government should give an official support to Christianity and should enter upon a proselytizing policy in support of it, as far as possible without using force or fraud.

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1. Spear, T.G.P: India, Pakistan and the West, p.124.

The ardent exponent of such views was Colonel Herbert Edwardes. He issued a memorandum on 'the elimination of all unchristian principles from the Government of India'. The 'unchristian elements' in English policy, according to him were the exclusion of the Bible and of Christian teaching from Government Schools, the endowment of native religions from the revenue, the recognition of caste, the observance of native holidays in the public offices, and the administration of Hindu and Mohammedan law.<sup>1</sup> Sir John Lawrence had a lot of sympathy with Edwardes's view. He wrote a long memorandum, expressing agreement on some points with Edwardes, but on the whole combating his views.<sup>2</sup>

Sir Bartle Frere differed from both of them. He was opposed to the principles advocated by Colonel Edwardes, and he did not want the Government of India to adopt the modified views of Sir John Lawrence either. Frere was convinced that the course proposed was not right. The English were not justified in using the temporal power of Government to enforce particular forms of religious belief, even when that belief was Christianity. Frere had always been a supporter of Christian missions by private means. He was convinced that the conversion of the natives to Christianity was the greatest

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1. Martineau, John: The Life and Correspondence of Sir Bartle Frere, London, 1895, Vol.1, pp.256-7.

2. ibid.

blessing that the English rule could confer on them. But he felt anxious lest the teaching of Christianity should be endangered by its being taken up by Government officials. He did his utmost to encourage it privately, in the hands of the Missionaries.<sup>1</sup>

Lyall favoured Frere's policy. According to Lyall, Frere took upon this question 'a statesmanlike and a moderate tone' which did much credit to a man in whom piety and a strong interest in Christian missions had always been prominent.<sup>2</sup>

Regarding Lyall's own views on this extremely difficult subject, it is not easy to see what he himself proposed concretely. Writing Asiatic Studies towards the close of the last century, Lyall noticed a clear contrast between Western and Asiatic institutions. A formal separation between religion and civil rulership was becoming an established principle in Western Europe. The main trend was towards disestablishment, disendowment and in short cutting the State clear of its connection with the Church. This attitude of the State with regard to religious institutions, was, according to Lyall, of "more or less respectful unconcern".<sup>3</sup> He saw that among English politicians neutrality meant complete secularisation of the State's function.

1. Martineau: op.cit, p.471.

2. Lyall: 'Life and Correspondence of Sir Bartle Frere', Edinburgh Review, 1895, p.163.

3. Lyall: Asiatic Studies, Second Series, p.104.

On the other hand in Asia, there prevailed the concept of unity in spiritual and temporal affairs. The institution of Caliphate in the Muslim world showed how closely the spiritual headship was bound up with temporal dominion. The ideas of a secular state were totally alien to the Oriental soil. On this subject, Lyall wrote:-

" In the East these ideas are entirely new; and of all the various kinds of new wine which we have latterly been pouring into old bottles, none is more likely to disagree with the Indian taste and constitution... As there has never been one nation or one religion in India, so a national church establishment, excluding all others, has never been imagined. That the sovereign should provide decently for his own persuasion is regarded as natural and decorous, that he should ignore them all and provide not even for his own faith would be a policy comprehensible only by those who had studied English polemics, and one without precedent in Asia."<sup>1</sup>

It seems that Lyall wanted that some State control should be exercised over religious matters. Neutrality meaning complete renunciation of control by the government, was a course of action, foreign to all historic experience in Asia.

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1. Asiatic Studies, First Series, p.295.

Reviewing the religious policy of the Government of India, Lyall made several observations. To begin with, he noticed that one of the cardinal principles upon which British India was administered was toleration. It was lucky for England that she established her dominion, when religious enthusiasm was burning very low in the British nation. The blunders of fanaticism were therefore avoided because there did not remain any ardent spirit of proselytizing abroad. Moreover, non-interference with the religions of the natives, was of such 'plain and profitable expediency' with the East India Company, that not to have practised it would have been 'downright insanity'. A tradition of total abstinence from any religious policy grew up, and was maintained long after the Company ceased to exist. According to Lyall, it was a wise and a prudent conduct. It was also unprecedented because no previous Indian Government could maintain 'such complete equipoise' in religious predilections. The Christians in India, as a body, were given special privileges. In short, 'toleration of this heroic, self-denying kind contradicted all the precedents and prejudices of Asia'. With the passage of time, however, the Government realised that to sit apart from the turmoil of religious strife was no longer possible. The principle of dissociation was constantly resented by the various religions of India.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Asiatic Studies, First Series, Chapter VIII.

It was here that Lyall pointed out that such a policy, i.e. of complete neutrality, was bound to disagree with the Indian taste and habit of thought. The chief difficulty in reading Lyall's ideas on religion and politics is, that there are so many points and proposals which he puts forward and later on contradicts as a result of his over-developed critical faculties. For instance, he found good reasons to criticise the Government, which he thought had acted prematurely, when it resolved to sever the ancient 'chain which bound the religious institutions of each province round the feet of the Government'. Thus the Government, in its efforts to liberate itself 'from being plagued with old-world fancies, threw away the leadership which accrued to the sovereign of India' from being universally recognised as the authority, whose arbitration was accepted in all nominations and successions to important religious office or estate. Lyall could go as far as to remark:- "The very fact that we had succeeded, in some parts of the country, to displace the sovereigns should have made us more careful to supply their exact place, and to continue their functions as closely as possible, instead of passing a self-denying ordinance to strip off the prerogative which every Mohammedan King exercises as an attribute of his rulership!"<sup>1</sup>

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1. Asiatic Studies, First Series, p.298.

After reading these lines, an important question which comes to one's mind is what would this have involved and could the British have done it? It is difficult to imagine that a cautious man like Lyall implied that the English Government should assume as strong a control over religions as the Muslims had done. One can hardly arrive at a definite conclusion as to what Lyall was really advocating. He seems to have side-tracked this issue by preaching political morality.

The concluding remarks of his Asiatic Studies, First Series, illustrate the point regarding political morality:- "All that the English need do is to keep the peace and clear the way..... Jagannath himself may be safely left exposed to the rising tide of that intellectual advancement which the people must certainly work out for themselves if they only keep pace and have patience. No doubt this negative attitude, this standing aloof, is an imperfect and not altogether well secured position..... We have not yet sailed out of the region of religious storms in India, and though spiritual enthusiasm may be gradually subsiding in fervour, yet it may also tend to combine and organise its forces, as polytheism melts down and concentrates.... But there is, at any rate, one gospel which the English can preach and practise in India, the gospel of high political morality, which, because it is a complete novelty and new light among Asiatic Rulers, should for that reason be the characteristic note of our administration...

We cannot undertake in any way the spiritual direction of Hindus, but neither are we prepared to take lessons from them upon questions of public morality."

Lyall made a detailed study on the relations between the State and Religion in China. The most remarkable fact which impressed Lyall about this country was the compromise between religion and politics. Lyall observed that in the enormous region of China, creeds and rituals preserved their primitive multiformity under a civil government, where the various religions found free play, and where the ruler found it possible and advantageous to preside over all of them. Nowhere was this better seen than in the empire of China - the oldest of Asiatic empires, which at one time had reached the highest level ever reached by purely Asiatic civilisation.

The Chinese Government was the only example in Asia representing a kind of constitutional conservatism.<sup>1</sup> In China religion and politics took a different course from the practice in Europe and Western Asia. In Europe the relations of State to religion were determined after much conflict, and the balance of power took many centuries to adjust itself. In Western Asia, 'the position was fixed by Islam, by intolerant uniformity'. In India there was widespread political anarchy and a general confusion of conflicting Faiths, when

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1. Asiatic Studies, Second Series, p.7.

the English solved the question by cutting off all connection with spiritualities.

In China, there was 'not only toleration of all religions on an equal basis, but the Emperor had placed them all under his own jurisdiction'. The practice in China verified the saying of Hobbes, who remarked, 'Temporal and Spiritual, are but two words brought into the world to make men see double and to mistake their lawful sovereign'. This error was corrected by the example of China. The Chinese Government managed to solve the complex problem very well by according an equally reverent recognition to a variety of discordant beliefs and worship.

Regarding religion and politics, one may still wonder as to what Lyall was trying to suggest to the Government of India by eulogising China so much. At any rate, we can infer from his Asiatic Studies, that despite his criticism and mental reservations, Lyall on the whole, favoured the religious policy of the Government of India.

It would not be wrong to call Lyall, a liberal by reasoning, but a conservative by temperament. He consistently advocated that in social and religious matters, the Indian people should be left as much as possible to their own ways and traditions. The forms of Indian society were undergoing an inevitable change under the influence of Western institutions. The important question was, whether and to

what extent, the Government of India should meet and facilitate the impending, moral, material, social, religious and political changes.

As a result of Western education, some enlightened natives were applying themselves to the task of social reforms, among which the condition of women, for instance, was given a prominent place. Lyall realised that the importance of the subject could not be over-estimated, nor could it be denied that infant marriages and perpetual widowhood of young girls were incompatible with Western notions of 'justice, reason and hygiene'. 'A wife at 10, a widow at 12, a mother at 13 - these were monstrosities in the face of which it was madness to think of a consistent, progressive public life.' Thus wrote a prominent native reformer.<sup>1</sup> Lyall observed that such remarks by a native reformer, were in advance of the ideas and convictions of his generation. A great majority of his fellow countrymen were either adverse or inert, and even his supporters lacked initiative. On the other hand, the Government was being called upon to lead the way to social reforms.<sup>2</sup>

Lyall did not think it was prudent for the Government of India, which had so many difficult duties to perform, so many possible misunderstandings to face, that they could run the risk of anticipating

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1. Lyall 'Twelve Years of Indian Government', (1882-1894),  
Edinburgh Review, January, 1895, Vol.181, No.371, p.130.

2. ibid.

public opinion upon the road of social reform. During this period of rapid transition when political aspirations and intellectual enlightenment were working among the educated classes, there was to be seen, simultaneously, a fermentation of the earlier ideas and religious antipathies, which had always dominated the vast and incoherent multitudes of the Indian people. Under such circumstances, the Government of India needed all its statecraft, foresight and penetration to introduce any reforms, whatever be their nature.

There were probably two reasons for Lyall to advocate caution in initiating reforms. Perhaps the first and foremost was political expediency; the second, the desire prompted by the poetic and romantic streak in his nature, to preserve the colourful and variegated traditions of the native institutions.

## CHAPTER II

### EDUCATION

In spite of the fact that Lyall himself was a highly educated man, he did not favour the idea of education for Indians. In his writings, one comes across the contempt that he showed for the Western educated classes. For him the 'semi-barbarous' native was much more likable than the 'respectable educated native', who was a 'bore'.<sup>1</sup> He thought that education would further complicate the already complex and difficult problems of Imperial rule. He considered the educated classes a threat to the stability of British Rule in India. Lyall did not agree with some of his colleagues like Sir W.W. Hunter and Sir Henry Cotton who propagated the need for educating India rapidly. This was a subject which he wanted to leave entirely to its supporters as he himself had no belief in it. But education was something which could not be refused to the natives, Lyall could therefore only issue warnings regarding the eventual difficulties of British rule.

Lyall examined the history of India during the eighteenth century, and saw this immense region exhausted by political struggles. The

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1. Durand: Life of Lyall. London and Edinburgh, 1913, p.106.

history of nineteenth century India, described a period of rapid recovery. During the course of a hundred years, English rule had made India one of the most powerful states in Asia. Complete tranquillity reigned under the British flag throughout the vast Sub-Continent.

It was gratifying for Lyall to note that the country had been brought to a pitch of peace and prosperity far exceeding anything that India, taken as a whole, had before attained. The long prevalence of order and security was only broken by the events of 1857. These events modified profoundly the character of the people in the older Provinces, and even in the Northern parts of India, changes were distinctly perceptible. Referring to the generation which grew up after the mutiny, Lyall writes:-

" The general increase of wealth and intelligence has told on the faces of the people as well as on the face of the land; they have probably altered more in the last twenty-five years than for centuries previously; they now wear the look of a settled, industrious population far less liable than heretofore to superstitious panics or to those commotions, half political, half religious, which suddenly stir Asiatics."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Lyall: 'Government of the Indian Empire'. Edinburgh Review, 1884, p.9.

By the seventies of the last century the rough work of pacification was complete. The rapid internal development of the country, however, had set the British fresh problems, much more delicate and intricate to solve. The Afghan war diverted, for an interval, the attention of the Government of India from domestic questions, but as soon as it terminated in Lord Ripon's time, the Viceroy earnestly devoted himself to the questions of administrative and constitutional reform, which had arisen naturally and inevitably by the altered conditions of the country. In British India the ideas and axioms of a free nation and nationality were percolating through the medium of the English language, into the educated strata of Indian Society. The notion of government, as a device for maintaining law and order and properly assessing the taxes, was no longer considered enough, as it had been for the past generation. The logical order of political evolution was gradually bringing forward a demand for political equality and for a larger share to natives, in the management of their own public affairs.

Iyall, being extremely perceptive, saw the signs of the forthcoming difficulties, of the Indian Empire. He realised that the difficulties were peculiarly awkward and distasteful to the English, with whom free institutions were the breath of national life, but at the same time who knew that ' a people neither finds such things

ready made, nor can be measured for them as a man for a suit of clothes'. The Russian and the Chinese empires, the Asiatic rivals of the English in power and rank were governed by cabinets of powerful officials, 'responsible only to absolutely irresponsible despots - they made no attempt to develop Asiatic society beyond its natural environment; they had the less need to interfere because they did not care to improve.<sup>1</sup> But the English in India found themselves in charge of an administration managed upon autocratic principles which they themselves had long outgrown and finally rejected in their own country. The English desired to maintain good government, and in order to do that, they had set up a very high water-mark of public morality among a people whose political morals had never risen beyond a low level. All kinds of free criticisms were invited from people totally unaccustomed to such privileges, upon the acts of a bureaucratic government. Secular education was being spread among the most religious races of the world.

In 1884, Iyall wrote:- "The confusion of ideas that is sometimes generated by this confounding of heterogeneous elements, by the inexperience of the people and the candour of their rulers is hard to describe; but very curious instances can be observed every day in the native newspapers, which reflect the disturbed surface of

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1. Iyall: 'Government of the Indian Empire', op.cit, p.11.

the public mind, without representing the deeper currents of native opinion and prepossessions. The press often appeals in the same breath to the primitive prejudices of Indian religion, and to the latest notions of European civilisation."<sup>1</sup>

The universally prevalent belief that education, civilisation, and increased material prosperity would reconcile the people of India eventually to English rule, was, according to Lyall, the 'shallowest' as well as the 'wildest' notion. De Tocqueville's study of the Ancient Régime, and the causes of the Revolution in France, which Lyall (according to himself) had read and analysed more attentively than he had ever before read a book, demonstrated to him most logically that it was the increased prosperity and enlightenment of the French people which produced the 'grand crash'.<sup>2</sup>

The outline of the situation in the 1870s and 1880s was that the ideas of abstract political right, and the germs of representative institutions, were being disseminated in India. At the same time the English were spreading modern education throughout the country. For centuries India had been governed by irresponsible officials. Local liberties and habits of self-government had been long obliterated or had never existed, and learning had not advanced beyond the stage of Europe in the Middle Ages. The English were working upon the principle

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1. Lyall: 'Government of the Indian Empire', op.cit, pp.11-12.  
2. Durand: Life of Lyall, p.95.

that the conditions of safe and speedy political progress required education and self-government, to run parallel, and to be pushed forward simultaneously. Political thinkers like the two Mills in England, had relied on their belief that in a colonial situation, education would act as a sedative in times of social stir and rapid change, or would keep people from misusing political powers and functions to which they were unaccustomed.

On the contrary, Lyall thought that public instruction, when applied largely and unexpectedly, could act as a strong irritant upon certain classes and it operated as a quick solvent of the old social order. Such effects were inevitable in India, where public instruction was dispensed almost entirely by the State, mainly through the agency of foreign teachers, whose duty it was to impress the latest conclusions of science and politics upon a people quite unprepared by antecedent habits or cultivation for receiving them. The introduction of secular education into a country where all teaching had from time immemorial been founded upon religion was another innovation. Lyall was sceptical about introducing Western education wholesale in India. The Western concept of education was national, based on the principle of equality of opportunity. It aimed at breaking intellectual monopolies, which had hitherto existed.<sup>1</sup> Lyall regarded the question of educating India

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1. Misra, Bankay Bihari: The Indian Middle Classes, London, 1961.  
p.149.

and the probable effects of 'the precipitation upon India, like tropical rain from the sky, of such a knowledge which was likely to wash away all the old landmarks', a menace to British rule in India. The question of education had a direct bearing on the delicate and complex task of making political reforms keep even step with the intellectual advance of the whole empire.<sup>1</sup>

For an administrator like Sir John Strachey, the conception of government was chiefly, if not exclusively, concerned with the duties of developing economic resources, of providing for police, legislation, and the distribution of local authority. Strachey was quite satisfied to see that justice was administered in British India under laws of 'unequalled excellence and simplicity'. There was hardly any country possessing a civilized administration where the public burdens were so light as in India under the British rule. He joined wholeheartedly with John Stuart Mill, who declared that the British Government in India was 'not only one of the purest in intention, but one of the most beneficent in act ever known among mankind'.<sup>2</sup> These notions, however, did not satisfy Lyall who viewed the situation in a different light.

It seems that over the years, there came a change in Lyall's ideas on the subject of education. By 1911, Lyall had come to believe that the best insurance against the uncertainties of the future would be

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1. Lyall: 'Government of the Indian Empire', p.16.

2. Strachey, Sir John: India, p.502.

found in taking the highest native talent and capacity into partnership, in enlarging the Indian share of Imperial duties and responsibilities.<sup>1</sup> In 1911, he wrote:- "It is upon moral and intellectual sympathies that the statesman relies, upon a community of ideas, sentiments and tastes, upon freedom of thought, liberty of speech, and all the mental training and enlightenment, the social elevation, that education in its widest and highest sense is expected to confer upon a people naturally endowed with very potent intellectual capacities."<sup>2</sup> However, by this time there had been enough deterioration of British Indian understanding and if Lyall had lived a little longer he would have seen that the Indians were asking, no more, for a mere share in administration.

The first steps which inaugurated western education had been taken in 1835, when the Government, yielding to the facile arguments of Macaulay, decided that the higher education so far as it was state-aided, should be given in the learning and language of the West, and almost simultaneously withdrew all restrictions upon Indian journalism. Macaulay was not blind to the ultimate consequences of these far-reaching innovations. He admitted that instruction in European knowledge and the habit of political discussion, might 'in some future' age produce a demand for European institutions. But such remote possibilities he

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1. Lyall: 'The Conflict of Colour', Edinburgh Review, April, 1911, No.436, p.436.

2. Lyall: 'European Dominion in Asia', Edinburgh Review, January, 1911, No.435, p.118.

was ready to accept, and he evidently believed that the transition from the old to the new order of ideas would be tranquil and orderly.

Looking back in retrospect Lyall thought that on the educational point immediately at issue in 1835 Macaulay was on the whole right and the Orientalists who opposed him were wrong; yet the change was "too abrupt and uncompromising".<sup>1</sup> It provoked resentment and patriotic protest especially among the Muslims, whose literature was very closely connected with their religion. Lyall's opinion was, that Macaulay with all his genius, often lacked full sympathy with the deeper and more delicate sensibilities of race and religion. That a prejudice might exist among the people of India against excluding their ancient literature and language from the superior courses of public instruction did not strike him as a matter for serious consideration. But the grievance that the national literature was neglected under British rule, had since that time, been most frequently alleged against the Government by those who seized upon European education as the direct path to official promotion and professional success. The leaven of Western teaching had fermented very rapidly among certain classes in the provinces which had been longest under British supremacy, and in the cities which had enjoyed uninterrupted peace and prosperity for more than a century. The spirit of ardent political liberalism which

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1. Lyall: 'European Dominion in Asia', op.cit., p.119.

prevailed among the leaders of educated Indian society was quite understandable. They were fulfilling the prediction of Macaulay by their natural ambition to obtain a share, and to acquire distinction in the administration of their country.

Lyall pointed out a singular fact, which Macaulay hardly foresaw, that the strongest symptoms of discontent, agitation, antipathy and even violent revolt against British rule came from the Western educated classes. This phenomenon was significant and it was taken into account by Lyall in the comparison between ancient and modern Imperialism. Historical evidence showed that in the provinces outside Europe the Greek language and literature declined and finally disappeared when the Byzantine dominion fell to pieces, as the Latin tongue did from North Africa; so that the sound conclusion was that their existence depended upon the dominion; that they perished in the ruin of the whole political fabric over which they had flourished. This was an instructive historic lesson that could be studied by those classes in India who were interested in the maintenance of European culture, that it was indissolubly connected with the British Sovereignty and it could not be expected to survive it. It was both a remarkable as well as a deplorable fact for Lyall that a large part of the miscellaneous publications issued from the native

press was employed in depreciating and defaming the acts and policy of the British Government. These were difficulties peculiar to modern Imperialism which were unknown to the earlier Asiatic sovereignties. The empires of antiquity had no experience of a free press, and literature was the exclusive possession of the cultured minority. On the other hand, the English education system in India had stimulated among the new generations an appetite for indiscriminate reading. Many writers found both profit and popularity in stirring up political antipathies and prejudices, and in laying all responsibility for grievances and even such natural calamities as plague and famine upon the Government. There was 'a fine air of audacious independence about attacking governmental action'.<sup>1</sup>

To the foregoing problems could be added another peculiarly modern difficulty, which was hardly anticipated by those who promulgated free and universal instruction as the panacea for political misunderstandings. It had come to pass that in India, education was more directly connected with politics than in any other country. The system of selecting for the various departments of the public service those who could prove literary ability, who had taken high University degrees, or who had won the first places in competitive

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1. Lyall: op.cit, p.121.

examinations, had been adopted throughout the country.<sup>1</sup> In Europe, however, these qualifications did not usually lead beyond the subordinate departments and the chief executive offices were attained by the high parliamentary road. But the Indian administration was a vast and undiluted bureaucracy, in which administrative efficiency was the mainspring of promotion. The superior appointments were reserved for those who had passed into the public service through the gate which was opened and shut by examiners. The obvious result had been to stimulate a rush for public employ, and to create the belief that literary proficiency established a rightful claim to admission. "The youth who had taken a creditable university degree considered that he had drawn a bill upon a government by whom the maxim of 'la carrière ouverte aux talents' had been adopted as a principle of policy."<sup>2</sup> But the claimants were very many and the places were too few. There was no room for a clamorous multitude, so disappointment was the lot of the majority, who often turned against their educators and found vent for their feelings in denouncing them. The government, worried by incessant attacks and misrepresentations, was sometimes driven into taking measures for repressing

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1. Martineau: Life of Frere, Vol.1, p.268

2. Iyall: 'European Dominion in Asia', p.121.

seditions publications. The vernacular Press Act of 1878 and the amendments to the sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure, were efforts on the part of the Government of India to check seditious writings.<sup>1</sup>

The neighbouring empire of China illustrated to Iyall, the effervescences which European education could bring out among the Asiatics. In China the system of open literary examinations by which candidates qualified for the public services, was imported from the West. So long as the course of studies was in the national language and literature, it was usually harmless. But the Chinese Government, probably emulating the example of Japan, discovered that a sound training in the learning and science of the West was essential to the intellectual elevation of its people, particularly for raising the level of ability and intelligence among its official services. America was desirous to attract Chinese students and the Chinese government was keen to send them to a country that was going so fast ahead in the van of progress. The result, however, was to stimulate the same kind of unrest, that was troubling India. The young Chinese returned to their native land with degrees and diplomas conferred by American Universities, and also with a conviction that these

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1. Maclane, J.R: 'The Government of India and the Native Press', 1875-1900, Institute of Commonwealth Studies Seminar, A Paper, University of London, February, 1960.

distinctions ought to be passports to all offices under the State. Thus the constitution of the 'Celestial empire', the oldest in the world, was 'disordered by a few doses of the new learning'. The old-fashioned Chinese statesmen remembered with grave misgivings, that in the Taeping rebellion of 1861, which very nearly ruined the Manchu dynasty, the prime-mover and leader of that frantic outbreak, Hung Chuan was a humble student, whose reason had been deranged by repeated failures to pass the tests that qualified for public employ. It was too evident for Lyall that the new wine of education, which 'fortified the stronger minds' acted upon the 'weaker Asiatic brain as a violent irritant', driving men into reckless animosity against the government that had 'fostered and then foiled' their expectations. It was no wonder that the venerable despotism of China should have been 'painfully discomposed by the rapid absorption of American stimulants'.<sup>1</sup>

The case of India was slightly different. By Lyall's time, at least two generations had grown up since universities and professors began their teaching in the older provinces, and the new learning started to spread slowly into Northern India. For a general survey of the course which the educational movement was taking, and an

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1. Lyall: 'European Dominion in Asia', p.123-4.

estimate of the consequences, the time had been much too short, for Lyall. By 1911, however, Lyall knew that education had powerfully assisted intellectual emancipation. It had perceptibly altered the views and habits of the higher classes in the older provinces. There were various indications that European literature had turned the thoughts of educated men and women into fresh channels, had coloured their old, traditional philosophy, and had even touched the imaginative faculty of the younger generations in the spheres of poetry and romance. Lyall observed that many of the essays that appeared in the Indian magazines or reviews had a 'reflective and dispassionate tone of criticism or dissertation' that was in refreshing contrast with the 'vociferations' of ordinary journalism. It could not be denied that a large part of the contemporary literature was still 'infected' by the prejudices and antipathies of Nationalism. But the fact that many books were translations from English authors indicated some degree to which the taste for precise thinking and accurate knowledge was slowly penetrating the Asiatic mind and 'correcting the tendency to extravagant and uncritical judgments'.<sup>1</sup>

All predictions as to the future of Asiatic civilisation were 'hazardous', yet Lyall had some slight ground for hoping that 'letters'

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1. Lyall: op.cit, p.124.

may rise to the 'height of a fine art' in India and shake off the contamination of political controversy; so that appreciation of beauty, of pure artistic expression, might again, as in ancient times, draw together East and West, and strengthen the bonds of modern imperialism. It was interesting for Lyall to see the Indian middle-class youth, bred at an English university, who returned to live at home and who missed the atmosphere of the cultured Western society. If he had real literary faculty, 'his dilemma between the old world which was reclaiming him, and the new world which had fascinated him', found its most effective illustration in the form of a novel. Some of the novels, written by the young Indians exemplified 'the ripening of a superior Eastern intellect under Western culture'.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE NATIVE PRESS

It is remarkable that the British authorities allowed the Indian press as much freedom as they did in the nineteenth century. As long as the number of newspaper readers was small, the Government usually preferred to ignore the appeals to racial and religious animosities and the allusions to violence. When these appeals and allusions became widespread, and when they coincided with a dangerous mood among the non-literate population, then officials decided in favour of a demonstration of authority and firmness. At the end of the century the

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1. Lyall: 'European Dominion in Asia', pp.125-7.

the problem took on a more serious and permanent character as the increasingly impatient demands of the educated classes reached a larger audience. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century almost the only full-time political occupation available was journalism, as representative councils and political organizations were in their infancy. All Indian newspapers, were by no means, political in nature. Many were devoted to religious subjects. However, some contained political comment. Sir Henry Cotton once described the press as 'the Constitutional Opposition' in India, and to some extent many editors regarded themselves as such. It was not an accident that two of the most important Congress leaders, Surendra Nath Banerjea and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, owned newspapers.<sup>1</sup>

As was observed earlier, Lyall regarded the control of the press as one of the problems peculiar to modern imperialism. He did not favour the idea of giving too much freedom to the press. In 1883, Lyall wrote to Stephen:-

" The native press in Bengal and Bombay shows great hatred of the European - the newspapers have less influence than is usually supposed, but their incessant dirt - throwing must gradually blacken our faces - I am beginning to agree with the French minister who said that if the

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1. MacLane, J.R: "The Government of India and the Native Press", 1875-1900. Institute of Commonwealth Studies Seminar, A Paper, University of London, February, 1960.

Lord Jesus came down with all his saints to establish in France the Government of the millennium, he would have to begin by gagging the Press. When political differences are radical, and Governments are liable to be upset or their existence challenged, a press must be a dangerous kind of dynamite to leave freely circulating - but all this concerns our successors in India."<sup>1</sup> The press was not considered as much of a threat in the eighties as it proved to be in later years.

Lyall regarded the press in India to be much more untrammelled than the press in England.<sup>2</sup> The press in India was not under the control of any considerable force of opinion among its readers, that could keep it within bounds, there were no rules of etiquette, and the law of libel, as applicable to newspapers, was little understood generally, and seldom used. The complete freedom of the press, represented a principle which the English 'were prone to treat rather too reverently', and which they carried about, like 'household gods', into strange lands. In the absence of any restrictions, the native press became a mouth-piece of miscellaneous complaints and accusations. The natural target were the Government of India and its officers. Under a popular government the press is divided among parties and it takes sides. In the bureaucratic governments of Europe the views and interests

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1. 'Lyall to Stephen', 29th June, 1883, Stephen Papers, Add MSS 7349 Box 3.
  2. Lyall: 'Government of the Indian Empire', Edinburgh Review, 1884, p.13.

of administration were represented by semi-official journals.<sup>1</sup>

In the case of the Government of India which was a foreign autocratic government, the majority of newspapers and journals were found in perpetual opposition. Lyall foresaw that with the passage of time the native press would increase and multiply, and acquire great influence over public opinion among the masses. For this reason he was not very happy about the complete freedom of press. However, he hoped that the tone of the leading newspapers, some of which were already written 'with ability and moderation', would continue to improve. Lyall fully realised that journalism was an indispensable aid to a foreign government in publishing and explaining its objects and reasons to the immense population, but he was equally apprehensive about the experiment of a free press. He reiterated his belief that even if the 'millennium' began on earth, even a government of 'glorified saints' would find themselves obliged to gag the press. Likewise, the best intentions and the highest administrative principles of the Government of India could not save it from 'incessant misrepresentation and violent calumny'. It may be pointed out, however, that Lyall was not in any way defending all the actions of the government. At times, he was very critical about the utterances, writings and actions of his countrymen. He wrote:- "No system of government presents so fair a mark to sharp-witted journalism as administration by a not very

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1. Lyall: op.cit.

sympathetic class of foreigners, imperfectly acquainted with the wants and customs of the country, impatient of crude political theories, and yet making many inevitable mistakes of detail."<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to see that Sir John Strachey differed from Lyall on this point. Strachey regarded the government as being so good that it could hardly be popular. The Strachey school "accepted with almost a sense of pride the fact that it (the government) was unbeloved and out of sympathy with its subjects".<sup>2</sup>

The Government of India gave the native press more attention than it really expected. The fact that almost all newspapers were carefully translated and abstracted for official perusal gave the petty journals far greater importance than they could otherwise have acquired. Moreover, the majority of the old-fashioned Indian folk, accustomed to treat very respectfully things pertaining to the state and to religion were alarmed by the unceremonious and radical style of the new school. The freedom of press was a novelty to India which amazed the public at large as well as the journalist, and by reason of the noviciate of native journalism, this liberty sometimes turned into licence.

Lyall observed that the Government of India had itself been, for many years past providing ample facilities and encouragement to its assailants by keeping careful public records of all its failures and

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1. Lyall: 'Government of the Indian Empire', p.13.

2. Stokes, Eric: The English Utilitarians and India, p.310.

shortcomings. It had fostered among its own officers, the habit of very plain, often rough speaking and writing in the discussion of administrative questions. It was the common practice in official controversy to denounce in 'very unmeasured phrases' any acts or orders of which the writers disapproved. Enthusiastic young officers saw no reason why they should not declare 'the whole system of Indian administration to be ruinous to the country and disgraceful to themselves'. The English periodicals occasionally brought out articles in which 'damaging extracts from reports and correspondence were arrayed in formidable series'. The most violent denunciations came from men who had been unsuccessful in various Anglo-Indian vocations. Much of the exaggerated official writing could be ascribed to the fact that for a long time it never occurred to Indian officers that their reports would go beyond the departmental bureaux or that the outer world would read Indian Blue books. They had always been in the habit of talking and writing their own language unreservedly before people, supposed neither to understand nor to take heed of what was said. The idea did not enter their minds that hard words used to demolish some rival theory, or to defend strong views on questions of police and revenue, would be taken up literally by the Public in India. The French Government as De Tocqueville records, made a similar mistake, under not altogether different circumstances, just before the Revolution,

by publishing documents full of severe criticisms upon its own institutions, and of damaging admissions against the proceedings of its predecessors in office. All experience showed to Lyall that nothing told against a government so seriously as its own confessions. It lost much more reputation by expressions of contrition than it was ever likely to gain by the most sincere attempts at improvement. Lyall observed:- "... Nor is this the only feature in which the attentive student may fancy that he discovers a curious resemblance, in attitude and situation, between the Anglo-Indian Government in certain moods and the old French regime under Turgot, Necker, and other enlightened and progressive ministers. There is the same centralised administration, the same contrast between liberal theories and arbitrary procedure, the same sincere belief in the speedy efficiency of the substitution of education and the machinery of popular institutions for ignorance and highly organised officialism. And the description, in 'L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution', of the sense of isolation that came over the Government of Louis XVI when it entered upon the task of inaugurating liberal reforms and redistributing its concentrated authority, will probably come home to any administrator who is embarking upon a similar enterprise in India.... we are working upon the principle that conditions of safe and speedy political progress require.... education and self-government, to run parallel and to be pushed forward simultaneously

like the lines of a railroad."<sup>1</sup>

Tension began to mount as the nineteenth century drew to a close. However, few officials saw any immediate danger to British rule but many thought the evident unrest among sections of the various Indian communities, and the educated classes was disturbing. For instance the Secretary of State, Lord George Hamilton was worried by what he regarded as the increasing solidarity of Indian opinion, races and religions in opposition to British rule. He wrote to the Viceroy, Lord Elgin, on 19th August, 1897, that "the development of national feelings or religious enthusiasm" was stimulated by "the process of education" and a free press. This tended "to make the onslaught against our Government more powerful, while the powers behind the authorities do not correspondingly multiply".<sup>2</sup> He felt that even if the Indian press did not advocate the overthrow of British rule, "their everlasting criticism and imputation of motives must ultimately make an impression just as a perpetual drip wears out stone". Hamilton thought that "in governing Orientals an assertion of strength and fighting power is periodically necessary." Twenty years earlier it had been suggested by Lord Lytton and others that education would better enable Indians to appreciate the blessings of British rule. But by 1897

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1. Lyall: 'Government of the Indian Empire', pp.14-16.

2. MacLane, J.R: 'The Government of India and the Native Press, 1875-1900, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, Seminar, University of London, February, 1960, p.7.

officials felt that the main threat to the British Rule came from the educated classes, and not so much from religious and aristocratic interests.<sup>1</sup>

By the early 1900s, the area of unceasing competition, political and commercial, among European nations had been materially widened, and the points of clashing interests had consequently increased. The conduct of foreign affairs required more accurate appreciation of the circumstances, motives and acts of established Governments in all the lands between the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans; it called for particular attention to the prevailing temper or aspirations of people of the various lands. All these elements were so intermixed that a very slight shock ran along the whole line, producing disturbance in quarters where it was neither intended nor foreseen. By the indefatigable enterprise of the English Press, London had become the great centre of information for all parts of the world. Nevertheless, since newspapers were expected to supply instantaneous explanations of remote incidents, it was not surprising that the ablest editors occasionally lead their readers astray.<sup>2</sup>

In all European and American countries as well as in some parts of Asia, the Press exercised a great and manifold influence, through the multiplication of newspapers, magazines and reviews, greater than

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1. MacLane: op.cit, p.8.

2. Lyall: 'The Political Situation in Europe', The Edinburgh Review, January, 1909, No.427, pp.254-5.

ever before. Universal education had produced among the people an ingrained habit of desultory reading by sharply stimulating their appetite for a daily supply of savoury news. In one way the Press rendered high and most valuable service to civilized nations by its wonderful activity in the dissemination of intelligence, by its staff of correspondents in all the principal capitals of the world. The running commentary on passing events which the best journals and periodicals maintained with distinctive ability, were to the substantial benefit of appreciative readers. However, the style of journalistic criticism in a Press which competed freely for popular favour, 'was inevitably vivacious, unvarnished, and positive'. In some respects it was advantageous. But it was in regard to criticism that Lyall advised caution to the Press both in England and India.

In the discussion of foreign affairs the situation was very different where the controversy was between nations whose respective ideas, circumstances, and habits of mind were often very imperfectly understood on either side, who were intensely sensitive to unguarded language, and were apt to misconstrue hasty words as signs and tokens of unfriendly intentions. In this case the Press, as Lyall rightly observes, is no longer 'the organ of a party, it claims to be the mouth-piece of a people, and to speak with representative authority'. The claim is by no means indefensible. The vast majority in every nation have no means or faculty of ascertaining the prevailing sentiments,

the respective points of view, of a foreign people except through the Press. It comes to pass that the attitude and language of the national Press is very generally taken, on both sides, to be the authentic expression of the national mind. It becomes difficult to persuade a person who feels wronged, when some unlucky or untoward incident raises a chorus of disapproval or division in a foreign land, that mischief is not in the air, and that the relations of their Governments are not approaching a critical stage. High words fly to and fro across the sea; the telegrams compress ambiguous news into pungent phrases; active journalists, writing on the spur of the moment, are not concerned to mince matters, and neither Press can do less than brandish the standard of its country. When individuals bring their private quarrels before the world, disputes or misunderstandings that might have been smoothed down by explanation are sure to be unreasonably exasperated by publicity, and in polemics between nations the effect is similar, with much more serious consequences.<sup>1</sup> Lyall observed with regret:- "National susceptibilities have been not unreasonably excited, and the Press has been playing upon our nerves until the cool judgment which used to be a distinguishing element of English character has been losing its control."<sup>2</sup> We shall see that Press activities worried

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1. Lyall: 'The Political situation in Europe', p.262.

2. Lyall: op.cit, p.264.

Lyall considerably during the Ilbert Bill controversy, both in India and England. He strongly advocated that since the press had great power, it should be used cautiously, not "squandered inconsiderately", and above all it should not be misdirected.

A modern writer, who shows a division of the Indian society into various classes, observes, that both the freedom and the division of India were the work of the middle classes, which contained a strong element of the Educated Middle Class.<sup>1</sup> Lyall's fears and apprehensions of the Educated classes in India were after all not ill-founded. As a matter of fact his premonitions proved true in 1947.

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1. Misra, B.B: The Indian Middle Classes, op.cit., p.400.

### CHAPTER III

#### INDIANIZATION OF SERVICES

The association of natives with services of lower rank was materially advantageous for the British Government. No political harm was apprehended so far as the Indianization of subordinate services was concerned. The emergence of the Western educated classes, however, led to the issue of Indianization in the higher ranks of the Civil and Judicial services and during the second half of the Nineteenth century, this issue remained in the political foreground of India.

The Charter Act of 1833, had removed all disqualifications for natives, on grounds of 'religion, place of birth, descent, colour' to enter 'any place, office, or employment' under the Government. Rules were therefore to be prescribed under which natives of India, 'of proved merit and ability', could be appointed to the various offices. The complete fulfilment of the Charter Act of 1833 had, however, been delayed by government hesitation and opposition. In the first place the stability of British rule was regarded as dependent on the pre-dominant British element in the Civil Service. There was also the general feeling that an average native did not possess the mental and moral qualities of an average Englishman which were vital for good administration.<sup>1</sup> Attention was drawn to this subject in the eighteen

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1. Blunt, Sir Edward: The I.C.S. London, 1937, p.53.

seventies. In 1873, when consulted, Lyall was most reluctant to associate natives with high Administrative and Judicial appointments. He suggested that certain Civil Service appointments should be reserved for Europeans exclusively.<sup>1</sup> As Home Secretary to the Government of India (1873-1874) Lyall wanted to 'preclude entirely the posting of a native.... at once to a Collectorship or a Commissionership, or to the Secretariat'. If such an appointment was ever found necessary, it could only be under some very special circumstances.<sup>2</sup> At that time Lyall thought it was politically unsafe to entrust natives with important executive authority. It was only in the subordinate ranks that natives could be employed safely. In regard to the Judicial Service, Lyall was comparatively lenient. He thought that the natives could be appointed directly to judicial offices without passing through official apprenticeship.<sup>3</sup> He was, however, opposed to appointing 'too many' natives to judicial offices.<sup>4</sup>

Within a few years, Lyall realised that the circumstances of the country were changing, the demands of the educated classes were rising fast and a rigid stand regarding the Indianization of Civil and Judicial services could not be taken. In accordance with the needs of the time,

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1. Note by Napier, Lord of Magdala, 25th August, 1873, Lytton Papers: MSS.Eur.E.218 No.23/1.
  2. Memorandum of Lyall, 24th September, 1873, Lytton Papers, MSS.Eur. E.218 No.23/1.
  3. ibid.
  4. Note of Lyall, Aboo, the 2nd April, 1877, Demi-Official, Home Department, Lytton Papers: 'Native Civil Service', MSS.Eur.E.218 No.23/1, pp.360-64.

Lyall leaned in favour of Indianization of services, with certain reservations. An attempt will be made to study Lyall's attitude on this subject in the following pages.

#### CIVIL SERVICE.

In 1877, Lytton asked Lyall's opinion on his note on the "Admission of Natives to Higher Offices" and Lyall gave his detailed views on this subject. He clearly stated that he did not regard the prevailing condition of the services to be a 'scandalous anomaly' as it had been held to be.<sup>1</sup> According to him, under similar circumstances, any other dominant race could not have worked out a solution to the problem better than, or even as well as, the British had. He quoted several examples from contemporary governments, illustrating that all real power was held by the ruling nations. The Russians had kept all real power in their own hands in the Asiatic provinces. The Moghuls in India did the same with very rare exceptions. The Turks did not even allow "a Christian to be a policeman or village chowkeedar".<sup>2</sup> The state of affairs in India was therefore no special anomaly for Lyall. It was due to the natural force of things. Taking an example near at hand of Native States of India, Lyall observed that 'the native rulers picked their own instruments wherever they found them 'sharpest'.

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1. Note of Lyall, dated Aboo, the 2nd April, 1877, Demi-Official, Home Department, 1877. Lytton Papers. 'Native Civil Service' MSS. Eur. E. 218 No. 23/1, pp. 360-64.

2. A night guard.

So it was neither logically inconsistent, nor peculiar to the British position in India. "What a despotic Government wants, all over the world, is above all things to keep a staff of able officers devoted to its own interests."<sup>1</sup>

Lyall, however, agreed with Lytton that since British rule took away many sources of occupation and adventure from the natives, it was obliged to find a remedy for their rising grievances. The chief reason to satisfy the natives on this subject to some extent, was the fact that the British had themselves admitted and proclaimed, several times that the natives were suffering an intolerable grievance. Lyall therefore proposed that a few natives should be carefully selected, treated exactly as young Englishmen of the same age and rank were treated, and then they should be allowed to join the Civil Service from the bottom of the Covenanted ranks. By this method, some very good native officials could be turned out. Although they could not equal the Englishmen in some respects, in certain others they would have the natural advantages of belonging to the soil. They could inform the Government about real feelings of the people and the affairs of the country, which the Government, by its foreign nature, so often missed.

Lyall agreed with Lytton in appointing natives belonging to the Indian gentry, and men of social eminence. In order to do this, the

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1. Lyall's Note: Lytton Papers, op.cit., p.361.

power of patronage in the Non-Regulation provinces was to be exercised. On one point he dissented widely from Lytton's proposed measures of reform. Lytton had adopted the device of recompensing the high native official for administrative service by honours and dignities. Here, Lyall pointed out that to satisfy this class, that is, the gentry, no distinction either in pay or power, between the Native and the Englishman in similar offices, should be made. If the native official was set apart, in any way, then patronage would lose its savour. Besides, the gentry very greatly valued being put on a level with the Englishmen.

Lyall emphasised the difference between a system of centralized administration by powerful officials, and a system which leaves a great deal of administration to local magnates and local bodies. Under the former system, which had prevailed in India, the local gentry took office mostly for political power and not for honours and dignities alone. Real power in India rested with offices reserved to the Covenanted and Commissioned services, and these were the offices which the natives wanted to hold. As stated earlier, Lyall had proposed to train some young natives to become local magistrates starting with the bottom rank of the service. He was convinced of the soundness of this measure and he wanted to take it to its logical conclusion. In other words, when native officials were to rise to

the ranks of local Judges, Commissioners and Members of the Revenue Boards, they were to be given the same pay and power as had always gone with these offices. Lyall strongly maintained that if this essential point was overlooked, the whole scheme would be pronounced as a 'delusion and a snare'. This advice of Lyall was sound since Lytton's proposals<sup>1</sup> had left real power with the Europeans and the natives could clearly see that this was not what the Acts of 1833 and 1853 had intended.

Lytton had overrated the value set on honours and dignities by the natives. This was not an adequate recompense for the real power of the office. Lytton had enumerated several things which he thought were the objects of the gentry for entering Civil Service but power was quite conspicuous by its absence. Another omission was that of money, which Lytton regarded was not of much consideration for the native gentry. Examining Asiatic precedents, Lyall saw that high office always went with large emoluments and under the Moghuls every mansab<sup>2</sup> had a handsome salary attached to it. It is true that some rich men would not have cared for money alone if they could be rewarded with real power, which was precisely what Lytton did not want. And Lyall had never heard of men 'of proved merit and ability' who would work hard 'for honours and dignities, which did not carry either pay or power.'<sup>3</sup>

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1. Note of Lytton, "Admission of Natives to Higher Offices", Lytton Papers, op.cit.

2. High rank with a title.

3. Lyall's Demi-Official Note to Lytton. Lytton Papers, op.cit., p.363.

Lyall advised Lytton to either promote natives boldly to the higher offices, beginning with the Covenanted ranks or to decline the native demands altogether. The former proposal was of course more in accordance with the needs of the time, and Lyall's view was to face the situation bravely, as the difficulty of parting with some power could not be evaded. He therefore advocated a clear policy to be adopted on this subject.

The point worth noticing here is that Lytton was in favour of appointing men of high social status, and not men from the educated Indian classes, and that Lyall also favoured the same idea. Lyall believed in the expediency of strengthening the offices by the conservative elements of the country and thought that the "gentry" could act as a conservative bulwark against the ever rising aspirations of the educated classes. He brought forward a constructive suggestion on this subject. He pointed out to Lytton that the whole blame for the exclusion of natives from serving the Government should not be placed on the Civil Service alone. There were other avenues in which the native talents and ambitions could be channelized. He mentioned Military Service as one of the alternative professions, and observed that under native rule, this service afforded readier and more popular openings than the Civil administration. As a matter of fact, it was in the closing of this avenue to distinction, more than the Civil monopolies, that the natives found a difference between Native and

British rule. This was a service which the natives had performed for honour and dignity more than for money or power. Lyall observed that from this avenue, the native gentry had been shut off, as no other similar class had been, in any other country. As Agent-General to the Governor-General in Rajputana, Lyall had met certain young Rajput nobles who were anxious for commissions in the British irregular cavalry. Whether it was really possible for the Government of India to gratify such native demands was another matter. Lyall had shown a possible alternative for cancelling the native grievances to some extent.<sup>1</sup>

During Ripon's Viceroyalty more reforms of the Civil Service were contemplated. Lyall reiterated his view that equal salaries should be given to natives holding superior appointments. He pointed out that since the high European standards of ability and integrity were more rare among natives, it would not be a bad bargain to give natives the same salaries as Europeans. He maintained that any distinction made on this point would be both 'unwise and impolitic'.<sup>2</sup> Since the natives could not be expected to acquiesce in the 'justice' of making this distinction, it was not worthwhile to let a grievance of this kind grow for the sake of saving a few thousand rupees.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Lyall's Note. Lytton Papers, op.cit.

2. 'Lyall to Ripon', 25th July, 1882, Ripon Papers, Add.MSS 43, 603, pp.30-1.

3. ibid, pp.31-2.

Ripon thought of introducing reforms in regard to the Age limit for the Civil Service. In 1876, a change had been introduced which brought a further reduction of Age limit to 19 for candidates desiring entry to the Civil Service Examinations. It had caused great unrest among the educated classes who thought it aimed at their exclusion from the competitive examinations. Ripon wanted to redress this grievance of the natives and Lyall agreed with him to find some remedy. Lyall thought that it was very important to give fair opportunities to natives for competing, and that the Indian Civil Service should gradually work up to a fair proportion of native members.<sup>1</sup> It is important to notice that Lyall only wanted a 'fair proportion' of natives in the service. On Imperial consideration he did not want multitudes of natives to swamp the European element.<sup>2</sup>

Towards the close of the nineteenth century, in view of the rising communal tension, Lyall thought it was neither prudent nor opportune to fill the higher ranks of the Civil Service with many Hindus and a few Muslims. From the administrative point of view, it could be very inefficient as a member of either faith would find the duty of an authoritative and unbiassed mediator almost impossible.<sup>3</sup> The tranquillity of the country and the maintenance of the existing relations

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1. 'Lyall to Ripon', 12th May, 1884. Ripon Papers, op.cit, p.217.
  2. Lyall: 'Twelve Years of Indian Government' The Edinburgh Review, January, 1895, Vo.181, No.372, p.23.
  3. ibid.

between England and India, could only be preserved upon a system by which an effective proportion of Englishmen in the higher ranks of the administration was assured.

Lyall suggested another alternative opening for the natives. He had pointed Military Service to Lytton, he suggested the Engineering profession to Ripon as a good career for natives. Engineers for the Public Works Department were recruited from Cooper's Hill College in England and from some colleges in India, of which the most important was the Thomason Civil Engineering College at Roorkee.<sup>1</sup> Like many other Provincial Colleges, this College was entirely under the Government of North-Western Provinces and Oudh. As Lieutenant-Governor of North Western Provinces and Oudh (1882-1887) Lyall took great interest in the Roorkee College and played an important role in putting the College on a better footing for the natives. He could think of no better line into which the reasonable ambition of the rising generation of educated natives could be diverted than the Engineering profession.<sup>2</sup> Appointments were guaranteed to those who qualified from this College. In the higher grade class, however, there were few Indians and after 1875 only eight appointments a year were guaranteed.<sup>3</sup> The changes therefore needed were, more encouragement to natives to join the College, and an increase in the number of guaranteed appointments.

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1. Gopal, S: The Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon, London, 1953, p.118.

2. 'Lyall to Primrose', 18th May, 1883, Ripon Papers, op.cit, p.135.

3. Gopal, S: op.cit, p.118.

In view of the paucity of the natives who had till then joined the College, Lyall decided to contact leading natives of the provinces to send up their promising candidates. Some outstanding men, who were particularly interested in education, like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, were also invited to help Indianizing the institution.<sup>1</sup> Lyall recommended that more appointments should be given to the graduates of Indian colleges for natives.<sup>2</sup> He believed that there was nothing to be gained by opening a side door for entry by an Indian College to European British subjects, who could easily enter the Engineering Service through colleges in England.<sup>3</sup> He advised to prescribe, as conditions, (i) an Indian education and (ii) an Indian domicile, for admission to competition for the appointments of Roorkee College.<sup>4</sup> Lyall was really keen to attract natives to the Engineering profession.

#### JUDICIAL SERVICES AND THE NATIVE JURISDICTION BILL

As Home Secretary to the Government of India (1873-1874) Lyall had specified that the only posts to which Natives of India could be appointed direct were the judicial offices.<sup>5</sup> He stated that for these offices, no official apprenticeship was required and the only qualification was to be, either a certain number of years practice as a

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1. 'Lyall to Primrose', 18th May, 1883. Ripon Papers, p.136.
  2. ibid, p.135.
  3. Letter from the North-Western Provinces Government. 10th March, 1884, No. C211, E-B-R to the Government of the N.W.P. and Oudh, P.W. Dept, Ripon Papers, Add.MSS.43, 587, p.448.
  4. ibid.
  5. Memorandum of Lyall. 24th September, 1873. Lytton Papers. MSS.Eur.E.218.No.23/1, p.11.

barrister or a certified pleader.<sup>1</sup> He had, however, pointed out to Lord Northbrook the arguments against putting too many natives into the Judicial Service.<sup>2</sup> Subsequent reflection confirmed what he had thought at first and he conveyed the same belief to Lytton. He pointed out to him that it was much easier, much less insidious, to deal with an executive officer who thwarts the Government than with a Judge. He noticed that even in English hands the judicial power had a knack of thwarting the executive.<sup>3</sup> He therefore considered that a large number of native judges would be inexpedient. The independence and separation of judiciary as a branch of Government in accordance with political theory was perhaps too familiar to Lyall to be ignored. This could possibly be a reason for him to draw the attention of Northbrook and Lytton to this point.

A much publicised and highly explosive issue regarding Judicial Services arose in Ripon's time. This was the Native Jurisdiction Bill, commonly known as the Ilbert Bill. Ripon wanted to introduce reforms in the Judicial Service by abolishing all differences of jurisdiction resting on distinctions of race. Till 1883, an Englishman in India could claim to be tried only by another Englishman. By that

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1. Lyall's Memorandum, op.cit, p.11.

2. Lyall's Demi-official Note. op.cit, p.363.

3. ibid.

time, however, one Indian Covenanted civilian had climbed up to be a District Judge and another had become a District Magistrate.<sup>1</sup> Ripon wanted to remove the restriction placed on native judges, from the code of Criminal Procedure. The reservation to English judges of jurisdiction over Englishmen had been maintained, partly through distrust of the competence of native judiciary, and partly as a political precaution.<sup>2</sup> The issue raised in 1883, by the Native Jurisdiction Bill was that this special reservation had outlived its need and should therefore be swept away as an 'anachronism and a cumbrous anomaly'.<sup>3</sup>

In 1883, when the measure had been put before Lyall, as it had been to other Provincial Governors, he had agreed to it only partly. Due to an oversight of his secretariat, however, it was assumed by the Government of India that Lyall had agreed to the measure entirely.<sup>4</sup> It was therefore, neither the Viceroy's fault in assuming more acquiescence in the measure than Lyall had actually intended, nor was it a personal mistake of Lyall. A misunderstanding arose between Ripon and Lyall. Lord Ripon thought that Lyall had not stood by him with sufficient firmness. Lyall explained his position to the Viceroy, and later he followed the same policy which he had adopted right from the start on

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1. Woodruff, Philip: The Men who Ruled India, The Guardians. London, 1954, p.72.

2. Lyall: 'Government of the Indian Empire', op.cit., p.19.

3. ibid.

4. 'Lyall to Durand', 10th March, 1883, Ripon Papers, Add.MSS 43, 603, p.93.

this issue. Lyall believed in some amendment of the existing law, in consideration to the claims of native judiciary, but on political grounds he did not regard it safe to determine the issue altogether in favour of abolition.<sup>1</sup> In other words, Lyall did not think it was desirable to confer on all Native Magistrates, jurisdiction over Europeans. He had only made a recommendation to the investiture of District Magistrates with full jurisdiction, including that over the Europeans.<sup>2</sup> The Bill, however, had also empowered other magistrates, who had no such standing or responsibility as the Magistrates of the Districts. Besides, the Bill had included Sessions Judges also and Lyall had made no reference to the question of conferring on native Sessions Judges jurisdiction over Europeans.<sup>3</sup>

The proposed amendments stated by Ilbert went beyond Lyall's recommendation. Not only did the former propose ex-officio jurisdiction to all Sessions Judges over Europeans but also proposed that the First Class Magistrates should exercise the same.<sup>4</sup> The number of the two combined, i.e. Sessions Judges and First Class Magistrates was to be far more numerous than the District Magistrates alone. Lyall laid stress on the difference as he thought it to be a substantial one.

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1. Parliamentary Papers, 1883, Vol.LI (C-3512), p.14.

2. 'Lyall to Durand', 10th March, 1883. Add.MSS,43, 603, p.93-4.

3. ibid.

4. ibid.

As Lieutenant-Governor of North-Western Provinces (1882-1887) he made it very clear that he did not think it expedient in his Provinces, to throw open to all Native Magistrates the jurisdiction to the extent that would be permissible under the Bill.<sup>1</sup>

Lyall believed that if the Bill had simply proposed an increase in the jurisdiction of District Magistrates, it would have aroused little opposition. He voiced his view to Ripon, saying that only this change, and nothing more, could rest on very strong administrative grounds.<sup>2</sup> He thought that after promoting a native to the rank of a District Magistrate, it was both unwise and inconsistent to impose restrictions and conditions on his authority.<sup>3</sup> Besides, an Englishman could not claim that it was an invariable usage of his nation to be tried all over the world by another Englishman.<sup>4</sup>

There was a storm of opposition both in India and England over the Bill. The bitterest possible race feelings came to the surface. Lord Ripon was persistently and unsparingly attacked by the Non-official Europeans in India and some of the leading Englishmen of the time like Sir James Fitzjames Stephen in England. Stephen wrote to Lytton:-  
 "....I have seen Maine several times lately. I hear from him that Ripon.... 'that bloody little fool', is behaving like the very devil

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1. Parliamentary Papers: 1884, Vol.IX (C.3877), p.274.

2. 'Lyall to Ripon', 30th March, 1883, Ripon Papers, op.cit., p.102.

3. Parliamentary Papers: 1883, Vol.LI (C.3512), p.14.

4. 'Lyall to Ripon', 28th March, 1883, Ripon Papers, op.cit., p.100.

in India - committing the abominable sin of nigger-worshipping to an accursed degree. I think you might make a most effective assault upon him in the House of Lords in which I would be delighted to help. I really think you might do your party your ex-empire and your creed a service by showing up the way in which a British Marquis... may come to worship his nigger."<sup>1</sup>

Stephen also wrote a letter to the Times on the Native Jurisdiction Bill, which was a powerful statement of the views of the opposition.<sup>2</sup> Lyall thought that some of Stephen's arguments were overstated and his illustrations were open to much criticism. There was very little real analogy, for instance, between the special tribunals for Europeans in Turkey or China, and the law which in India required a European British subject to be tried by one of the same nationality. The position of a few Europeans trading at the sea ports of a 'barbarous' Asiatic Empire was absolutely different from that of an Englishman living under his own laws (i.e. laws made by his own people) in a country governed by a very strong and completely organised administration of his own countrymen. In the former case the question was whether an English merchant could be protected from the "lawless caprice of some Pacha or Maulvi who was perfectly despotic and sure to be against the foreigner"

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1. Stephen to Lytton. Undated Letter. Stephen Papers. (Letters from Sir James Fitzjames Stephen to Lord Lytton, 1882-1891), Add 7349 (1).
  2. Ripon Papers. op.cit.

In the latter case the question was merely whether a selected native Magistrate, carefully supervised by English superiors should exercise summary jurisdiction over an Englishman. Lyall had good grounds for differing from Stephen's attack on the Native Jurisdiction Bill. He had written some criticisms, to England, to the foregoing effect.<sup>1</sup> The sustained violence of language in the Calcutta press and some English Newspapers heartily vexed Lyall. He deeply sympathised with the Viceroy and came out in an open defence of Lord Ripon's general reform policy.<sup>2</sup> His correspondence of the time shows that he was really troubled in spirit at the 'violent unreasonable fermentation of the Bengal Europeans'.<sup>3</sup> He thought that the Europeans themselves were causing a great political harm by 'their unwarrantable and impolitic invectives against the natives'.<sup>4</sup> According to Lyall they had made a serious tactical error in picking a quarrel with the natives over a measure for which their own Government was responsible.<sup>5</sup>

Since the question of amending the Criminal Procedure Code in the matter of jurisdiction over Europeans had been formally taken up, Lyall considered it important to proceed with the Bill to some conclusive

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1. 'Lyall to Ripon', 28th March, 1883, Ripon Papers, op.cit.
  2. Lyall's article, 'Government of the Indian Empire'. Edinburgh Review, op.cit.
  3. 'Lyall to Primrose', 30th March, 1883. Also 'Lyall to Ripon' 28th and 30th March, 1883. Ripon Papers, op.cit.
  4. Lyall: 'Government of the Indian Empire', op.cit., p.12.
  5. ibid., p.19.

decision.<sup>1</sup> He was decidedly against dropping the Bill altogether.<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, the Bill had to be modified to confer jurisdiction on Native District Magistrates and Sessions Judges only, and not on First Class and other Junior Magistrates. It may be pointed out again that originally, Lyall had only agreed to giving jurisdiction to the District Magistrates and not to the Sessions Judges. The modified Bill had, however, included the Sessions Judges. At this stage, Lyall agreed to the modified measure because he did not wish 'to embarrass' the Government of India.<sup>3</sup> Since it was a question of legislating for the whole country, Lyall gave way, and assured the Viceroy of his whole hearted support over the modified bill.<sup>4</sup>

In upper India there was far less friction among Europeans and natives, therefore the tone of controversy over the Bill was much less intolerant. As far as the Non-official Europeans were concerned, Lyall thought it was primarily a local Bengal measure.<sup>5</sup> In lower Bengal particularly, the race distinctions between Englishmen and Bengalees were stronger and more apparant because there was more competition of interests. For long there had existed much heart-burning over questions like indigo-planting and difficulties connected with the land. In short,

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1. 'Lyall to Ripon', 4th December, 1883. Ripon Papers, op.cit. p.179.
  2. Parliamentary Papers: 1884, Vol. LX (C.3877), p.278.
  3. 'Lyall to Ripon', 4th December, Ripon Papers, op.cit.
  4. ibid.
  5. Blunt, Wilfrid Scawen: India Under Ripon. A Diary, p.145.

the Bengalee and the Englishman rubbed up against each other more often in lower Bengal than elsewhere in India, and the storm centre in India over the Bill was the Calcutta press. In the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, Lyall anticipated no serious trouble. In a most reassuring manner he conveyed to the Viceroy that he would direct maximum efforts to keep his provinces clear of controversy.<sup>1</sup> Lyall did not encounter much opposition among the natives in connection with the European antagonisms, and in regard to the Englishmen in public services, Lyall was confident of their co-operation.<sup>2</sup>

To sum up Lyall's attitude regarding the Ilbert Bill controversy it would be interesting to record Lord Cromer's comments, who was at the time (1882-83) Financial Member of the Viceroy's Council. He writes:-

"As was customary in such cases (like the Native Jurisdiction Bill) all the local Govts. had been consulted..... The result was that Lord Ripon had before him the opinions of practically the whole Civil Service of India. Diverse views were held as to the actual extent to which the law should be altered, but, in the words of a despatch addressed by the Government of India to the Secretary of State on September 9th, 1882, the local reports showed 'an overwhelming consensus of opinion that the time had come for modifying the present absolute bar upon the

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1. 'Lyall to Ripon', 30th September, 1883. Ripon Papers, op.cit. p.174.

2. ibid.

investment of native magistrates of the interior with powers over European British subjects.' Not one single official gave anything approaching an indication of the storm of opposition that this ill-fated measure was about to raise... Curiously enough, the only danger-signal which was raised was hoisted by Sir Henry Maine,..... who did not belong to the I.C.S.....Sir H. Maine....wrote privately a few words of warning to Lord Hartington....(who) put the letter in his great coat-pocket.... and forgot all about it.... with the result that Sir H. Maine's warning never reached Lord Ripon.... A furious storm of opposition, which profoundly shook the prestige and authority of the Government of India, and notably of the Viceroy, arose. It was clear that a mistake had been made. The measure was in itself not very important. It was obviously undesirable as Lyall remarked, 'to set fire to an important wing of the house in order to roast a healthy but small pig...." The duty of a practical rough and ready politician was very clearly indicated. However, little he might care for the measure on its own merits, political instinct pointed unmistakably to the absolute necessity of affording strong support to the Viceroy. Lyall failed to realise this fully. He admired Lord Ripon's courage. 'We must', he said, 'all do our best to pull the Viceroy through'. But withal it is clear, by his own admission, that he only gave the Viceroy 'rather lukewarm support'.... that a man of Lyall's philosophical

and reflective turn of mind should see both sides of a question is not only natural but commendable, but this frame of mind is not one that can be adopted without hazard by a man of action at the head of affairs at a time of acute crisis."<sup>1</sup>

In Lyall's writings on the subject of the Indianization of Services, one comes across an important point of Political theory, that is the relationship between the Executive and Judiciary. Being quite conversant with political theory and the working of political institutions, Lyall had come to believe that in the earlier forms of government, the executive had to be all powerful. It is true that judicial authority emerges into separation and independence, as society becomes regular and stable. Meanwhile, executive power must overshadow all other functions of government till society reaches a certain development stage. As a country settles down to orderly habits, it is the tendency of the executive to fall more and more within the control and restraints of the courts of justice. Such a state of affairs, however, presupposes the unification of the people, transcending all racial and religious barriers under a consolidated government.

In the India of his time, Lyall no doubt observed a tendency towards systematic rule and an amalgamation under 'the common name of British subjects' but he was equally conscious that 'race and religion

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1. Cromer: 'Sir Alfred Lyall', Quarterly Review, July, 1913, reprinted Political and Literary Essays, 1908-13, pp.95-9.

both still split up the body politic'.<sup>1</sup> It was therefore premature to assume that in any part of India the relations of the people and the Government could be identified with those in a modern state and nation. Lyall thought that a policy, which at that stage of the country's political evolution tried the gradual transfer of the majority of the judicial offices into native hands, reserving the executive posts mainly to foreigners, would commit the grave error of making race distinctions correspond with the division between the two main departments of administration.

It was a sort of an axiom with some Anglo-Indian administrators to accept that the best and most judicious method of allotting to natives, a fair share, in the administration of their country, was by giving them a very large proportion of judicial offices, reserving to Englishmen a preponderance in the executive department. Sir John Strachey, for instance, was quite willing to give the maximum possible share to natives in the Judicial Service but he was equally against giving them the same in the executive department. He said on this point:-

"It would be every bit foolish to make over the executive charge of our districts and of our cities to native Commissioners, and Deputy Commissioners, as it would be to revert to the system which cost us so

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1. Lyall: 'Government of the Indian Empire', op.cit. pp.19-21.

dearly, under which our artillery and our arsenal and magazines were entrusted to the loyalty of native soldiers. I believe this provision to be altogether erroneous and that it is an opinion the truth of which has been exclusively contradicted by the history of every country which has been subjected to the Government of an altogether alien race.... I believe it is in the judicial branch of public service that we must endeavour to satisfy the legitimate ambition of the natives."<sup>1</sup>

Strachey argued that high executive posts could not be given to natives without disastrous results. Lyall differed from Strachey on this point. He thought that such a theory, if adopted in practice, would be a cause of apprehension to the English settlers with regard to their trial by the native judges. Besides, the country had not reached that stage in political evolution when the balance of authority between the judicial and the executive could adjust itself. Distribution of a large number of judicial offices among natives, and the reservation of the main executive appointments for the British, would strengthen the race distinctions. The courts defined the power and liabilities of all executive officers and sat in judgment over the use of executive authority. There was the risk of a political collision between the predominantly Anglo-Indian executive and the courts of justice constituting a dominant native element. It was obvious that in any conflict

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1. Minute of Sir John Strachey, 21st October, 1872. (Native Civil Service), Lytton Papers, MSS.Eur.E.218, pp.59-60.

of this kind, the native public opinion would certainly range itself on the side of a native judiciary.<sup>1</sup>

To sum up, we can say that Lyall was not in fact an enthusiastic supporter of Indianization of services. He would not have given a large share to natives in the Civil and Judicial Services, if he could have helped it. He preferred to divert native ambitions to professions like engineering, but he was extremely sensitive to the changes around him and he could not, for long, withhold his lukewarm support for natives entering the Civil and Judicial Services.

The policy of doubting the loyalty of natives and hence keeping them away from positions of trust and responsibility worked, it seems, in a vicious circle, and, as a result, created further distrust against foreign rule in the minds of the educated natives. Either they should not have been given Western education or they should have been allowed to participate in the administration of the country. To fill their minds with Western education, with the writing of Burke, Macaulay, Mill and others, and then let them rot aimlessly was a dangerous policy for the safety of the British dominion in India.

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1. Lyall: 'Government of the Indian Empire', op.cit. p.21.

CHAPTER IV  
DECENTRALIZATION

Lyall's views regarding decentralization form perhaps the most interesting set of his political ideas. He made a very thought-provoking analysis of the Indian situation on this subject. He was rather cynical about the sonorous phrases regarding Pax Britannica.<sup>1</sup> The demand that the weaker people should conform to the civic standard of the stronger, as a result of moral force of the Imperial name, could lead to undesirable consequences. As a matter of fact, such demands had resulted in over-centralization and caused 'active interference, peremptory assertions of superiority, high-handed control..... impatient dealing with barbarous folk'.<sup>2</sup> Lyall thought that decentralization was an essential means to achieve good government in India. Not only did he regard decentralization necessary for good government; he also thought it to be vital for the maintenance of British rule in India.

Lyall, like Sir Bartle Frere, had always given due importance to the diversity of India. Frere was perhaps the first Anglo-Indian administrator who pointed out the importance of Decentralization. He was opposed to the policy of assimilation and he wanted the Government

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1. Lyall, A.C: "Life and Correspondence of Sir Bartle Frere",  
The Edinburgh Review, 1895, Vol.182, No.373, p.158.

2. ibid.

to discard the idea of applying a single system to the whole of India. The British Government had tried to enforce exact uniformity which had resulted in the destruction of all individual and local authority and responsibility. Frere suggested a different 'mode' of government. He advocated a good and a vigorous despotism in which the risks of tyranny and arbitrary oppression are minimised. His idea was to make the local officials more accessible to the people so that their grievances could be redressed on the spot without any wastage of time.

The defect of the prevailing system was that the Government had enveloped themselves in rules and regulations and no power was left for individual action.

"We have guarded ourselves against doing evil till we have left no power of doing good."<sup>1</sup>

The laws made by an aloof and distant legislature consisting of high Government functionaries, ignorant of public opinion and without real knowledge of the country could be nothing better than 'crude edicts'. This system had done positive harm to the Government. The absence of local legal authority was responsible for the misconduct of unscrupulous officials who had usurped authority. According to Frere, better results

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1. Martineau, John: The Life and Correspondence of Sir Bartle Frere, London, 1895, Vol.1, p.267.

could be obtained by giving the local officials more legal power and greater responsibility to their immediate superiors. The solution offered by him was 'to centralize by individuals not by departments'.

He said:

"Throughout your whole machine of Government, from the head of the village up through heads of districts and provinces, up to the Governor-General, let every official be a real ruler in all things to those below him, and let him be really ruled by the functionary above him."<sup>1</sup>

This was Frere's rough and ready plan of Government. Lyall, on the other hand, had no specific plan to offer. He developed the argument on decentralization along general lines. He considered the principle of decentralization to be a sound one and regarded it as a necessary means to achieve good government. His comprehensive knowledge of ancient and contemporary history made him believe in the need and urgency of decentralization in the case of India. He considered all efforts, whether in the form of Provincial decentralization or Local Self-Government as steps in the right direction.

It is important to mention that in his writings Lyall identified Provincial Decentralization with Local Self Government, perhaps rightly so, for it is difficult to draw a line between the two. Both are steps towards decentralization, that is, the relaxation of control by the

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1. Martineau; Sir Bartle Frere, op.cit, p.266-267.

centre; provincial decentralization can be regarded as a step higher than local self-government. In the governmental structure, local self-government can be described as the foundation. It is employed as an instrument of political and popular education in the use of representative institutions. The object of decentralization is to strike a balance between the authorities of the Central, Provincial, and Local governments. It is a safeguard against the evils of centralization.

Discussing the relationship between Central and Local governments, J.S. Mill remarks, "Power may be localized, but knowledge to be most useful, must be centralized, there must be somewhere a focus at which all its scattered rays are collected so that the broken and coloured lights existing elsewhere may find there what is necessary to complete and purify them."<sup>1</sup> Lyall agreed with Mill. For Lyall, concentration of knowledge was harmless but concentration of power was most undesirable.

Lyall's picture of the Indian sub-continent was that of a congeries of states and provinces, differing from each other in their needs and stages of development. He believed that the provinces should be left alone as much as possible and he continually advocated provincial decentralization. It was through provincial decentralization that an unwieldy empire could be managed efficiently and satisfactorily.

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1. Mill, J.S: Representative Government, p.281.

He had complete confidence in the men on the spot, in those who were handling the facts and knew the ground. An effort will be made to enlarge upon this belief of Lyall while discussing his Local Self Government Schemes for the North-Western Provinces.

Lyall advised that the principle of decentralization should be logically and consistently observed by the British in India. All political rules are dependent on the special circumstances, conditions and character of the people for whom they are intended. The political art is essentially an art of adaptation. It lays down very few general terms and uniform principles in regard to political institutions. The course which is suited for one society, or one stage of society, may be wholly inapplicable to another. The guiding principle for Lyall was to govern India in accordance with the needs of the different areas and regions of the country.

For a comparison, it is interesting to see that on this particular point, James Mill had the same view as Lyall. Mill thought that no scheme of government could 'happily conduce to the ends of government', unless it was adapted to the state of the people for whose use it was intended.<sup>1</sup> Taking into account the 'habitual' division of the country into numerous states and petty-jurisdictions, Mill observed

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1. Mill, James: History of British India, Third ed., vol.11, London, 1826, p.135.

that a strong and lasting political unity had never existed in India. The reason was that various local units obstinately clung to their own separate languages, customs, laws and institutions. The so-called unity imposed by one or two bigoted sovereigns was merely superficial and too short-lived to produce any considerable effect. Mill thought that 'forming a combination of different states, and directing their powers to one common centre seemed least consistent with the mental habits and attainments of the Hindus.' It was for lack of a power of combination that India had been rendered so easy a conquest to all invaders and which had enabled the British to retain dominion over such an enormous region.<sup>1</sup>

Various local units merited separate treatment. Lyall realised that the vital principle of decentralization was often ignored and there was a 'constant tendency to congestion at the head'.<sup>2</sup> And it was essential to safeguard against this tendency of over-centralization consistently. He saw that the Western civilization was acting as a powerful solvent on Indian society.<sup>3</sup> It was loosening its antique bonds by breaking down its various divisions. The enormous population of India had for long been separated into social compartments by

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1. Mill, James: History of British India, Third Ed., Vol.11, London, 1826. See Chapter X.

2. Lyall: "Twelve Years of Indian Government", Edinburgh Review, p.26.

3. ibid.

differences of blood, caste and religion. Politically the people were intersected by the existence of the native states. The old inequality and variety of laws, customs and personal status parcelled men out into groups. These various groups and gradations of the native society had provided some kind of local self-government and some distribution of authority, no matter how rudimentary or primitive it was judged from Western standards.

Lyall observed that in the interest of discipline and efficiency the British government in India had strengthened the centre at the cost of all kinds of local units and institutions. The danger was that all authority was becoming fixed and concentrated and Lyall frequently warned against this danger.

"The English dominion in India may drift towards that condition of over-centralized isolation, with shallow foundations and inadequate support, which renders an empire as top-heavy as an over-built tower, and which is unquestionably an element of political instability."<sup>1</sup>

Apparently Lyall feared the consequences of over-centralization. In geometrical terms, over-centralization could perhaps be drawn as an inverted triangle, with all the pressure of the base resting on one point. Obviously, this position is most precarious without the genuine support of the broad base of society. Lyall drew historical evidence

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1. Lyall: 'Government of the Indian Empire', op.cit., p.37.

by stating that all Asian Empires had foundered from excessive centralization.

The process of levelling and uniformity under British rule was being helped by several other factors springing from Western influence. In the India of the eighties, Lyall could perceive the decay of old social prejudices in the leading classes. The finer springs of political sentiments were being touched. Demands of land reforms, self government, free journalism, public meetings, the elimination of race distinctions and the discredit of religious beliefs were growing stronger. Lyall regarded the British government to be the primary force which had set the whole country moving, 'as the steam power slowly sets going a great ship'.<sup>1</sup> He could also see that the time was passing for the British to regulate the pace of this ship. The main factors retarding progress in India up to that time had chiefly been the inert resistance and stagnation of the masses and the physical difficulties of the country. Now that the forward movement was being pressed by the British, Lyall began to speculate on the future course into which that immense region of India might be drawn.<sup>2</sup>

Lyall strongly felt that since, as a result of British influence, the various local sub-divisions were vanishing, it was in accordance

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1. Lyall: "Government of the Indian Empire", op.cit., p.36.

2. ibid.

with natural expediency to substitute other administrative and territorial groupings instead of allowing authority to be jammed at the centre. It was for this reason that he supported Ripons' Local Self-Government Scheme. With decentralization as a means, the various administrative and territorial groupings could act as barometers to measure public opinion in the vast and varied regions of India. Much opposition and discontent against Foreign rule could be avoided if the local governments concerned kept in touch with the real feelings of their subjects and informed the Central government accordingly. The British Government, for the simple reason of being foreign, could not enjoy the support of the various Indian groups and petty jurisdictions. Lyall thought that it was all the more essential that British government, which was foreign to the indigenous population in all its aspects, should preserve the various petty jurisdictions.

Lyall advocated that the Native States should be retained as political breakwaters. They could act as useful neutralisers against the forces of general discontent. With tactful handling the native states could be utilised to act as some kind of counterpoise to the generally felt strain of foreign domination. They could act as an important safety-valve where the conservative and traditional way of life could be preserved. Lyall clearly saw that the British were

foreign in a way the Moghuls had never been. The policy of annexation and assimilation of the native states and petty jurisdictions was therefore all the more dangerous for the British. He pointed to the "error of Aurangzeb whose levelling and grasping policy ruined the Moghul empire."<sup>1</sup> In 1907, referring to the native states, he wrote to Morley:

"It is most essential not to interfere with their old-fashioned ways by attempting to introduce 'administrative efficiency' against their inclinations."<sup>2</sup>

Lyall repeatedly advocated decentralization and constantly pointed to the political advantage of assisting people to arrange themselves into separate compartments, to collect round local centres and to preserve the distinctions that had grown up naturally in a country exhibiting marked diversities of climate, race, and history.<sup>3</sup> For Lyall, provincial decentralization or some sort of 'Subordinate Home Rule' was an essential means to manage a distant and unwieldy empire.

1. Lyall: "Twelve Years of Indian Government", p.26.

2. Lyall to Morley, 28th May, 1907, Morley Collection, MSS.D. 573/43.

3. Lyall: "Twelve Years of Indian Government", p.26.

### LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

The actual need for decentralization had been felt since the eighties of the last century. During his Viceroyalty, Ripon foresaw the importance of the demand of the educated classes for a share in political power and he planned to meet it through local government reform. Lyall's advocacy of decentralization can be illustrated by his support to Lord Ripon's Local Self Government Scheme.

Lord Ripon devoted himself to internal reforms. He seemed inclined to adopt as forward a policy in this respect as Lytton had adopted in foreign affairs. Ripon's Local Self Government Scheme was not entirely original. To him, nevertheless, goes the credit of realising the need for infusing fresh life in Local Government. The forms of local government were available but the spirit was lacking. Local bodies already existing were administrative conveniences rather than experiments in freedom.<sup>1</sup> But, according to another writer, no separate indigenous local government tradition existed (apart from the village organisation) which could be distinguished from the centralised administration of the state, upon which the nineteenth century officials could build up an

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1. Gopal, S. The Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon, London, 1953, p.90.

organised Local Government.<sup>1</sup> Hence Ripon's Scheme was an entirely novel experiment.

Ripon's reforms of Local Self Government were drawn in the form of a Resolution.<sup>2</sup> According to this Resolution, genuine discretionary powers were to be given to the various local governments. As Lieutenant-Governor of North-Western Provinces, Lyall was frequently consulted by Ripon on his scheme of Local Self Government. Lyall's opinion had long been decidedly in favour of giving the natives a much larger share in their local affairs. This fact is clearly borne out in a detailed correspondence between Ripon and Lyall.<sup>3</sup> With a longer experience of Indian affairs than Ripon, Lyall was more conscious of the difficulties and complications in implementing such a scheme. He thought that 'a change of this radical nature, which is gradually evolved in other countries' could not be introduced in India 'per saltum'.<sup>4</sup> He agreed with the general idea of the scheme but advised gradual and evolutionary methods in carrying it out.

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1. Tinker, Hugh. The Foundations of Local Self-Government in India, Pakistan and Burma, London, 1954, p.334.
  2. Resolution of the Govt. of India, 18th May, 1882. Parl. P. 1883, Vol.11, p.25.
  3. Ripon Papers, Add. MSS 43, 603.
  4. Lyall to Ripon, 29th May 1882, Ripon Papers, Add. MSS.43, 603.

Lyall assured the Viceroy of the soundness of his policy.<sup>1</sup> He believed that, in his own Provinces, the policy could be satisfactorily carried out. He only wanted time and freedom to arrange details, so that he could adjust the prescribed machinery carefully to local needs. Lyall was anxious to discuss the matter, in all its bearings, with the leading natives of North Western Provinces and Oudh. As an able administrator, Lyall always believed in the desirability of knowing the views of the natives personally. He felt that for this purpose it was not wise to rely on the native press, as it did not always reflect the real native opinion.

In regard to the implementation of Ripon's scheme, Lyall feared that the power to be relinquished may, if too suddenly transferred, not always pass into the hands of the classes, among the people, best qualified to receive it.<sup>2</sup> Lyall was anxious to bring in men of position, influence and character and he thought that the system of partial nomination could go far to secure this essential point.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, although he sided with Ripon, he advised caution in implementing his scheme of Local Self Government. He was also of

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1. Ripon Papers, op.cit.

2. ibid.

3. Lyall to Ripon, 13th May 1883, Ripon Papers, op.cit.

the opinion that all Local Governments should be allowed sufficient autonomy. He particularly asked for it in his own government of the North-Western Provinces. Lyall pointed out that the local government concerned should have a fair share in the initiation of measures to be framed, with ample time for preliminary consideration by its own method. He believed that there was not much use in consulting the Local Government upon a scheme already settled in all the main principles, in which case, there may be very little left for the Lieutenant-Governor and his advisers to do afterwards, except to criticize. And it was hardly profitable that such criticism could have much effect upon the fixed conclusions of a finished project.

For his own Provinces, Lyall requested that in inaugurating reforms, the Government of India, with a full statement of objects, reasons, and general policy, should place the inquiry and the collection of facts for decision in the hands of the Local Government.<sup>1</sup> This procedure was the most effective means towards the ends of the Local Self Government Scheme. The Government of India could pass under criticism the detailed proposals of the Local Government. And Local Governments thus constituted could be more acceptable to the people as well as to the officers of the provinces.

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1. 'Lyall to Ripon', 29th May, Ripon Papers, op.cit, p.18.

There was a good deal of understanding between the Viceroy and Lyall, as a result of which, the latter was asked to complete his Scheme for giving effect to the policy in the North-Western Provinces.<sup>1</sup> Lyall drew up his conclusions in the form of a detailed Resolution.<sup>2</sup> This document laid down the whole plan and modus operendi to be adopted. Lyall's scheme offered some modifications on the recommendations of a committee which was constituted for this purpose. The committee had proposed the appointment of a certain number of qualified and suitable persons to elect a Board in each Tehsil. But to make an election worth holding, the voters in each Tehsil should outnumber the persons to be elected. Lyall was opposed to the principle of election; he preferred the system of direct nominations to the District Boards. He had two reasons in mind for favouring the latter system.

Firstly, he was conscious of the great difficulty in devising principles on which elections could be held. Lyall very much doubted whether, in the great majority of districts, suitable persons could be found in number more than sufficient for providing each Board with members. Besides, he thought that it would be very

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1. Lyall to Ripon, 16th November, 1882. op.cit.
2. ibid., 13th May, 1883, p.130.

difficult to hold election unless some definite standard of participation was prescribed. He was apprehensive of the results of any haphazard arrangements.<sup>1</sup>

The second reason was more important. He pointed out that the sweep of the whole experiment of Local Self-Government undoubtedly depended, at the outset, on enlisting the services of the leading and influential men to local bodies. "Any scheme that does not bring together these men, prepared to work and to help others, will set out under great disadvantages; for if the principal people hold aloof and let smaller persons be elected, we may find local self government doing little or no good or even political harm. Therefore, although the modified scheme narrows the representative basis, I think it is the best way of introducing the policy...."<sup>2</sup> Lyall had always emphasised the importance of securing the support of influential people on political grounds. And only a system of nominations could secure the desired object.

By reason of Lyall's cautious attitude, a slight misunderstanding seems to have occurred between Ripon and Lyall. The latter had no belief in one's ability to settle details beforehand. He wanted

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1. Lyall to Ripon, 16th November, 1882. op.cit.

2. ibid., 13th May, 1883, p.130.

all working details to adjust by the light of actual experiment in Local Self Government. Ripon was a bit annoyed at what he thought was the ultra-cautious attitude of Lyall. Lyall, of course, lost no time in explaining his position.<sup>1</sup>

"If there is at headquarters any idea that the general policy is being restricted or discouraged in N.W.P., and that the real intention of this government is to a certain degree not up to the full level of the Resolutions, that idea is quite wrong..."<sup>2</sup>

Replying to an Address at Benares, Lyall reiterated his sincerity of intention in the following words:-

"... the Government of these Provinces proposes to give effect to the scheme of Local Self-Government. I need hardly say that my object and intentions are to carry out thoroughly the policy upon which that scheme is based, in the way best suited to the circumstances of this country, and to the wishes of the people... The fact that we are introducing important changes is a good reason why we should proceed with some degree of deliberation at the beginning of the new system. Nor can I believe that any reasonable person, who knows the difficulties of detail which these changes

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1. Ripon Papers, op.cit., p.63.

2. Lyall to Primrose, 12th January 1883, Ripon Papers, op.cit., pp. 80-1.

involve, will suppose that there is any idea of thwarting or hindering the policy, merely because it is somewhat cautiously initiated."<sup>1</sup>

These words are very representative of Lyall's attitude on various political issues. Ripon's misunderstanding was, however, soon removed and to Lyall's great satisfaction 'a consistent line of policy was maintained in the North-Western Provinces, from the first Resolution on the subject, down to the final draft of the Acts.'<sup>2</sup>

Ripon's Reforms stirred up vehement opposition in England from various quarters, and Lyall came out with an open defence of the Viceroy's general policy in 1884. He tried to justify Lord Ripon with regard to his Local Self Government scheme. Lyall showed that the various measures adopted by the Viceroy were in accordance with the needs and circumstances of the country. He attributed most of the Local Self Government problems to the predecessors of the British Government. He observed that no local rights or liberties, no assemblies or

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1. Reply of the Lieutenant-Governor to the Address of the Benares Municipality delivered 10th January, 1882, Ripon Papers, op.cit.
  2. Lyall to Ripon, 30th September, 1883, op.cit., p. 173.

corporations were over recognised by the Moghul officials, leaving the towns of India 'always remarkably destitute of any kind of collective autonomy.'<sup>1</sup> The simple policy of Asiatic despotism was followed in beating down everything that might interfere with the personal authority of the rulers or their agents. The picturesque expression given to the Indian village community in Elphenstave's History of India, could not convince Lyall. The punchayats or local juries were inadequate arrangements and were no substitutes for a well organised Local Government. England had thus taken over from an Empire that had crushed all local independence and power of resistance. He admitted that the English had committed the error of perpetuating that set up by reorganising the centralised system. In fact, the process of reorganisation operated still more to break up the rough shifts and methods invented by the people for managing their own affairs. The establishment of regular courts and general laws, under the British, had inevitably superseded local juries and different usages.

Lyall held that Ripon's experiment was in many ways novel and extremely important. The time had come for reforming the

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1. Lyall, 'Government of the Indian Empire', op.cit., p.22.

constitution of local bodies and investing them with genuine authority and independence. This task was by no means easy. To Lyall's mind, administrative reforms on broad uniform principles could neither be possible nor desirable for India. It was due to the enormous size of the country and the great heterogeneity of its population. Besides, Lyall observed that the principles and patterns of Local Self Government coming from Britain would not work efficiently in India. In Britain ancient liberties survived and developed, under very favourable circumstances among a few millions of people. Such institutions, which grew up like trees are easily preserved and improved. On the other hand, the business of creating ab-initio the apparatus of local self-government on vast and incoherent multitudes of India, infinitely divided by religions, castes, sects and tribes was a different matter altogether. The magnitude of the task often made Lyall very anxious. In view of the religious antipathies and low public morality, things could speedily lead to 'local misgovernment' instead of 'efficient Local Self Government'.

Lyall strongly warned against the danger of following British political institutions blindly. As a matter of fact, he realised

that some instructive precedents could be found on the Continent for the Indian situation. In some European countries, he found that the strong centralised governments were busy restoring or rebuilding local institutions that had been demolished during the despotic periods of Europe. Prussia, he thought, had solved the problem of tempering a powerful bureaucratic government by local independence, with much success. Russia had drawn back after making some tentative steps in the same direction. France had been constantly endeavouring to repair the consequences of the breakdown that followed 'the well-meant and ill-made beginnings of reform and decentralization.'<sup>1</sup> The great lesson that could be learnt, according to Lyall, was to see that these very changes in the field of local government helped to precipitate the Revolution in France.

Lyall was much impressed by De Tocqueville's study of the *Ancien Régime* and causes of revolution. There are frequent references to De Tocqueville's work in Lyall's own writings. Despite the manifold differences between France in 1787 and the India of the eighties, Lyall saw the curious resemblance between the Anglo-Indian administrators and the French Intendants.<sup>2</sup>

De Tocqueville's account of the manner in which the French Government

1. Lyall, 'Government of the Indian Empire', p.23.
2. ibid.

of the Eighteenth Century set about substituting independent municipalities and provincial assemblies for the previous system of official supervision, was most stimulating for Lyall. Three-fourths of France had previously been administered by the Intendants almost arbitrarily. This class of officials, in their powers and attributes, were by no means unlike the Commissioners and Magistrates in India. The Intendants kept up a system of control over, and constant interference with, all kinds of administrative details, which was similar to the practice of Indian District officers. Suddenly, the Government, being convinced that the time had come for reform, transferred almost all these local powers from the Intendants and their subdélégués to the provincial and sub-divisional assemblies. The result was that the Intendants, who previously did everything, suddenly found themselves able to do nothing. Although they were still charged with the duty of assisting some supervisory functions, they no longer had any real power of guiding them. This complete transformation of functions and powers stirred up everyone and resulted in general confusion. The officials and the assemblies fell to quarrelling and accusing each other of misgovernment.

Lyall had thus read the French situation very carefully and had foreseen similar problems on the Indian scene. Consequently,

he advised a very cautious and judicious handling of the situation. A precipitate transfer of public business from the district officers to the newly-formed local boards, could induce, through similar cases, the same embarrassments as followed in France. This, of course, was no argument against decentralization, which Lyall had always thought to be very essential for India. The only need emphasised was that of caution and foresight in carrying it out. The French Government set out much too hastily and unscientifically on the long neglected path of decentralization. The blunder then committed was the exclusion, at once and entirely, of the official executive from the local assemblies. He made the point very clear by stating that the withdrawal of the officials was not wrong in principle but that they were withdrawn too suddenly.<sup>1</sup>

Lyall suggested that the best course for the Indian situation was to make the magistrates preside, in the beginning, over the district assemblies, making the constitution of the local bodies as elastic as possible, so that their autonomy and representative character could develop with the practical experience and public spirit of the country.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Lyall: 'Govt. of the Indian Empire', p.26.

2. ibid.

John Stuart Mill had pointed out earlier that a free country which attempts to govern a distant dependency, inhabited by a dissimilar people, by means of a branch of its own executive, will almost inevitably fail.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, Lyall thought that the prevalent system of minute administration under the eye and guiding hand of highly trained English officials, no doubt produced admirable results. It was a wonderful example of scientific governmental mechanism. But the time had come for relaxing, cautiously and with safeguards, the discipline of administrative tutelage.<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting to record Lyall's comments on Curzon's views regarding decentralization and his criticism thereof. On 15th June 1907, Lyall wrote to Morley:-

"Lord Curzon's letter in today's Times gives a characteristic view of what he understands by decentralization. The Local Governments are, or are likely to become, 'petty despotisms' - unless they are constantly enlightened by outside experience or stimulated by higher control'. And Curzon recalls hundreds and hundreds of letters that he received inviting his intervention, and the final judgment of the Government of India. In short, as I

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1. Mill, John Stuart. Representative Government, p. 329.
  2. Lyall to Ripon, April 28, 1883. Ripon Papers, op.cit., p.113.

learnt from recent conversation with him, his real conception of decentralization is the concentration of authority in the hands of a very active and energetic Governor-General. This is, indeed, the embodiment of his belief in efficient administration as the sure method of keeping the people of India content with our rule. I myself set great value on efficiency, though I do not reckon it to be the first thing essential - but I also venture to doubt whether the constant supervision and consequent interference of the supreme government is so likely to secure efficiency as a system of leaving more to the responsible local governments. And I even question whether uniformity of system in such matters as education, police, excise or sanitation is necessary, as Curzon assumes it to be, or even desirable. In the United Kingdom, here at home, we have no such uniformity, and the various provinces of India are no less different in condition and character of the people, than England, Scotland and Ireland ... My own opinion is that the drawbacks to provincial decentralization, whatever they may be, can never be so serious as the evils of centralization. And one point, which I have had in mind since you announced that a Commission would meet on the subject, is that very precise and formal rules will be needed to deter a vigorous Viceroy, with little faith in the judgment or capacity of other folk, from continually finding urgent reason for setting them aside, since,

of course, he must always hold in reserve the power to do so in extreme cases."<sup>1</sup>

The importance of decentralization was not fully realised by the Government of India. A contemporary writer observes, with regret, the delay which occurred in implementing the recommendations of the Decentralization Commission. If the demands of the politically active classes were to be met by greatly increased representation in the Legislative Councils, the sensible course was to enable them to learn at first hand and as a first step, the working of local institutions.<sup>2</sup> The policy of the Government of India was often pedestrian perhaps due to a lack of ideal. The Government, it seems, were confused regarding the political future of India; whether they wanted complete self-government, a kind of Imperial Trusteeship, or some other type of control, is difficult to comprehend.

It is interesting to discover that people of divergent political views converged on the subject of decentralization. John Bright, 'the sentimental Liberal', Sir John Strachey, 'the ice-cold bureaucrat', Sir Henry Maine, 'the great and rare mind', and Sir Alfred Lyall 'the

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1. Lyall to Morley, 15th June 1907, Morley Collection, MSS.D573/43.
  2. Tinker, Hugh. Local Self Government, London, 1954, pp.336-7.

intellectual Liberal', all joined in recognizing the necessity of decentralizing the Government of India.

Bright, thinking that the union of the various regions of India into a single state was impossible, went as far as to propose that each of the great provinces should have a separate and almost independent Government of its own, directly subject to the English crown, and that the Central Government of India under the Governor-General should be abolished.<sup>1</sup> This was, of course, a complete swing of the pendulum, but Bright's belief in the sharp diversities of India, and the desirability of leaving the Provinces freedom in internal affairs with the minimum of interference from the Centre, was well-founded and reasonable.

Strachey repeatedly insisted that the primary fact lying at the root of all knowledge about India was the diversity of the 'countries' and its peoples which comprised it. He thought that centralization had outlived its need. During the building up period of the British Empire, concentration of authority and centralization were both inevitable and essential. Once, however, the Government was constituted on a firm footing, decentralization

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1. Strachey, Sir John. India, Its Administration and Progress, London, 1903, pp. 63-65.

was as much important for consolidation and progress. Political security could be ensured by making the Provincial Governments almost independent in internal matters. Strachey did not, by any chance, advocate a weak Centre; he only wanted a little sacrifice of some part of the Supreme authority.<sup>1</sup>

For an enormous undertaking such as the Government of the Indian Sub-Continent, the wise lesson of Sir Henry Maine was decentralization. He expressed his views as follows:-

"Under a centralised Government there is danger of generalizing a local mistake. Localised, a mistake can be corrected with comparative ease; it becomes dangerous in proportion to the area of its diffusion."<sup>2</sup>

In Lyall's writings, one finds frequent analogies drawn between the Roman Empire and the British Empire in India. His views on decentralization can be summed up as follows: "... the English have accomplished the building-up, after the high Roman fashion, of an immense polyglot empire, the stability of the structure must depend upon a skilful distribution of weight, because excessive centralization is radically insecure, and supports are useless without some capacity to resist pressure."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Strachey, op.cit. pp. 116-7.
  2. Maine: Quoted in Strachey's India, p. 117.
  3. Lyall, British Dominion in India, pp. 389-90.

Despite the efforts initiated in Lord Ripon's time and subsequently followed by some British and Anglo-Indian officials, the principle of decentralization was not properly implemented for a long time. The first effective step in this direction was taken in 1917 in the form of Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, when it was already too late. And the Government of India, by their reluctance to part with any measure of substantial control, began to fear the relinquishment of all control.

CHAPTER VSELF-GOVERNMENT

From 1885 onwards, the conditions which had made the establishment and continuance of British rule possible in India were fast changing mainly as a result of that rule itself. In the era of the Nationalist movements, the prodigiously difficult problem before the English was of retaining India in a state of contented subordinate relation to England. Lyall often thought of the future of the Indian Empire, as he himself observes:-

"....I am always thinking of the probable fortunes of our Empire, and trying to conceive it possible to civilize and convert an enormous nation by the mechanical processes of the present times by establishing schools and missionary societies. Also, having civilized them, and taught them the advantage of liberty and the use of European sciences, how are we to keep them under us, and to persuade them that it is for their good that we hold all the high offices of Government?"<sup>1</sup>

The Indian National Congress was formed in 1885 during the Viceroyalty of Lord Dufferin who had succeeded Lord Ripon in the Governor-Generalship of India. According to Lyall, no Governor-General ever came to India so well equipped by antecedent experience

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1. Lyall, Quoted in Durand Life of Lyall, p.89.

for the work as Lord Dufferin.<sup>1</sup> With regard to the political situation in India, Dufferin recorded his views in a Minute. He wrote:-

"My own inclination would be to examine carefully and seriously the demands which are the outcome of these various movements; to give quickly and with good grace whatever it may be possible or desirable to accord; to announce that these concessions must be accepted as a final settlement of the Indian system for the next ten or fifteen years; and to forbid mass meetings and incendiary speechifying. Putting aside the demands of the extremists..... the objects even of the more advanced party are neither very dangerous nor very extravagant.....But it must always be remembered that though common sense and a certain knowledge of affairs and of the world may limit the programme of the leaders to what they think they have a chance of getting, the ideal in the minds of the major part of their followers is an India in which the British Army shall ward off invasion from without and preserve them from tyranny and usurpation of the native princes within, while they themselves shall have free scope to administer their domestic affairs untrammelled by the interference of white men, except perhaps in the person of a Viceroy and a limited number of high officials. Undoubtedly the most vital and important of the notions started by the reformers is the change they propose in the

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1. Lyall: Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, London, 1905, Vol.11, p.72.

Legislative Councils. I confess..... that improvement might be possible in this direction, and personally I should feel it both a relief and an assistance if in the settlement of many Indian administrative questions affecting the interests of millions of Her Majesty's subjects, I could rely to a larger extent than at present upon the experience and counsels of Indian coadjutors. The fact of their supporting the government would popularize many of its acts which now have the appearance of being driven through the legislature by force, and if they in their turn had a native party behind them the government of India would cease to stand up, as it does now, an isolated rock in the middle of a tempestuous sea, around whose base the breakers dash themselves simultaneously from all the four quarters of the heavens.... In spite of the serious array of arguments which I have adduced against the change, my instincts rather propel me in the opposite direction, at all events so far as to try the experiment of liberalizing, if not the supreme, at least the subordinate Legislative Councils. Now that we have educated these people, their desire to take a larger part in the management of their own domestic affairs seems to be a legitimate and reasonable aspiration, and I think there should be enough statesmanship amongst us to contrive the means of permitting them to do so without unduly compromising our Imperial supremacy."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Lyall: Life of Dufferin, pp.151-3.

There are two important points which spring from the above narrative. Firstly, the help and encouragement given to the formation and functioning of the Indian National Congress were not the outcome of pure altruism and love for the natives. The Congress was formed so that it could be used as a barometer to measure public opinion, and a medium for enlisting popular support for the Government of India. Secondly, Dufferin wished to strengthen the provincial legislatures so that the jurisdiction in diverse provinces should proceed upon an intimate acquaintance with particular needs and a right knowledge of public opinion. He firmly maintained the principle of maintaining supreme control, embodied in the word 'Empire'.

Lyall approved of Dufferin's policy, which he thought was sound and practicable. He believed that there must always be some power capable of holding a just and even balance among conflicting races and creeds, and the problem in India, he knew, was to superintend upon a principle of devolution and distribution of administrative responsibilities. Lyall also thought it advantageous to provide more opportunities for public debate upon legislative projects. Lyall's acquiescence in Dufferin's policy regarding the Congress, and his willingness to give political concessions to the natives, can be seen in the following words:-

"Lord Dufferin felt that the time was passing when the British Government could afford to disparage the claims and aspirations of a party that the British system of education had deliberately created...

No statesman.... knew better than he (Dufferin) did that if the English persist in continuing to pile up, after the high Roman fashion, the edifice of a great empire over a miscellaneous population, they cannot go on adding to the super-structure without distributing the pressure of administrative responsibilities."<sup>1</sup>

The political scene in India was changing fast. To some keen observers of the Indian politics, the signs of a great transformation were apparent. The unrest, in its purely political aspects, seemed to some as being largely artificial, but what chiefly alarmed them were the more 'sinister aspects'. It was a movement of wholesale revolt and reaction against the domination of the West, against its spiritual and ethical, as well as against its material and political ascendancy.<sup>2</sup> About thirty years earlier the superiority of Western literature and Western ethics was as generally recognised as that of Western science and Western political institutions. But in the 80's the pendulum began to swing back, and in the 90's the movement was seen to be developing into an extraordinary Hindu revival - back to the Vedas, back to Kali-worship, back to Shivaji Maharaj, and back to the golden age when, 'before the advent of the wicked Englishman, prosperity reigned and all the virtues flourished'. The freedom of press gave the movement

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1. Lyall: Life of Dufferin, pp.150-1.

2. See Chirol, Valentine: Indian Unrest, London, 1910.

much publicity and encouragement. Then there was widespread Western education. The future of India became a tremendous problem; the education initiated by the English themselves was bearing fruit. And as Morley put it, "The danger arose from a mutiny, not of sepoys about greased cartridges, but of educated men armed with modern ideas supplied from the noblest arsenals and proudest trophies of English literature and English oratory".<sup>1</sup> There was also an economic aspect. The educated classes regarded the economic policy of the Government of India as radically unsound and grossly unfair to India. They maintained that the 'drain' to England was the real cause of the poverty of the people.

The year 1892 shows an important landmark in the Constitutional development of the Indo-Pak sub-continent. It was to the credit of Lord Lansdowne that one of the most important measures of constitutional reform that was enacted by the British Parliament, was vigorously supported by his Government and was passed during his Viceroyalty. It was the Indian Councils' Act of 1892. The Act gave a Legislative Council to North-West Provinces. It increased the number of the members of all the councils, provided for the selection of non-official members on a representative principle, and materially enlarged the function of

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1. Morley: Recollections, Vol.2, p.154.

these bodies. The privilege of recommending members for the Imperial Legislative Council was also bestowed on the provincial legislatures, and upon academic, commercial, municipal associations and corporations. In the new councils the members were given the right of discussion on financial matters and of interpellation. In other words the members of the provincial councils had acquired certain powers of substantial value.

As a student of history and of the art of government, nothing could have been more interesting for Lyall than to watch the course and conduct of the great experiment in the evolution of political enfranchisement in India. He noted, with satisfaction, the evidence of moral and material progress during Lord Lansdowne's Viceroyalty, and commended the Viceroy for his policy of political reforms. Lord Lansdowne was considered a strong and successful Governor by Lyall, and the Act of 1892 was indeed a welcome step which was taken at a favourable time.<sup>1</sup> During the last decade of the nineteenth century the English and the natives saw much more of each other and knew each other much better than formerly. Education was bringing the upper classes nearer to a common level, while capital, commerce, and even literature were bringing about a stronger community of ideas and interests. It was not a surprise for Lyall to observe that some native politicians,

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1. Lyall: 'Twelve Years of Indian Government', Edinburgh Review, January, 1895, No.371, p.32.

however 'able and well intentioned', were usually found to be in their novitiate with regard to the complex problems raised by the application of political science to the government of dependencies. Although he approved of the 1892 Act as being a most commendable measure, yet he cautioned against the sudden introduction of popular institutions in India, which had, for centuries, been governed autocratically through powerful officials. He referred to the prominent instance of France. That instance was afforded by the assemblage of the States-General, in 1789, when the ignorance of the people, the utter inexperience of the deputies, and the total absence among the ministers of any practice or precedents in the management of representative institutions, produced speedy confusion and disorder. If rash and revolutionary changes could bring such rapid political ruin upon a compact and highly civilised nationality, what disaster could not be expected in the midst of the vast incoherent miscellany of tribes and castes that composed the population of India? This was a question which constantly worried Lyall.

In order that constitutional reforms may be successful in India, Lyall advised that the reforms must follow some intelligent order, and must not begin at the wrong end. In this connection Lyall referred to, and criticised the British policy in Ireland where the English possessed political ascendancy. They (the English) set about enlarging the civil rights of the Irish Catholics in a defective manner. The

privilege of voting for members of Parliament was conferred upon a people, the majority of whom were extremely ignorant and easily misled, but it was not until a long period of discontent and disaffection had elapsed that the voters were allowed to elect representatives of their own faith. These representatives were indeed their natural leaders. When this had been done there was further delay before the general education in Ireland was seriously taken up. The result of this policy, according to Lyall, was confusion which could have been avoided if the order of these reforms had been reversed. Lyall therefore advocated that in India, it was wise to adjourn radical changes of the governing institutions until public instruction, which was slowly permeating all ranks of the population, could raise the general level of intelligence, Lyall wanted to defer the placing of the mechanism of representative government in the hands of a masterless multitude until there was a fair certitude that they would not be utterly bewildered and misdirected in endeavouring to use it.<sup>1</sup>

Here we may note an inconsistency in Lyall's views. As we have already observed, Lyall was not in favour of educating the natives. In the 90s he realised, however, that public instruction was an indispensable prerequisite for the introduction of representative institutions. It is for this reason that there was a change in his attitude regarding the furtherance of education amongst the natives.

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1. Lyall: 'Twelve Years of Indian Government', p.26.

Towards the close of the nineteenth century and in the early years of the present century, certain events influenced the attitude of the Asiatics towards European domination. The defeat of the Italians by the Abyssinians in 1896 was the first decisive victory gained by Oriental troops over a European army. The Japanese victory over Russia in 1904, not only at land but also at sea, warned that 'the era of facile victories in Asia had ended; since never before in all history had an Asiatic navy won a great sea fight against European fleets'.<sup>1</sup>

The Indian National Congress at the opening of the Morley-Minto Era gathered more strength and momentum and the Government of India had to recognise its importance. The eyes of the Nationalist leaders, extremists as well as moderates, were now fixed on a better political future for India. Self-Government was the goal of the Indian Nationalists. A vibrant spirit of 'New India' pervaded the whole Sub-Continent.<sup>2</sup> In the first decade of the present century, the English and the natives were working at cross purposes because they did not have the same aim in view. The British were most reluctant to accept the Indian ideal of self-government. Even so, some reflective civil servants like Sir Henry Cotton, began to wonder whether they were in India for the good of the people or for their own good.

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1. Lyall: Introduction to Valentine Chirol's Indian Unrest, p.ix.

2. See Sir Henry Cotton's New India, or India in Transition, London, 1907.

In this era of growing unrest and political consciousness among the natives, Lyall was somewhat inclined towards giving them more political concessions. Morley was introducing his Bill of Reforms and Lyall seems to have had frequent discussions with him and others, who, like Lord Cromer, were interested in the subject. The fact that the measures introduced, were moulded, to some extent, on Lyall's advice, is borne out in a correspondence between Lyall and Morley.<sup>1</sup>

In 1907, Lyall was consulted by Morley with regard to the formation of advisory councils, which were to be composed of the country's notables. Lyall had no faith in advisory councils - believing that advice without direct responsibility was of small value. He could not think of any case in which the 'régime consultatif' had been tried with success.<sup>2</sup> The proposal to consult notables, 'either individually or collectively' did not strike Lyall as being profitable. His doubt was whether it would be politically expedient to use both methods simultaneously, i.e. to deal with an officially-constituted Council on affairs of State, as a body; and also to take, separately and confidentially, the advice of individual members without creating jealousies and increasing the general sense of irresponsibility, which was inherent in all institutions of this sort.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Morley Collections, MSS D.573/43/C 'Letters of Sir A.C. Lyall, to Lord Morley'.
  2. 'Lyall to Morley' Easter Sunday, 1907, Morley Collection, MSS D.573/43/C.
  3. ibid.

A Council of Princes was contemplated by Lord Minto, which, when formed could act as a possible counterpoise to the aims of the Indian National Congress. This body could be a sort of Privy Council not only of Native Rulers, but of a few other influential men. The Viceroy wanted to get different ideas from those of Congress, ideas emanating from native notables having interest in the good government of India.<sup>1</sup> According to the Government of India proposals, this body was to have a 'formal association with the Government', but it was to have 'no formal powers of any sort'. Lyall doubted the expediency of constituting such a Council and argued that a body constituted on such lines would mean that the members would profess no definite responsibility.<sup>2</sup> It was likely that they would not give their advice with confidence and would not pay close attention to possible consequences; at the same time it was likely that if their advice was disregarded they would resent it. Since the Government attached 'the highest importance to collective consultation' and also intended 'to consult the counsellors individually' Lyall could not see how these two methods could be reconciled.<sup>3</sup>

There were some other reasons also which prompted Lyall to oppose the idea of a Council of Princes. He did not believe that the proceedings of the collective consultation would be kept secret. His own

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1. Mary, Countess of Minto: India, Minto and Morley, 1905-1910, London 1934, p.29.

2. 'Lyall to Morley', 11th April, 1907, Morley Collection, op.cit.

3. ibid.

experience showed that 'the natives of India very rarely held their tongues'. And among 40 or 50 members from different parts of India, there were sure to be some who would not resist the temptation of disclosing the results of proceedings which would stimulate much curiosity outside the Council. Nor did Lyall think that individual consultation 'by letter' was advisable, as most of the magistrates were not capable of stating their views effectively in writing. Almost invariably 'they called in the assistance of some friend who could put their ideas into form, and they very seldom wrote even their ordinary letters'.<sup>1</sup> Also, Lyall was apprehensive about constituting such a large and influential body as this Council. He could not overlook the danger that the Council, if it were not very judiciously handled, might eventually unite in some kind of political opposition to the British Government.

Lyall advised the Government of India to consider beforehand how far they were prepared to accept the advice of the Council on legislative and executive questions, for once the Council of Princes was constituted, it would not be easy to reject their advice. If no consideration was shown to their advice, it would lead to much frustration and heart-burning among the members of the Council.<sup>2</sup>

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1. 'Lyall to Morley', 11th April, op.cit.

2. ibid.

In 1907, Lyall was consulted on the question of the appointment of a native member to the Viceroy's Executive Council. Lyall was against such an appointment for various reasons. The Government of India had intended the selection of a man, who 'stood aloof from politics', and Lyall wondered if such a selection would provide a sufficient guarantee for the member's competency to deal with important political affairs. Morley thought that the admission of natives to the level of the High Courts could be an answerable argument for admitting a native member to the Viceroy's Executive Council. Lyall thought that this analogy was not strong enough. A judge who had to apply the written law to specific cases could easily be kept straight by the Bar and by his colleagues on the Bench, whereas a member of the Executive Council who had to deal with high questions of policy and the secret affairs of a Government was in a very different position. 'The sphere of politics' Lyall observed, 'is so distinct from the sphere of judicial administration'.<sup>1</sup>

The demand for the appointment, of a native member to the Viceroy's Council, however, could not be set aside. As a matter of fact, it grew more urgent with the emergence of the All-India Muslim League in 1906. This body was a Muslim counterpart of the Indian National Congress. With intellectual enlightenment among the Muslims, the

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1. 'Lyall to Morley', 8th May, 1907, Morley Collection, op.cit.

traditional socio-religious differences between the Hindu and the Muslim communities were extended to politics. There was a widespread Muslim reaction against the aggressive Hindu revivalism. The Muslims brought forward their grievances and demanded political safeguards for their own community. By 1909, the Government of India had come to realise fully that 'There was something, called a Muslim problem in India'.

In view of the rising communal tension, the Government of India were considering whether the appointment of two native members (one representing the Muslims) to the Viceroy's Council would be wiser than that of a single member. In 1909, Lyall was consulted on this subject. We have seen that in 1907 Lyall was opposed to the appointment of a native member to the Viceroy's Council. In 1909, however, Lyall approved of such an appointment. The change in Lyall's view regarding this subject was perhaps actuated by the rapidly changing political conditions of the country. The previous question regarding the suitability of a native's appointment to the Viceroy's Council was no longer disputed. Lyall was now being consulted on a different question-whether the appointment of two native members to the Viceroy's Council would not be better than the appointment of a single member. Lyall thought that the appointment of two members was worse than one.

On 5th February, 1909, Lyall wrote to Lord Cromer:—

"I appreciate fully the objections to appointing a single native member to the Viceroy's Council, nevertheless I am still inclined to believe that it is now the best thing to do. To my mind, two Native Members would be worse than one. A Hindu and a Mohammedan would most probably be intensely jealous of each other; they would be often thrown into opposition to each other on questions where the interests or prejudices of the two communities which they would represent would be antagonistic, and this might import into the Council an element of controversy and discussion. The Viceroy might find himself obliged in such cases, to decide between them, to the dissatisfaction of the Member and of the Community whose opinion be overruled. If no portfolio were given to these two Members, I think it would be difficult to provide them with sufficient employment, whereas, according to my view, it will be mainly by imposing plenty of work and direct responsibility upon the Native Member that we can hope to keep him straight. Moreover, they would find themselves in a position inferior to that of the English Members, and the native public would infer that we did not trust their ability or their integrity.

In short, I fear that the introduction of two native Members would weaken the Executive Council which would be the greatest of all disadvantages. If, instead of opposing each other, they chose to act

together, I should apprehend that the Indian element in the Council would be too strong to be easily manageable. A single native Member, on the other hand, could be kept in order by his European colleagues, and he himself would, as I think you agree, be likely to be very cautious about showing favour to his own people, and would be anxious to maintain his reputation for impartiality. Nor is it prudent, in my opinion, to introduce at once the practice of appointing two native Members, from which we could hardly recede, later.

But I agree with you that the appointment of a Hindu member will just now intensify the discontent of the Mohammedans, which I take to be the most serious difficulty in front of Morley. Yesterday I wrote to Morley, strenuously advising him to make some concessions to the Mohammedans in regard to their representation on the Legislative Councils. It is a problem that brings us at the outset face to face with the difficulties inherent in working any elective system in India. This method of giving power to majorities, which seems to us so simple, is not understood by a people infinitely divided by groups of tribes, religion and caste, and I do not see how it can fail to operate for the predominance of the Hindus, while it suits admirably the designs of the advanced Hindu politicians. If the Mohammedan finds himself at a serious disadvantage, he will be alienated from our government, and the important wing of the moderate party will be dislocated."<sup>1</sup>

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1. 'Lyll to Cromer', 5th February, 1909, Cromer Papers, MSS.F.O. 633/18, pp.165-7.

With regard to the proposals for enlarging the Legislative Councils, Lyall agreed that this measure was politic and necessary. It was only on some points of detail that Lyall offered some modifications, for instance, he thought that the number of members suggested for the Viceroy's Legislative Council was too large, and that native commercial interests were not specifically represented. He advised that great care should be taken in adjusting the balance of representation among the different classes and interests in Indian society.<sup>1</sup> On grounds of political expediency, Lyall wanted the Government of India to make concessions to the views of Muslims. Since the Muslims embodied a strong conservative element, they could be a substantial support to the Moderate party in India. And the best possible policy would be to enlist the moderates as allies and auxiliaries on the side of the British government against the extremists. Lyall felt, 'It would be a grave mischance if the Mohammedans were alienated'.<sup>2</sup>

Regarding the enlargement of Legislative Councils, and the appointment of a native member to Viceroy's Council, Lyall gave his detailed views to Cromer, which read as follows:-

"My view of the situation is that the present bureaucratic system of Government, though it is the best method of securing efficient

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1. 'Lyall to Morley', 11th April, 1907, op.cit.

2. 'Lyall to Morley', 4th February, 1909, Morley Collection, op.cit.

administration, cannot long be maintained. It is, in fact, a benevolent despotism, very effective for the impartial dispensation of justice.... But at the moment we can perceive everywhere in Asia the beginning of a movement toward giving the higher classes a larger share in the government of their respective countries, toward bringing men of capacity and competence into the upper ranks of administration, and investing them with some power of exerting their influence on the course of affairs. I believe that in India, which is one of the greatest and richest empires in Asia, and is under the sovereignty of a free self-governing nation, it is impossible - certainly impolitic - to resist this movement. No other country in the world is ruled by non-resident foreigners, nor is any other administration in the world almost entirely in the hands of a civil service of officials selected in a foreign country..... In my opinion it is necessary to modify this system, not only by widening the Legislative Councils, but also by introducing, gradually, men of independence and influence into the executive authority that initiates and determines all important legislation.

Now for the purpose of accomplishing successfully the introduction of reforms in the direction of self-government in India, the policy of the English rulers should evidently be to lean on the moderate party among the natives, and to strengthen it against the extremists. If we can satisfy that party and acquire its support, I believe that the

other faction can be sufficiently restrained, for I hold that the moderates represent the views and aspirations of a very great majority of those among the Indian population whose opinions are worth counting. We shall rely upon them to temper the violence and discredit the excesses of the extremists by the weight of their character and the force of their influence. In short, we must enlist them on our side, and to gain this advantage I would venture upon material concessions.

I would make a bid for their confidence by proving that we have confidence in their attachment to the British rule, and I think that the appointment of a native member to the Executive Council would prove that we trust them. I do not undervalue the objections that have been raised against such an appointment, the embarrassment that it might cause in the conduct of business in the Viceroy's Council, the undesirability of entrusting the native member with secrets of State, the difficulty of selecting an Indian with adequate merit, ability and integrity, or of choosing one who will honestly represent the interests of both Hindus and Mohammedans. But these objections are to my mind of comparatively secondary importance and partly technical, and I think that we have no right to assume their validity beforehand, while to admit arguments of this sort as conclusive against making the appointment would be to shut the door indefinitely against an Indian member, since they can always be revived to defeat a proposal to appoint him.

I am convinced that the introduction of Indians to places of real and high importance in our Government is a step that must be taken sooner or later - however long we may postpone it - because their assistance and co-operation in the arduous task of governing modern India is essentially needed, and I should prefer to take it sooner rather than later. The proper decision would be, in my opinion, to accept some risk of inconveniences and disadvantages, and to treat objections founded upon them as necessarily superseded by considerations of higher statesmanship."<sup>1</sup>

The above extract raises some points for consideration. It shows that Lyall ultimately made up his mind to liberalize political institutions in India. His views concerning the enlargement of Legislative Councils are not inconsistent because he favoured this measure, right from the very beginning. Regarding his attitude towards the appointment of a native member to the Viceroy's Council, we may note an inconsistency. On this question, Lyall did not adhere to his original stand. As we have seen, Lyall did not favour the idea of appointing a native to the Viceroy's Council in 1907, but only two years later, in 1909, he found sufficient reason to agree to such an appointment. On the whole, when we try and read Lyall's views regarding Self-Government in 1909, we find that he recommended ways and means to placate the natives by

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1. 'Lyall to Cromer', 31st January, 1909, Cromer Papers, MSS.F.O. 633/18, pp.155-8.

giving them a share in the Government. He could not, however, reconcile himself to the idea of complete Self-Government, and he was convinced of the need for British superintendence.

British policy in India, though liberal and progressive lacked until 1917 a sense of direction. Concessions were made to the demands of the politically-minded classes in India, but no attempt was made to work out a policy of continuous advance. The Reforms of 1892 and 1909 did not attempt to shift the foundations of British rule in India. They merely adjusted the machinery of British government to the changed circumstances of the country. The reforms aimed at associating natives more closely with the administration and allowing them better opportunities to influence it, while retaining intact its foreign and autocratic character.

Lyall considered India only one aspect of the great Asiatic problem, which he thought would probably be solved in the course of the 20th century. Reviewing the extraordinary changes going on in the Eastern world, Lyall remarked, 'It is not impossible that the twentieth century may see the complete withdrawal of Europe from Asia.....However comfortable it may be to ourselves to attempt to dismiss these speculations, we cannot get rid of them. The aspiration of all Asia is toward a Renaissance, to be accomplished by throwing off the burden of European dominion, and protectorate.'<sup>1</sup>

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1. 'Lyall to Morley', August 12th, 1909, Morley Collection, op.cit.

As regards Self-Government for India, Lyall had observed, as early as in 1884:-

"It may be proper for the nation to entertain as a remote eventuality the notion of transferring India to the Indians whenever they become competent for autonomy, and to regard it, in the abstract, as a consummation devoutly to be wished for, but if this intention be constantly proclaimed publicly and authoritatively, we are very likely to delay and defeat our own ends. For, in the first place, the question as to the precise stage and degree of moral and material progress at which the Government may be safely handed over to the natives of India would soon become a matter of frequent discussion, recurring with increased animation, and causing chronic divisions and uncertainty. Government upon such a provisional theory as this has never yet been intelligible to the greater part of mankind; and in India, where everything has hitherto rested upon direct authority, to make the right to rule a matter of argument and demonstration would be like the building of the Tower of Babel; the whole enterprise would break down amid the confusion of tongues. In the second place, although no English Statesman would hesitate to grant India all the independence and autonomy that she can fairly earn and exercise under the British Crown, yet we are bound to take heed lest we promise more than we are able to perform, or raise premature expectations in regard to a political future that no one can yet foresee."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Lyall: 'Government of the Indian Empire', op.cit., pp. 39-40.

The idea of complete self-government for India is quite conspicuous by its absence in the above lines. The maximum that Lyall could afford to entertain was 'a notion of transferring India to the Indians' to be regarded 'in the abstract'. It seems that with all his foresight, Lyall could not envisage anything beyond some sort of an 'Imperial trusteeship' for India. In the preceding pages, we have seen Lyall's attitude regarding self-government from Dufferin's time to the Morley-Minto Reforms. It was only on grounds of political expediency that he hesitatingly agreed to grant the natives a minor degree of self-government.

CHAPTER VIINDIA AND ENGLAND

Having examined some of Lyall's political ideas, we now turn to perhaps the most important part of this study. What were Lyall's ideas in regard to the relations of India and England? In order to be able to answer this big question we have to attend to its various aspects, separately. Firstly, what was Lyall's idea about the British Empire, did he think it was desirable and justified? Secondly, did Lyall draw any lessons from the history of the past empires, which could, to some extent, guide the English in India? Thirdly, did the contemporary political situation in Asia have some instructive bearing on the Indian political situation of Lyall's time? Fourthly, what were, for Lyall, the chief difficulties and problems of the English in India? And finally, what were Lyall's suggestions for promoting better relations between India and England? These are the various aspects of the question, which we shall try and answer in this chapter.

The Indian empire was not finally rounded off and consolidated until the middle of the nineteenth century, when the annexation of the Punjab brought its frontiers up to the mountains beyond the Indus river. During the preceding hundred years, the English had been expanding their supremacy according to

the old Imperial fashion, overthrowing unstable rulerships, annexing provinces, winning battles and reducing principalities to subordinate alliance. The people at large acquiesced, according to immemorial custom, in the substitution of stronger for weaker rule. The power passed naturally into the hands of those who could take and use it, i.e. the English. The idea of any further annexations had always been distasteful to Lyall. He thought that the English, like the Russians, had many cogent motives for abstaining from territorial extension. The two empires, Russian and English, had both undertaken quite as much as they could manage in Asia. Their respective dominions required settlement and security, and relief from the heavy burden on their revenues imposed by alarms and rumours of impending war.<sup>1</sup>

In his own time, Lyall saw the climax of power of the English and their territorial dominion in the East. Nevertheless, the English were, at the same time, beset by all the problems and difficulties that meet all empires when, after reaching the limits of territorial expansion, their rulers turn round, survey the situation and set out on the path of improvement and civilization. In 1884, Lyall observed:- "Through these troubled waters the Indian Government goes on ploughing its course like the

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1. Lyall 'The Political Situation in Asia'. Edinburgh Review, July, 1906. No.417, p.255.

great Leviathan, to use the metaphor by which Hobbes figured his all-powerful sovereignty, 'that mortal god to 'whom we owe, under the immortal God, our peace and 'defence'. Probably no government in the world has approached more nearly, by its attributes or its authority, to Hobbes's ideal of the Leviathan, than the English Government in India. It occupies the position, attained only two or three times in the world's history, of a government possessing enormous power of moulding and fashioning morally and materially, a vast number of people belonging to races less advanced than the ruling race."<sup>1</sup>

Lyall justified the Imperial title of England over India. He thought that in all settled governments, it was a great advantage, almost a necessity, that the supreme authority should be personified in some ultimate idea or institution, placed in the common estimation beyond discussion. From the English point of view, this fundamental principle was the permanence and indisputable right of the Queen's dominion in India. For a long time after the establishment of the English paramountcy, the native population remained satisfied. The English justified their position, by giving them a system of government incomparably better than any that they had previously known.

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1. Lyall 'Government of the Indian Empire', Edinburgh Review, January, 1884, No.325, p.34.

Foreign rule was to India no novelty, the subjection of miscellaneous races to one masterful sovereignty had been the ordinary conception of empire in Asia, as in ancient and even mediæval Europe.<sup>1</sup>

The title by which the English held India was essentially the same by which their predecessors in that country previously held it, and was the same by which the territory was ruled everywhere in Asia. Conquest and direct inheritance from actual possessors were the title deeds of Asiatic sovereigns, who did not exchange provinces by family compacts, or make the genealogic claims to separate kingdoms which had caused the dynastic wars of Europe. Hence conquest, with the power to retain and transmit gave the only title to be had in Asia. Sometimes, a very short period of complete and firm occupation conferred on a government, a dynasty, or a family a good heritable right, and rapidly obliterated all preceding claims. Everywhere in Asia were found traces of the stratification of races caused by frequent floods of invasion, or by internal eruptions. The earlier races gradually melted into something like a population, the later races retained some political pretensions and privileges,

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1. Lyall 'The Conflict of Colour', Edinburgh Review, April 1911, No.436, pp.419-420.

and the uppermost race of all had the whole political power accompanied by the continual anxieties caused by subject tribes and dethroned dynasties. In India the changes of surface had been violent which had left recent and visible marks. There were parts of British India where the descendents of the several dynasties, each representing different races, were receiving pensions from the State.

The pattern of the political world had been stamped out all over Asia in such a manner. Therefore, the English right by conquest and prescription to hold India was perfectly good by virtue of being the only valid and recognised title known to Asia.<sup>1</sup> In regard to the legitimacy of the English government in India, Lyall's views, apparently, were quite similar to those of Strachey, Stephen and Cromer. However, Lyall did not attach as much importance as these others did to the moral force of the Imperial name and the Pax Britannica. He often thought these notions to be a bit exaggerated by Strachey and others. One thing is certain, Lyall wanted the English Empire to be as far prolonged as possible.

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1. Lyall, 'Government of the Indian Empire', op.cit., p.38.

The English dominion in India was probably the fourth one of its kind in history, the past three being the Macedonian, the Roman, and the Byzantine Greek dominations in Asia.<sup>1</sup> Some lessons from history could, therefore, act as a guide and a warning for the English in India.

The political relations between Europe and Asia, since authentic history began, have undergone many striking and important vicissitudes. In the record of the wars, invasions, and territorial conquests up to, and for some centuries after the Christian era, the balance of advantages was entirely on the side of Europe. In the fourth century Europe invaded Asia, when Alexander led his Macedonians from the Bosphorus to the Punjab rivers, and founded a vast dominion that was held by his successors until the Romans took over charge of Western Asia. In the fifth century B.C., when the Persian Kings invaded Europe, the frontiers of the Western continent were gallantly defended by the Greek States, with the result that the Asiatic forces were defeated by sea and land. But in the seventh century of Christian era, the rise and rapid spread of Islam turned the scale for the first time in favour of Asia, and during the centuries that followed, Christianity and European dominion were both swept out of the

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1. Lyall 'European Dominion in Asia', Edinburgh Review, January 1911, No.435, p.112.

Eastern Continent. The Arabs established a dominion in Spain, in Italy, and invaded France, and later the Osmanli empire fixed itself in South-Eastern Europe, where it clung to Constantinople and to some relics of its former territory. From the seventeenth century, however, the tide of conquest began again to flow Eastward. By the nineteenth century, England and Russia consolidated great dominions in Asiatic lands. This swaying to and fro of the long contest for superiority between Europe and Asia, the ebb and flow of the tide of territorial conquest, present a wide and attractive field of historical survey. Lyall thought that the periods of early European dominion in Asia, Greek and Roman could be studied with profit and to much practical purpose by the English in India. His classical education provided him with various points of comparison. There was the curious resemblance of administrative methods and political expedients adopted by European rulers in different ages and in similar circumstances which suggested remarkable analogies to Lyall, who was familiar with the same problems as those that confronted the Greeks and the Romans in Asia.

Some historians regard the Macedonian empire in Western Asia, in some respects, as the prototype of the British empire in India.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Bevan, History of the House of Seleucus. Quoted in Lyall: 'European Dominion in Asia', p.107.

Lyall accepted this view and considered the English Empire as the revival of the civilisation imported into Asia by the Greeks. The superiority of the Western races in war was a capital feature of ancient history. Herodotus mentioned that the Greeks thought very little of the soldiers of the Persian Kings, they were called 'barbarians' who engaged 'in battles wearing loose trousers, with turbans on their heads', easy to overcome.<sup>1</sup> Alexander's victories proved that the Eastern troops were no match for the disciplined forces of the West. The Greek and the Macedonian armies, and later the Roman legions dispersed the Oriental armies and as easily beat down the old Asiatic monarchies, as Russia and England did in Central Asia and in India during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, the intervening period of nearly a thousand years, turned the fortunes of war in favour of Asia. Historians record that in the sixteenth century the Turkish armies were too strong for the European. And in Lyall's own time, Russia's defeat by Japan in 1904, made him doubt whether superiority in arms could always be found on the side of the West. Russia's defeat gave him ample warning that for Europe 'the era of facile victories' in Asia had, once again, ended.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Lyall, 'European Dominion in Asia', p.107.

2. ibid., p.108.

For Lyall, the belief in an eternal distinction between East and West could not be discarded as an easy commonplace. On such a far-reaching question, he could not pretend to give a positive opinion, nor could he predict what might happen in the distant future. However, the evidence of past history gave manifest support to his belief, that the distinction between East and West was real, inveterate and that it went very deep. He observed that no European civilization, Greek, Roman or English (till his time) had taken permanent root in Asiatic soil. The ingrained differences of race and religion, the habits and the character of the Asiatics had remained unchanged, despite European domination. The civil polity of Rome had stamped an indelible impress on the language, literature, and laws of Europe, but it had hardly left a trace beyond ruins and the shadow of a mighty name (Rome) throughout all the Asiatic lands which it once overspread from the Euphrates river westward to the Mediterranean shores. Similarly, the relics of Greek architecture and art, and a few grains of Greek learning and philosophy were found scattered about Western Asia, but the Hellenic culture and institutions had vanished entirely.

In recent history, the cardinal question before the English

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1. Lyall, 'European Dominion in Asia' op.cit., p.108.

in India was whether the foundations of their civilization could be so firmly laid as to withstand the natural forces that brought reversion to the original type and whether its civilisation could be effectively assimilated by a great and infinitely diversified population. The lesson of history was grim. The result of Alexander's conquest was based on the political principle of amalgamating his subjects into one people by permanent institutions, and thus infusing into them some elements of the Hellenic character. But the mixture of Macedonians, Greeks, and natives in the conquered countries was very incomplete. They generally formed separate classes in society and the general result was rather to lower the European than to elevate the Asiatic.

Some Historians are of the opinion that the Greeks lost all their moral and intellectual qualities rapidly, so that when the Romans took over Western Asia from the Greeks, they also contracted a corrupting infection which was fatal to them. Marriages between Europe and Asia not only damaged Greece and Rome intellectually and morally, but also impoverished the conquerors. The result of conferring peace and good government on the Asiatic provinces and of stimulating their immense productive capacities were, that the financial capital of Europe was gradually drawn into Asia, that

great commercial cities arose on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, and that the vast profits of the trade between the two continents passed into Asiatic hands.

The point worth notice is the prediction that the reappearance of European dominion in Asia, that is, the English empire in India, would eventually produce similar results. With the revival of peace and industrial security, the drain of capital eastward would again set in and the European would discover that he had been enriching the Asiatic at a heavy loss to himself. It was observed that at Calcutta and Bombay, the native merchants were prospering at the expense of the foreigner, whom they were likely to oust sooner or later. It was prophesied by some historians that the produce and manufactures of Asia would seriously affect European industries whenever the methods and machinery of the West was imported into Eastern countries. It was believed that the state of commercial exchanges, whereby England had managed to secure a balance in her favour, was artificial and could not last long.

Lyall's conclusion, from the writings and opinions of those who had studied the earlier periods of European domination in the East were, firstly, that the rule of the Macedonian, the

Roman and the Byzantine Greek while they lasted, was each in a very high degree beneficial to Asia. Secondly, Asiatic conquests in Western countries had done far more harm than good to Europe. On a comparison of benefits to the world's civilization, the balance of advantage was entirely on the side of the Eastern continent. Thirdly, Roman Imperialism was thoroughly successful in Europe and it had lasting effects. The assimilation of the Western nations, by the Romans, was complete and their amalgamation under the Empire was cemented by the triumph of Christianity. On the other hand, Roman dominion did not succeed in the East in terms of assimilation. Lyall agreed with Arnold who said, "the fundamental dualism of East and West ... was never really overcome."<sup>1</sup>

From the comparison of ancient with modern imperialism, Lyall thus extracted the profitable lesson, that European civilization in Asia had never survived the disappearance of European dominion.<sup>2</sup> And this was the lesson he wanted to convey to the Western educated classes who were demanding self-government for India. A firm and well ordered government was the basis of all national progress. Then followed the elevation of the general standard of intelligence, as a result of the spread of the highest

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1. Arnold, Studies of Roman Imperialism. Quoted in Lyall...  
op.cit. p.115.

2. Lyall, 'European Dominion in Asia' op.cit., p.130.

learning, literature and physical sciences, which are essential to the cement of the political fabric, and are also indispensable elements for the permanence of civilization. The Romans were consummate administrators, they organised their Asiatic provinces on a system, and by methods, civil and military, which resembled in many curious details those which were adopted by the English in India. But it was the Hellenic civilization, protected and prospering under the Roman empire, which gave durability to the era of European dominion in Asia. After several centuries, when the Byzantine power in the East was overthrown by the 'Mohammedan' conquests; it was succeeded by a government that despised and rejected the sciences, philosophies, and letters of the West.' It restored a period of intolerance, ignorance and misrule. According to Renan,<sup>1</sup> the decadence of the 'Mohammedan' states, the intellectual nullity and impoverishment of their people in countries once flourishing and progressive were due entirely to the contempt with which all scientific culture had fallen since the light of Western civilization was extinguished. This was the lesson of history which Lyall wanted the 'half-educated classes' in India, to take to heart. The half-educated Indians believed that some

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1. Quoted in Lyall, 'European Dominion in Asia', p.130.

acquaintance with the English language and literature and some aptitude as writers, authorised them to disparage, decry and to even aim at supplanting a government on whose will and power, the nascent civilization of their country entirely depended. Lyall believed that the withdrawal of England's guidance and control would re-open the floodgates of war-like invasion and internal confusion, which had hitherto retarded the development of culture and civilization in India.<sup>1</sup>

After the rapid expansion of European dominion in Asia and Africa during the nineteenth century, the twentieth century opened with a policy of non-aggression and the preservation of the status quo. One of the strongest military powers in the West, Russia, met its match in the farthest East, not only on land, but on the sea. The sudden appearance of Japan as a formidable sea-power was a strange and portentous phenomenon for a watcher of the political horizon like Lyall. Referring to the Russo-Japanese war of 1903, Lyall said:- "In the first year of the present century a competent observer of the tendency of affairs in Asia might have been justified in believing that Russia and England held the future destinies of the continent almost entirely in their own hands. He might have predicted

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1. Quoted in Lyall, 'European Dominion in Asia', p.130.

that these two mighty nations would sooner or later come into violent conflict, which would determine the destiny of surrounding kingdoms, and that from West to the Far East the spread of European dominion would be thenceforward irresistible. No one can now venture on any such presumptuous forecast..."<sup>1</sup>

Only in the Far East, where Japan and China had held out against European domination and had preserved their national independence, had indigenous talent found free scope. The world saw what Japan had achieved and what she continues to achieve. Likewise, we have still to see what China may accomplish whenever her forces are organised and her administration shall have been reformed. There are numerous disadvantages which arise out of foreign domination. Political tutelage suppresses national vigour of the subject populations by exempting them from the rough training of necessity. It forces them into grooves not always adapted to their distinctive types. It has a tendency towards the impoverishment of national character. The history of Asia shows that in the past times, she has produced men of commanding genius, able rulers, leaders of great armies, and above all, the founders of the religions that have conquered the world spiritually. In later days, these great men had no successors. The predomination of

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1. Lyall, 'The Political Situation in Asia', The Edinburgh Review, July, 1906, No.417, p.242.

European ascendancy seemed to have stifled the growth of eminent ability. The atmosphere was uncongenial to the development of extraordinary personalities.

In the sixteenth century the empires of India, Persia, and Turkey were equal in wealth and military power to the contemporary kingdoms of the first class in Europe.<sup>1</sup> But in Lyall's time, there was no ruler in Western Asia who could venture to disregard the dictates of the European cabinets - Japan and China being the only two nations in the Far East to have maintained their separate entities. It was recorded by some historians that during the nineteenth century, the political and economic decline of the Muslims had assumed alarming dimensions, that there was no sign of their pulling themselves together as a nation and that nearly two-thirds had lost their individuality under foreign supremacy. It does not seem to have occurred to them that this decadence was mostly due to the effect of foreign supremacy.

Lyall's forecast was that 'the twentieth century was to witness the organised effort of Asia to shake off the European incubus'.<sup>2</sup> The first decade of the present century, which Lyall observed in his lifetime was a period of perceptible unrest throughout Asia. The

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1. Lyall, 'The Political Situation in Asia', op.cit., p.259.
  2. Lyall, 'The Conflict of Colour', Edinburgh Review, April 1911, No.436, p.224.

ideas and aspirations of Nationalism had begun to percolate into Asia, where they started undermining the traditional despotisms. These ideas were particularly saturating the countries in South Asia, which were under European dominion. The consequences were rapid because the South Asian regions happened to be in possession of those European nations whose government at home was in form and spirit popular, if not democratic - England, France and Holland, while their dependencies were still under a system of modified autocracy.<sup>1</sup> The general tendency of all the modern influences had been to stir up and sharpen latent differences of race and religion throughout Asia, and among the peoples under European rulership to give an increasing political significance to the primordial distinction of natural colour.<sup>2</sup>

One remarkable feature of Lyall's time was that the influence of Asiatic complications upon European politics was increasing. The general unrest in Eastern countries was connected with a growing impatience of Western ascendancy and dominion over them. Not long ago it was generally anticipated that the Kingdoms of Asia were too weak to resist the forces, moral and material, of the West, and that it only remained with the powerful governments of Europe to

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1. Lyall, 'The Conflict of Colour', Edinburgh Review, April 1911, No.436, p.420.
  2. Ibid.

agree among themselves upon questions of control or territorial partition. But Lyall observed that Western civilization, authoritatively imposed upon Asia, had defeated its own ends, so far as it was expected to secure European predominance.<sup>1</sup>

While European Cabinets were disputing and arguing, the Asiatics were taking lessons in the arts of war and peace. They had been arming and educating themselves; they had been importing industrial and military machinery from European workshops. In short they had learnt the value of organised administration and they desired, rather prematurely, to be rid of their masterful teachers.<sup>2</sup> At one extremity of Asia the Russians had realised, to their cost, the consequence of these movements, at the other end were to be seen, a revolution in Turkey which was discarding a despotism whose misrule provoked foreign interference and was endangering the integrity of the empire; Eastward of Turkey the Persians were making a bold attempt to introduce representative institutions, and in India the English were confronted by the difficulties which encompassed a government which undertook radical reforms. In short the Asiatic people, who had been copying and importing the inventions, ideas, and methods of the West, were departing from their ancient ways.

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1. Lyall, 'The Political Situation in Europe', Edinburgh Review, January 1909, No.427, p.250.

2. ibid.

They were setting out upon new paths under inexperienced leaders. However, it was yet to be seen whether the conceptions of citizenship in a state, of nationalities united by patriotism, which lay at the foundation of firm political architecture in Europe, were sufficiently advanced in Asia to overcome the obstacles presented by infinite divisions of race and religion.

At any rate, Lyall expected a vast transformation of Asia during the twentieth century, which was to multiply and complicate political problems in Europe. The ease and rapidity of communications by sea and land across the world, effected by European energy and capital, had thrown down the barriers that had kept the four continents apart for centuries, and had let loose upon America and the British Colonies a flood of Asiatic migration. Hitherto the broad waters of the Pacific had separated the half-peopled lands of the Far West from the overcrowded countries of the Far East. Since on one side there was a necessary demand for labour, and on the other an inexhaustible supply, the natural antipathy of different races was sharpened by a conflict of interests. On this subject Lyall said:- "And if the time is near when the policy of Asiatic states will be supported by organised armies, when Chinese and Japanese navies will ride in Eastern waters, all international relations will need readjustment to a much more intricate calculation of the

balance of the world's power."<sup>1</sup> By 1909, Japan had concluded two engagements, one with Great Britain, the other with the United States of America. The former treaty had indirectly aided the Japanese in their resistance to the advance of Russia toward their frontier. The latter agreement included a reciprocal guarantee of China's territorial integrity, providing for the free and peaceful development of both nations in the Pacific. It marked an important departure of America from the traditional policy of that government, and it signalled the entry of America on the stage of Asiatic diplomacy and connected the Western continent with the ravelled politics of the Eastern world, as Lyall remarked:- "The electric chain which transmits all round the earth any vibration of jarring interests or disquieting incidents is now complete."<sup>2</sup>

According to Lyall, English Imperialism encountered unprecedented difficulties in India. Previously, in the Western continent the assimilation of races brought under the Roman sovereignty was easy and natural. Roman Imperialism was favoured by certain conditions and circumstances, by the absence of religious antagonism, and by

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1. Lyall, 'The Political Situation in Europe', op.cit., p.251.
  2. ibid.

a certain general affinity of the European population. On the other hand, conditions and circumstances in India were very different and extremely complicated. Lyall mentioned James Bryce's 'Studies in History and Jurispendence', where reference was made to the 'centripetal and centrifugal forces' which could advance or retard the accomplishment of national unity, particularly the tendencies to disruption that may oppose or even defeat amalgamation under one State. Bryce emphasized the importance of the obstacles presented by differences of race, religion, and language, but he believed that these disruptive forces could be overcome gradually by a skilful adaptation to circumstances of consitutional methods. Where religion and language had ceased to divide a population, social intercourse and inter-marriage could operate effectively towards promoting a fusion. "But", Bryce added, "in one set of cases no fusion is possible, and this set forms the despair of the Statesmen; it presents a problem which no constitution has yet solved. It is the juxtaposition on the same soil of races of different colour".

Bryce regards this 'juxtaposition' as a recent phenomenon in history. In the past, prejudices of colour were strong enough to prevent social intercourse and intermarriages. Under the Roman Empire, for instance, access to high offices of State among the Italians and Hellenised Asiatics was quite common. Lyall thought it was most

unfortunate that this single problem, which no constitution had hitherto solved, was the one confronted by the English in India. The English empire, was a case of modern Imperialism, which was to be tested in circumstances particularly unfavourable.<sup>1</sup>

Some economic factors also created difficult problems for the English in India. The introduction of swift and sure means of communication between Europe and Asia caused general economic unrest in India. The capitalist adventures of the West brought a flood of cheap manufactures in the country. This was inevitably ruinous to the weaker, more backward, and less concentrated, arts and crafts of the natives. The country was inundated by goods of third rate quality which easily displaced commodities produced by slow handiwork. It was easy to prove that railways, factories and public works found employment for a very great number of labourers and artisans. But the decay of ancient callings and the shifting of population were painful processes. The higher forms of Indian art, with their delicate organisms, were running a great risk of being crushed by the rough competition of the markets. For the pure economist, these changes were natural and necessary. For Lyall who was interested in politics and state-craft, this period of transition was a period of perceptible unrest. He could

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1. Lyall, 'European Dominion in Asia', op.cit., p.117.

see very clearly that these economic changes were modifying the whole structure of native society. They were leading to a disintegration of the old, traditional groups which marked off trades, professions, and industries, into separate communities, and hereditary castes embedded in the religious and family life of India.

Lyall thought that the tremendous problem before the English was to superintend these inevitable processes of transition. The Government could not possibly evade the duty of protecting the weak, and of arbitrating between ill-matched powers and interests. He knew that in the contentment and confidence of the land-owning classes - which included a vast number of very small proprietors, the British Government found its essential elements of stability. And serious consequences could follow by mishandling the problem, and by disturbing these elements.<sup>1</sup>

Another difficulty, for the English in India, lay in the management of such a vast Empire by a Civil Service. Lyall thought that the Civil Service alone could not tackle the complicated political situation in India. The government of a great empire by an official hierarchy provided little outlet for the reasonable ambitions of the educated natives for prominence in the sphere of national politics. Bureaucracy was inadequate, for it was not in the nature or within the province of

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1. Lyall: 'Government of the Indian Empire', op.cit., p.32.

even the most skilful and experienced officials to command popularity and to lead public opinion.<sup>1</sup> The Government of India was based on a system which was essentially administrative, and in no way political. The officers were out of touch with the people, employed all day in their offices, working mechanically. The result was centralization which Lyall had always considered a great danger of Imperial rule over wide areas and vast populations. The transfers of the officers from place to place was much too frequent. The age of retirement was 55, and under this rule, an officer of established merit and ability, was often taken away just when his ripened experience, his long intercourse with the natives, and the moderation and judgement truly acquired, were of great value to the State.<sup>2</sup>

According to Lyall, another problem for England was the presence of Muslims in India. The Muslim formed a considerable minority of the whole population and 'Islam had always been a stiff and unyielding obstacle to alien innovations, it stood firm as a rock against the assaults of new ideas and antagonistic beliefs.'<sup>3</sup> Lyall came to the disheartening conclusion that the task 'imposed upon Europe of civilising Asia was formidable'. The problem of reconciling their own Muslim

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1. Lyall: 'The Conflict of Colour', Edinburgh Review, April 1911, No.436, p.432.
  2. 'Lyall to Morley', 28th May, 1907, Morley Collection, D.573/43/C.
  3. Lyall: 'The Political Situation in Asia', Edinburgh Review, July, 1906, No.417, p.253.

subjects to European ascendancy was already found sufficiently arduous by the three governments, England, Russia and France, which were chiefly concerned in solving it.<sup>1</sup> Lyall never took to the Muslims and thought that their presence in India created another problem for England.

Lyall's first and foremost suggestion to improve relations between India and England came as early as 1884. He advised that the question of the English Empire in India should not be debated upon openly. The fact that the English possessed a great and distant empire, affected 'some minds with a sense of timidity, and with a kind of faint-hearted contrition' while it affected stronger minds with 'a weighty sense of grave responsibility, and even with sincere doubts as to the morality of their domination to keep what they held'. Lyall thought it was difficult to give a proof of the legitimacy of the English government in India to those who questioned it on moral grounds. And it was most inexpedient, to argue this question upon the basis of reason and utility. On this point, he said:-

"....to encourage the disposition.... in England and .... in parts of India, of treating the morality of our rule in India as an open question of ethics, will only lead the discussion away into a region of fallacies, illusions and disappointments. The plain fact of conquest not only silences but satisfies the warlike races of India, who

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1. Lyall: 'The Political Situation in Asia', op.cit., p.257.

submit willingly.... to a strong and just government, and who are no mean judges of political realities.... ... However essential it may be to keep constantly before our eyes the moral purpose running through the existence and conservation of our dominion in India, yet to stake our title to this great possession upon grounds of morality or temporary expediency, is to risk it upon an unstable, because always questionable, foundation."<sup>1</sup>

In order to achieve better relations between India and England, Lyall wanted the government to attend to the economic unrest in the country. Bearing in mind that finance was the mainspring of administrative mechanism, Lyall advocated great caution in the formulation of the financial policy. Some Englishmen had been prone, like Sir John Strachay, to excessive reliance on the material benefits which English rule had conferred upon India. Material advantages were treated as a reasonable justification for English supremacy, and it was considered, that they secured to foreign rule a fair working popularity. Lyall, on the other hand, pointed out that the English in India should take full account of the effervescence of new ideas, which were gaining ground day by day. He thought that the natives accepted British rule either with 'reluctance or indifference'. 'If they consented to be hustled onward along the road of moral and material progress, it was chiefly on condition that they were not required to pay much

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1. Lyall: 'Government of the Indian Empire', pp.38-39.

for the blessings that were showered on them'. He cautioned the Government of India to deal very cautiously with all measures of fiscal enhancement.<sup>1</sup> In exchange for protection from foreign invasion, and internal peace - the two main benefits of British rule which were really appreciated - the natives were willing to allow the British a free hand in governing them. But Lyall knew that 'the price which the natives cared to pay must not be exorbitant, and its weight must be adroitly distributed.'<sup>2</sup>

Lyall was struck by the fact that in India the public income from land had always been the chief mainstay of the State's finances. Since a great majority of the population subsisted by agriculture, the just and skilful management of Land-Revenue was of great importance to the welfare of every government and of people.<sup>3</sup> In view of the Russian advance which was much discussed in the 80s, Lyall thought it was all the more essential for the British to make satisfactory settlements of Land-Revenue. This was the most effective means of keeping India attached to England. On grounds of political expediency, the Government must forego certain demands of fiscal enhancement. A policy of light taxation was favoured by Lyall.

1. Lyall: 'Government of the Indian Empire', p.32.
2. Lyall: 'Twelve Years of Indian Government', p.16.
3. Lyall: The Rise and Expansion of British Dominion in India, London, 1910, p.384.

In order to avoid the evils of Bureaucracy which had resulted in over-centralization, Lyall suggested that the Provincial governments and the native states should be left to their own devices. Some reforms should be introduced into the Civil Service. Transfers of the civil servants should be made less frequent. The rule regarding the retirement of the officers at the age of 55 should not be rigidly enforced. Lyall's experience showed him that the natives invariably preferred the older officers to the younger men; they had more confidence in the former.<sup>1</sup> Apart from Civil Service reforms, Lyall pointed out that the best insurance against the uncertainties of the future would be found in taking the highest native talent and capacity into partnership, in enlarging the Indian share of Imperial duties and responsibilities. This was, however, to be a gradual process. Lyall warned the native politicians to be patient and moderate in their demands, for nothing could be worse than 'precipitation in politics'. To the Indian patriot, Lyall gave the example of a Frenchman who had witnessed the consequences, in his own country, of drastic political changes that 'En révolution les honnêtes gens sont toujours balayés'. Here Lyall made a shrewd observation. He said:-

"It is morally certain that, whatever changes may be made in the form of Asiatic governments, the strongest men in a country - those

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1. 'Lyall to Morley', 28th May, 1907. Morley Collection, op.cit.

who act roughly and resolutely - will still be uppermost".<sup>1</sup> It was therefore essential for the native politicians to learn the art of representative government gradually, and not press the demands for representative institutions too hard. A premature transfer of power, from the English to the natives, might lead the country to revert to its ancient, autocratic, and totalitarian tradition.

Despite the fact that the English dominion in India was being tested under circumstances particularly unfavourable, Lyall thought there was still hope for a successful outcome. He had no intention of abandoning the enterprise in despair. He pointed out that, many of the 'attractive forces' (which according to Bryce, drew together diverse races under one state, and counteracted the centrifugal and disruptive tendencies) were already operating towards cementing the relations between India and England. Among these binding forces were the material interests - the spread of industry, the security of property, the national wealth increased on both sides by a prosperous commerce, light customs duties, safe, easy and swift intercommunication, the introduction of good laws and administration of justice, and the devolution of representative self-government by the establishment of local legislatures. All these were solid benefits accruing to India from the English connection, and on this connection they all depended for

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1. Lyall: 'The Conflict of Colour', Edinburgh Review, April, 1911, No.436, p.438.

their permanency. The legal and constitutional reforms were slowly moulding the intelligence of the people to a habitual conception of government by impartial and systematic procedure. Lyall thought that the visible changes made in all classes of the population by the firm and regular enforcement of law was a fact of great value to political philosophy. It was an evidence of the power which good legislation could exert over morals. The national prosperity and welfare of India were due to its association with England.

Lyall expressed the hope of a permanent relation between India and England. The history of England showed him that his nation, had, from time to time, made original discoveries in the domain of science, and had also led the way in the field of practical politics. Representative institutions, parliamentary control, limited monarchy, may be said to have been invented and developed within the British Isles. They had served as the patterns on which Europe and America had reformed their own machinery of government. In the case of the Indian Empire, the English were once again found at the head of a great political adventure. They had to act as pioneers in a region hitherto unexplored. The English were endeavouring to consolidate their Oriental empire upon a foundation of liberal institutions.<sup>1</sup> The task was of unprecedented difficulty, and it was to test the inventive genius of the most

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1. Lyall: 'European Dominion in Asia', p.116.

skilful and experienced political architect, nevertheless, it could be accomplished with success. The English could set another example in the art of government, by retaining India in close contact with England.

The final gift of history for Lyall was clear-sightedness, for which he admired Warren Hastings more than for anything else. He commented, "his faculty of looking through and beyond the passing clouds of adverse circumstances and accidental failure by which men are so easily blinded and dispirited, and of fixing his eyes steadily on the main chances and essential conditions of success. He saw not only the sea of troubles which encompassed the English in India, but the calm and open waters that were to be reached by resolute and skilful navigation. So long as he could keep the vessels head straight on the point to which he had set her, neither waves nor wind, nor a mutiny on board could wrench the helm from his straining hands."<sup>1</sup>

It was with the help of this gift of clear-sightedness and 'skilful navigation' that Lyall hoped to secure the English position in India. He felt he could say with confidence, "We are quite safe in India if we make no blunders".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Lyall: Warren Hastings, London, 1920, p.183.

2. Durand: Lyall, p.165.

### CONCLUSION

I have found the study of Lyall a fascinating pursuit. He was an individual - a class by himself, and by no means easy to understand. Just as white gradually merging into black yields a grey colour which is neither pronounced nor distinct, so is Lyall a man who was continuously vacillating between two extremes, now touching one, now the other, but never identical with either. His other colleagues, for instance Sir John Strachey and Sir Henry Cotton, could be said to have belonged to a well-defined political group, but this is not the case with Lyall whose name is not linked with any one political group or event of historical importance. Why this is so is easily understood. Sir John Strachey and Sir Henry Cotton were administrators first and foremost, and men of action. Sir Alfred Lyall, on the other hand, was fundamentally a thinker and a man of ideas. His greatest contribution was to the theoretical aspect of Anglo-Indian administration rather than to its practical side. If we have gained insight into the character of this reflective man this fact would hardly surprise us.

Lyall was not a man who took things for granted. He had an analytic mind which probed into the secret recesses of the spirit of the East. He made an effort to understand things alien to his race and culture. Like Maine he wished to

penetrate through superficial layers of rash prejudices and perceive the human reality beneath. The comment that he got to the back of the Oriental mind is, no doubt, based on a great deal of truth and observation. I would, however, challenge it on one ground. A very large area of the Orient meant the Muslim world, and with due respect to his erudition and experience, I would like to point out that Lyall did not really deal fairly with the Muslims. He was enthralled by the mysticism of Hinduism and could justify its institutions. He sang lyric praises of the Chinese culture and civilization. All he could think of as a suitable comment upon the Muslims was that they were good warriors. I have my doubts whether he meant even this to be a compliment. His criticism of Muslims is pedestrian and hardly in conformity with his critical habit of mind. It surprises me how he could have overlooked, while expressing his distaste for the Muslims, the invaluable contributions made by them to the quest for knowledge in various spheres.

P. K. Hitti, a notable historian, observes that Muslim Spain wrote one of the brightest chapters in the intellectual history of mediaeval Europe. Between the middle of the eighteenth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries the Arabic-speaking peoples were the main bearers of the torch of

culture and civilization throughout the world. They were the medium through which ancient science and philosophy were recovered, supplemented and transmitted in such a way as to make possible the renaissance of Western Europe. The crowning achievement of the intellectual class of Arabs in Spain was in the realm of philosophic thought. Here they formed the strongest link in the chain which transmitted Greek philosophy, as transmuted by them and their Eastern co-religionists, to the Latin West, adding their own contribution, especially in reconciling faith and reason, religion and science. Philosophy as developed by the Greeks and monotheistic religion as evolved by the Hebrew prophets were the richest legacies of the ancient West and the ancient East. It is to the eternal glory of mediaeval Muslim thinkers of Baghdad and Andalusia that they reconciled these two currents of thought and passed them on harmonised into Europe. This influx into Western Europe of a body of new ideas, marks the beginning of the end of the 'Dark Ages' in Europe and the dawn of scholastic period kindled by contact with Arab thought and quickened by fresh acquaintance with ancient Greek lore.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Dufferin too freely admitted the fact that it was to Mussalman Science, Mussalman Art and to Mussalmen literature that

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1. Hitti, Philip Khuri: History of the Arabs, fifth edition, London, 1953, see Chapter XL, 'Intellectual Contributions.'

Europe has been in a great measure indebted for its extrication from the darkness of the Middle Ages.<sup>1</sup>

In view of historical evidence it can only be said regretfully that Lyall, despite his reputation for having a keen perception of the "Oriental Mind" did not in fact give the Muslims due credit. He saw them only as blood thirsty warriors not as a people with a heritage of knowledge and noble tradition.

Lyall was a protagonist of the Imperial creed of his time and age. Even so he was too calm a man to be 'swept too far by the stream of rash energetic activity' which was commonly termed Imperialism. He believed in Imperialism, not in proclaiming it upon housetops but in practising it quietly. He did not favour the obtrusive and aggrandizing tactics of Imperialism. His attitude was defensive. He believed in conserving and consolidating the Empire but was against the idea of further annexations. Throughout his life he believed in the prevention of the dissolution of the English supremacy. In this way he was no less than any other "die-hard" imperialist. But so far as acquisition of further territories was concerned he was opposed to such an idea. He cited the example of Aurangzeb whose conquest of South India was a grave miscalculation and the expansion of whose empire

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1. Dufferin: Speeches delivered in India, 1884-8, London, 1890, p.24.

proved fatal to its stability. He had seized more than he could hold and wisdom, thought Lyall, lay in learning from his example.<sup>1</sup>

I would like to mention in passing one of the recent judgements made about Lyall. It has been said in connexion with him that empires are not built by men who see both sides of a question.<sup>2</sup> If the 'building of the empire' merely means conquest and annexation, then the remark has some legitimate basis. But if we take the 'building of the empire' in its wider connotation, we can say with certitude that Lyall's share in the consolidation of the English empire of India is as much, or even more, than any other earnest and enthusiastic Imperialist. He was a quiet man who worked quietly. Nevertheless he made a real contribution to the cause of his country. Men like him act as an invaluable factor in sobering the over-eager, and tempering the over-rash, schemes of Empire-building. To build an Empire is not easy but having built it, to retain it is more difficult. Lyall was mentally equipped to give expert guidance on the principles of successful domination. He constantly advised caution and moderation in applying Western methods to an Oriental society for he feared this would lead to a disintegration of the Empire.

Kipling wrote "East is East and West is West, And never the twain shall meet". Lyall too believed in the fundamental dualism

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1. Lyall: 'The Moghul Empire', The Cambridge Modern History, Vol.VI, London, 1934, p.552.

2. Woodruff: The Men Who Ruled India, The Guardians, p.74.

of the East and the West. He knew how incomprehensible the ways of the West seemed to the people of the East and the ways of the East to the people of the West. One of the conclusions he arrived at after his study of the Orient was that accuracy was abhorrent to the Oriental mind, while the West delighted beyond all things in symmetry and accuracy. Being an Imperialist, he recognised the part played by political power in the advance of civilization. But while determining progress, he found it necessary to fix some standards by which progress could be measured. He believed that Western Standards could not act as an accurate measure for Eastern minds. To him it was, therefore, essential to ascertain, with care and caution, the consequences which could ensue by the enforcement of any such arbitrary measures and standards. If fatalism, natural conservatism and ignorance could lead the uneducated natives to reject Western ideas, the highly educated natives often refused to accept Western standards because they seemed too materialistic to satisfy their spiritualistic outlook. Surendranath Banerjea once remarked 'the English are stupid and ignorant, and therefore wholly unfit to govern India'. Keeping in mind the differences between the East and West, Lyall was never tired of reiterating the need for caution and foresight. He felt that the best way of retaining India under English Supremacy was never to lose sight of the fundamental disparities between East and West. In this

he exhibits an insight possessed by few imperialists and goes to show his wisdom and understanding.

He was a man who had read history to some purpose. He knew that 'not even the wisest and the most humane of princes, if he be an alien in race, in customs and religion can ever win the hearts of the people'. He studied the history of Imperial Rome and applied the relevant knowledge gained from it to the conditions prevalent in India. He was sensitive to political movements and drew several analogies regarding the situation in India and in the countries of the West. History helped him to understand things better. In the light of the past he found it easy to comprehend the present and make forecasts about the future. He did so with remarkable accuracy, for Lyall, with his penetrating mind, missed very little.

If we gather the various threads of his political ideas, we can construct his political theory with regard to the governance of India. Briefly speaking Lyall's end was the retention of the Empire of India. The means suggested by him were limited education of a small and carefully selected number of natives, indianization of services on a limited scale, decentralization and a limited degree of self-government. By employing these means he hoped to secure the British position in India. He wanted only a very small number from the influential classes to receive education. He was against a wholesale education for natives

for he feared that a general awakening of the masses would most certainly endanger the English hold over India. Although on moral grounds a man of Lyall's calibre would not have refused education to the uncouth natives of India, but being an Imperialist, he could not afford to be so altruistic. He opposed the idea of widespread education, for the Empire was dearer to his heart, than the enlightenment of an alien people. He favoured the idea of educating the few natives of social rank and prominence so that they could act as a medium for supplying information about the general masses. A few of these carefully selected educated natives were again to be chosen even more carefully for the various services in the government of India. On grounds of political expediency, it was essential to have some natives in the services to make the government look more representative and to temper its alien character. Decentralization was the most effective means to manage the empire of India. It was only by distributing and dividing the weight of authority that a distant and unwieldy empire could be managed. Lyall considered centralization a deadly danger to British rule in India. Hence he constantly pointed towards decentralization as being a safeguard. Another means of retaining the empire was by giving the natives a limited share in government. Lyall thought that a limited degree of self-government could keep the natives quiet. But despite his efforts and hopes Lyall feared and foresaw the complete withdrawal of Europe from Asia in the twentieth century.

I have found it very interesting to study a man as complex as Lyall. He was a man who had political ideas, who could see both sides of the picture, and who was capable of the most astonishing penetration into the unknown mysteries of the Orient. He was not decisive by temperament. His clear reflective mind became an impediment in the way of speedy action. He saw - and foresaw - clearly, perhaps too clearly, the actions and reactions of the subjected millions of India. He was a man true to the cause of his country but a man who also manifested a passionate sympathy for the people of the East. He was a man who knew much, who understood much and who questioned everything he came across with the incision and precision of a critic but also with the sensitivity and human sympathy of a poet. I would like to end my study of Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall with a few lines of his own - characteristic both of his profundity and of the doubt which troubled him in all walks of life:

Is life, then, a dream and delusion, and where shall the dreamer  
awake?

Is the world seen like shadows on water, and what if the  
mirror break?

Shall it pass a camp that is struck, as a tent that is  
gathered and gone?

From the sands that were lamplit at eve, and at morning are  
level and lone?

GLOSSARY

Baboo	Commonly, an Indian English writing clerk; (contemptuous) half anglicised Indian. Properly, an Indian gentleman.
Chowkeedar	A night guard.
Jagannath	A Hindu idol annually dragged in procession on a huge car.
Kali	A Hindu goddess.
Mansab	High rank with a title.
Maulvi	A Muslim preacher, also a Muslim learned in Islamic theology.
Musalman	Muslim
Pacha	Turkish officer of high rank, e.g. military commander, governor of province.
Punchayat	A Village or caste council (originally of five members) acting as a court of arbitration.
Pundit	Hindu learned in Sanskrit, philosophy, religion and jurisprudence.
Rupee	Indian monetary unit, par 1s.6d.
Raj	Abstracted to mean 'rule'.
Room	Rome
Shivaji Maharaj	The Marhatta leader.
Tehsil	The sub-division of a district for revenue purposes.
Vedas	Ancient Hindu scriptures.

ABBREVIATIONS

Ad, Add	Additional.
Depart	Department.
Eur	European
Govt	Government
I. C. S.	Indian Civil Service
Lt. -Governor	Lieutenant-Governor
MS, MSS	Manuscript, Manuscripts
Memo	Memorandum
No	Number
N. W. P.	North-Western Provinces
Parl P	Parliamentary Papers
P	page
PP	pages
Vol.	Volume

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

AITCHISON

Sir Charles Umpherston Aitchison (1832-1896) joined the I.C.S. in 1857, as an assistant in Hissar, a district of North-Western Provinces. Under-Secretary in the political department, Secretariat of the Government of India, 1859-1865. Appointed Deputy-Commissioner, and subsequently officiated as Commissioner of Lahore, 1865-1868. Foreign Secretary to the Government of India 1868-1878. Chief Commissioner of Burma, 1878-1881. Lt.-Governor of the Punjab 1882-1887. A very successful Governor, popular with all classes of the people. Invited by Lord Dufferin to join the Council of the Governor-General in 1887. Also discharged the additional duty of presiding over the Public Service Commission. Retired and left India in November, 1888. In 1892, he contributed a memoir of Lord Lawrence to Sir William Hunter's 'Rulers of India' Series.

COTTON

Sir Henry John Stedman Cotton (1845-1917). Joined service in 1867. Held various civil appointments, mostly in Bengal. Under-Secretary to the Government of India 1873. Chief Secretary 1891-96. Chief Commissioner of Assam 1896-1902. After retirement became Liberal M.P. 1906-1910. An extremely popular civil servant. Known as a 'friend of India', one who was genuinely sympathetic towards the aspirations of the educated classes. Cotton, Hume and Wedderburn formed an 'Indian group' in England. They exercised a considerable influence on Indian questions. Cotton said "It was natural perhaps, that I should assume the foremost place in the Indian group. Around me there were other sun-dried bureaucrats. These men supplied sufficient weight of authority."

FRERE

Sir Henry Bartle Edward Frere (1815-1884). In 1834, Frere received his appointment to a writership in the Bombay Civil Service. Appointed Commissioner of Sind in 1850. Frere did much to improve the conditions in the backward province of Sind. Went to England on furlough in 1856. Returned to his post and was met on his landing at Karachi in May 1857 with the news of the mutiny. Throughout the anxieties of the time he never for an instant relaxed his efforts for the development of the province. Frere appointed Governor of Bombay in 1862. Appointed Member of the India Council in 1867. A very able and industrious administrator. In religious opinions Frere was a strong churchman. But he was no bigot, and on several occasions he checked missionaries in their zealous efforts to assert Christianity in defiance of the beliefs and prejudices of the natives of India.

FULLER

Sir Joseph Bampfylde Fuller (1854-1935). Secured first place in the competitive examination for the I.C.S. in 1873. He went out at the end of 1875 to the N.W.P. and his brilliance led to early promotion. Chief Commissioner of Assam 1900. Secretary Revenue and Agriculture Department of the Government of India. Went back to Assam in 1902, as Chief-Commissioner. In October 1905, on the short-lived partition of Bengal, he was appointed Lt.-Governor of the newly constituted province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. The storm of protest and denunciation raised by the Hindus of Bengal and by Congress politicians centered largely upon him. Measures which he deemed necessary to overcome lawlessness were magnified by an unscrupulous press. On the other hand, the Muslims, who formed two-thirds of the population under his charge, rallied to his support. His services in India were terminated in 1906.

HUME

Allan Octavian Hume (1829-1912). Indian civil servant and ornithologist. First appointed in the North-Western Provinces in 1849. Awarded the C.B. in 1860, for services rendered during the mutiny. Remained in the N.W.P. for eighteen years. Appointed Secretary in the Revenue and Agriculture Department of the Central Government. In 1879, he was sent back to his own provinces 'under a cloud'. His friend and biographer Wedderburn declares that his offence was 'over-boldness in expressing opinions unpalatable to the ruling powers'. Became a Member of his Provincial Board of Revenue. Retired from the Civil Service in 1882. Hume advised Lord Dufferin to organise a representative body of educated men who would explain popular needs. He is considered 'the father of the Indian National Congress' and one who was always in close sympathy with the aspirations of the educated classes of India.

HUNTER

Sir William Wilson Hunter (1840-1900). Topped the list of the I.C.S. examination in 1861. Joined service in 1862. First appointment in the lower provinces of Bengal, as assistant magistrate and collector in Birbhum. Published 'Annals of Rural Bengal' in 1868. Selected by Lord Mayo 'to organise perhaps the most gigantic literary enterprise that has ever been undertaken by any government', which came to be known as the 'Imperial Gazetteer of India'. In 1871, a new post of Director-General of Statistics was created for Hunter. Appointed an Additional Member of the Governor-General's Council in 1881. This appointment was twice renewed, making a term of six years. Presided over the Commission on Education. Also a member of the Commission on Finance. Vice Chancellor of the University of Calcutta. (1886). Retired 1887. Wrote and edited several books on India. A very distinguished member of the I.C.S., known as an 'Indian Civilian, historian and publicist'.

O'DWYER

Sir Michael Francis O'Dwyer (1864-1940).. Joined service in India in 1885 and was first posted to Shahpur in the Punjab. His rise was rapid and was achieved by sheer character and ability. He greatly distinguished himself in land revenue settlement work, and was made Director of Land Records and Agriculture in the Punjab in 1896. Revenue Commissioner from 1908-1909. Agent to the Governor-General in Central India from 1910 to 1912. Lt.-Governor of the Punjab 1912-1919. It was generally acknowledged that his firm, fearless, but at the same time sympathetic administration had been the directing factor which turned the Punjab in very critical months from a theatre of danger into a great example of loyal recruiting for the cause of the British raj. The unrest in the Punjab in 1919, is however, attributed to O'Dwyer's harsh administration. But this may be considered the native point of view. O'Dwyer was shot by an Indian assassin named Udhan Singh.

STRACHEY

Sir John Strachey (1823-1907). Educated Haileybury, 1840. Appointed Bengal Civil Service, 1842. Had various administrative posts in North-Western Provinces. Judicial, Commissioner, Central Provinces, 1862. Chief Commissioner of Oudh, 1866, Member of Viceroy's Council, 1868. Lt.-Governor, North-Western Provinces, 1874. Finance Member, Government of India, 1876. Left India, 1880. Cotton said of Strachey and his brother, Sir Richard: "By inheritance and education they belonged to the school of philosophic radicalism represented in John Stuart Mill."

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