

*Friday,
1st February, 1901*

ABSTRACT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Council of the Governor General of India,

LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Vol. XL

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ABSTRACT OF THE PROCEEDINGS
OF
THE COUNCIL OF THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF INDIA:
ASSEMBLED FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAKING
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Proceedings of the Council of the Governor General of India, assembled for the purpose of making Laws and Regulations under the provisions of the Indian Councils Acts, 1861 and 1892 (24 & 25 Vict., c. 67, and 55 & 56 Vict., c. 14).

The Council met at Government House, Calcutta, on Friday, the 1st February, 1901.

PRESENT:

His Excellency Baron Curzon, P.C., G.M.S.I., G.M.I.E., Viceroy and Governor General of India, *presiding*.

His Honour Sir John Woodburn, K.C.S.I., Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

The Hon'ble Major-General Sir E. H. H. Collen, G.C.I.E., C.B.

The Hon'ble Sir A. C. Trevor, K.C.S.I.

The Hon'ble Sir C. M. Rivaz, K.C.S.I.

The Hon'ble Mr. T. Raleigh.

The Hon'ble Sir E. F.G. Law, K.C.M.G.

The Hon'ble M. R. Ry. Panappakkam Ananda Charlu Vidia Vinodha Avargal, Rai Bahadur, C.I.E.

The Hon'ble Kunwar Sir Harnam Singh, Ahluwalia, K.C.I.E., of Kapurthala.

The Hon'ble Mr. J. Buckingham, C.I.E.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. F. Evans, C.S.I.

The Hon'ble Rai Bahadur B. K. Bose, C.I.E.

The Hon'ble Sir Allan Arthur, Kt.

The Hon'ble Mr. P. M. Mehta, C.I.E.

The Hon'ble Sir A. Wingate, K.C.I.E.

The Hon'ble Mr. D. M. Smeaton, C.S.I.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. J. S. Cotton, C.S.I.

The Hon'ble Mr. C. W. Bolton, C.S.I.

The Hon'ble Rai Sri Ram Bahadur.

The Hon'ble Mr. R. P. Ashton.

The Hon'ble Mr. R. H. Henderson.

DEATH OF HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN-EMPRESS.

Hon'ble Members having taken their seats, His Excellency THE PRESIDENT addressed them as follows:—

“Here, at this table, where we are met to exercise the legislative powers, for the benefit of the people of India, that have been devolved upon us by the

[*The President.*] [1ST FEBRUARY, 1901.]

Crown of Great Britain, we ought not, I think, to meet to-day without paying such tribute of humble respect as is open to us to the memory of the great and good Sovereign who has worn that Crown for nearly two-thirds of a century, and now, in the fulness of years and honour, has passed away. The British Empire has had no such Queen, gracious, wise, dignified, symbolising all that was most enlightened and progressive in her time, of pure and stainless life. India, in its long cycles, has had no such Empress, tender-hearted, large-minded, just, humane, the loving parent of her subjects of every race and clime. All the Princes of India have been proud to own their fealty to so noble an example of sovereignty, and the hearts of all the Indian peoples have been drawn together by this singular and beautiful combination of mother, woman, and queen. Those of us who, in any official capacity, either here or elsewhere, have served Her Majesty have felt it to be our proudest distinction that it was her warrant that we acknowledged, her Empire that we were engaged in safeguarding, her example that inspired us. Whether we are young or old, we shall none of us ever forget that we were honoured by wearing the uniform of Queen Victoria.

“ It would be easy for me to say much about the mark that this marvellous reign has left upon the history of India, and to indicate, at many points, the sagacious hand and influence of the deceased Sovereign. But perhaps the present occasion is not the best for such a purpose, while, after all, are not all her reign and character, in their relation to this country, summed up in the famous Proclamation of 1858, the Magna Carta of India, the golden guide to our conduct and aspirations ?

“ It has been the fashion in history to designate some Sovereigns by the distinguishing attributes of their personality or reign. Thus we have read of the Great, the Conqueror, the Just, the Lion-hearted, the Saintly, the Strong. Should it ever be desired to find such an appellation for the late Queen, it would be admitted by all that she deserves pre-eminently to be called by the title which she herself, I believe, gave to her own husband, namely, the Good. It is the virtue of her character, and the benignity of her influence, that her people have admired, quite as much as, if not more than, the splendour of the Victorian Era, or the unequalled glory of her reign. If blame or reproach ever fell upon her country, no shadow of it touched herself. She was above all, as well as over all. She set an example not merely to Courts and nations, but to every human hearth ; and at every hearthstone in the Empire is the feeling not merely that a great monarch is dead, but that a bright and beautiful ray has been extinguished.

[1ST FEBRUARY, 1901.] [The President.]

"Nowhere, I am convinced, in the wide orbit of the British Empire is there a more genuine sorrow, or a more profound sense of loss, than in India to-day. We are truly a nation in mourning. During the past ten days, many hundreds of telegrams and letters have poured in upon me testifying to the grief of communities and individuals. The newspapers have been full of similar evidence. All these records tell the same tale. They speak of the simple emotions that spring from the heart, of the sadness with which, even when it is a throne that is left vacant, men gaze upon the parting sail 'that sinks with all we love below the verge.'

"And yet the occasion is not one for lamentation only. We may mingle a sense of pride and of gratitude with our tears. For the Queen's life was extended far beyond the normal span. It had covered four-fifths of one century, and had crossed the threshold of another. Nature seemed for a while to have relaxed its inexorable laws in her favour, and in extreme old age, even to the end, she retained the freshness, the warmth of affections, and the energy of youth. In her more than eighty years of life, she had represented, as no other living man or woman, the higher aspects of the spirit of the age. She had shared in its trials—indeed had borne more than her portion of them—had steadied its impulses, and had sympathised with its struggles and hopes. There was left to her no public or private duty undone, no glory unattained. It may be said of her that she turned Great Britain into a world-wide Empire, with India as its corner-stone. If a part of the result is to be attributed to the statesmen who met at her Council, and part also to the movement of those unseen forces which are beyond human control, it yet remains true that her ministers were as often guided by her as she was by them, and that it was her personality and character, and the devotion which they excited, that gave to those forces the direction which they assumed. And so, having summed up in her own career the aims and achievements of the Nineteenth Century, she has now, in the very hour of the dawn of its successor, been relieved of the burden, and has handed on the trust to others. The British Empire, and the entire world, may count themselves fortunate if the new century produces any figure at all comparable with the central and shining figure of the old.

"I propose, as a mark of respect, that this Council should not proceed further with its business this morning, but should stand adjourned until this day week."

The Council accordingly adjourned to Friday, the 8th February, 1901.

CALCUTTA;	}	J. M. MACPHERSON,
<i>The 1st February, 1901.</i>		<i>Secretary to the Government of India, Legislative Department.</i>