

Such, gentlemen, are the facts—and a pitiable story they make, do they not? A story of a great wrong gratuitously done; of the persecution of men who deserved praise, and not blame; a story of the betrayal of our friends and of the sacrifice of our servants in the base, cowardly and vain hope of placating a mob of irreconcilable rebels; a story of the timidity of the strongest Conservative Government that has ever held office in England; of more dishonesty and chicanery; of the making of India a pawn in the game of politics as played at Westminster, and of the betrayal of our interests in the favour of our greatest enemy, the rabble gang of murderers and torturers, the persecutors of Christianity and declared enemy of Christian civilisation. This is a heavy accusation, but is there anyone who will say that it is not fully justified by a study of the history of Indian affairs since the year 1917?

You will remember at the beginning of the evening the details I gave you of the immensity of India, its crowded population, the number of different races which inhabit it, the number of different languages spoken, the enmity which exists between the various races, and the fact that 330 millions of the people are entirely illiterate; you will remember too, that it is universally admitted—by Ghandi himself quite openly and freely, that chaos, bloodshed and civil war would immediately follow if the British were to give up India.

In these circumstances, to talk of self-government in this country, which is marching in uneven stages through all the centuries from the fifth to the twentieth, is ridiculous in the extreme.

And the truth is, that on the part of the great mass of the people there is no spontaneous desire to throw off British Rule. The whole movement has been artificially engineered and, in the circumstances, I say the concession of Home Rule would be a betrayal of the masses unparalleled in history—of those masses who owe their happiness and content to the peace, order and progress which, for the first time in their history, they have enjoyed under British rule.

We have brought this brief survey of Indian affairs down to the fall of the late most disastrous Socialist Administration and, though it is too early to say much about the results of the change in Government, this much may be said—that the position in India has improved greatly.

More than 95 per cent. of the people of that country want only one thing—to be allowed to live their lives in peace and comfort and to enjoy the progress that they enjoyed until a *Secretary of State, an alien to England, deliberately set about causing discontent in India*. It is true that the Socialist Prime Minister has succeeded in retaining his hold on the office of Prime Minister, but the present Secretary of State and the present Viceroy have shown that they will act like men to accept the challenge of the revolutionary Congress and to stamp out revolutionary activity. How active the revolutionaries are is shown by the recent murder by two schoolgirls of a Magistrate in Bengal and by the still more recent attempt on the life of the Governor of that province by another girl. Surely, too, this is a light on the Bengali mind that employs girls to commit murder, in the hope that they will escape the penalty attaching to crime. The thing we have to fear is that the Conservative party in the House, conscious of its over-whelming strength, may become careless and slothful, and that it will allow itself to be dragged at the heels of the Socialist Prime Minister, whose deplorable influence on Indian affairs it is quite impossible either to deny or to excuse. This influence, unless continually fought against and counteracted, will certainly continue to do incalculable harm to India.