

ernorship. Besides Lord Brassey, the commission was composed of two Anglo-Indian officials ; a medical man and a Conservative member of Parliament, who were supposed to be impartial members ; two representatives of the anti-opium party, Mr. Arthur Pease and Mr. Henry J. Wilson, M.P. ; and two Hindu gentlemen of high standing.

The English members of the commission began their work in the autumn of 1893 by a week's sittings in London, where evidence was taken from various ex-officials, missionaries, and others from India, China, and the Straits Settlements. They then proceeded to India, where they were joined by the native commissioners, and made a four months' tour, beginning at Calcutta and proceeding by way of Northern India to Bombay, taking evidence at various centers along the route.

Bishop Thoburn has remarked that the commission visited India at a peculiarly unfavorable time. The ever-swelling military expenditure on the northwest frontier of India, combined with the continuous depreciation of the silver currency, causing an aggravation of the weight of the "home charges"—that is, the sums payable by India to England, in gold, for pensions, furlough allowances, and interest on loans—had brought about a deficit in Indian finance. At such a time to talk of cutting off the revenue derived from the sale of opium to the Chinese seemed to most residents in India, whether European or native, who had anything that might be taxed, a most untimely display of morality. The official world of India was strongly opposed to the anti-opium agitation ; and it is difficult for Englishmen or Americans, accustomed to the air of perfect freedom, to conceive the influence possessed by Government in India, especially as regards the native population. Under these circumstances, it cannot be deemed surprising that a great mass of evidence, extenuating the evils of the opium habit, extolling it as "an unconscious safeguard" against malaria, and attributing to it other (sometimes contradictory) beneficial consequences, was brought before the commission. The really astonishing thing is that there were everywhere found witnesses—missionaries, native Christians, and a considerable number of gentlemen from the small but important class of Indian social reformers—who came forward boldly to express the conviction that the opium habit, in whatever form, is a curse and a disgrace.

The majority of the English commissioners readily accepted the crude theories and loose statements put forward by the official witnesses and supported by the Europeans and Indians whom they had mustered to support them. In the course of their Indian tour, all of them, except Messrs. Pease and Wilson, had plainly shown their bias toward the views prevalent among the Anglo-Indian officials by whom they were surrounded, and frequently entertained. The medical member of the commission, Sir William Roberts, as has been pointed out recently in the *Indian Medical Record*, an influential Calcutta paper, was strongly predisposed by his own published writings to the view put forward by several leading official doctors in that city, that