

The Bengalee

CALCUTTA, OCT. 16, 1914.

THE 16TH OCTOBER.

TO-DAY IS THE 16TH OCTOBER, A day which when the partition was in force and had not been modified, was observed as the great nation-day. It is no longer, a day of mourning; for the great grievance of the partition has been redressed by a beneficent Government. It is now a day of rejoicing, but also a day of great memories. It is the day of the "Rakhi-bandhan," when brother met brother and tied round his wrist the red emblem of eternal brotherhood, which Kings even did not despise. May the day live in our recollection and kindle in our breasts the joy of fervent patriotic unity. We live in better times and under happier auspices, and may the self-sacrifice and the devotion of the past be re-awakened in us to spur us on to renewed efforts for the re-birth of our indigenous industries and the growth of our nascent civic rights. In the days that are now happily past and gone, we fought, in the words of Edmund Burke, with our hands tied behind us, with an omnipotent Government watching us in suspicion and distrust. All this is now changed. Not distrust, but conciliation is now the watchword of the Government, and if we are men, and if the spirit that was awakened on the 16th October lives and is not dead, we should be able to take the fullest advantage of the present golden opportunity and turn it to the best account for the benefit of our great and ancient country. With the help and co-operation of the Government, with our patriotism stimulated by recent events and with the memories of brotherhood, indissolubly associated with the 16th October, we should be in a position to impart an added impetus to the great movement of progress which has been so happily begun.

THE BUDGE-BUDGE INCIDENT.

WE DESIRE TO CALL PROMINENT attention to the following letter which we have received from an esteemed friend on the Budge-Budge incident:—

Sir,—The public are relieved to see that the painful incident which took place at Budge-Budge on the 29th

ed at the hands of the Canadian authorities had created a sense of mistrust and irritation which was intensified by the fact that they found on their return home that they were not to be permitted to go where they liked. The situation needed the most delicate handling and by persons who inspired the confidence of Gurdit Singh and his followers. But the past cannot be recalled, and it is useless to indulge in unavailing regrets. We agree with our correspondent in thinking that a public enquiry should at once be ordered, and that by a mixed Commission of officials and non-officials, on which the Sikh community should be adequately represented. We are glad to find that the Indian Association has already taken action in the matter. The Secretary has sent the following telegram to His Excellency the Viceroy through the Private Secretary:—"The Indian Association earnestly appeals to His Excellency the Viceroy to appoint a mixed Commission of officials and non-officials, the Sikh community being represented thereon for public enquiry and report upon the Budge-Budge incident." We further learn that the Association has submitted a representation to His Excellency Lord Carmichael making the same prayer. We hope the Government will see their way to grant this prayer which represents a universal public demand.

While the above was in print, we received a telegram from our Simla correspondent announcing the appointment of a committee of enquiry by His Excellency the Viceroy. The committee will be presided over by the Hon'ble Sir W. Vincent Kt. I. C. S. and will be composed of the Hon'ble Maharajahdhiraja of Burdwan, the Hon'ble Mr. Fagann I. C. S. (Punjab), the Hon'ble Sardar Saljit Singh, and Mr. H. Walmley I. C. S. (Bengal). The committee, we are informed, will assemble in Calcutta at once.

JAPAN AND THE WAR.

THOSE WHO HAD ANY KNOWLEDGE of Japanese politics and any confidence in Japanese statesmanship knew it that the moment Great Britain intervened in this conflict, Japan would also throw herself into it, on behalf of the Allies. She had very clear and definite treaty-obligations with Great Britain, in the discharge of which she had to take her side in this war.

ture is intimately bound up with that of China. Any attempt at the partition of China would only be the precursor of the overthrow of Japanese supremacy in Eastern Asia. This is why Japan forced herself upon the European powers when they combined to punish China for the Boxer outrages. Her presence as a member of the punitive expedition saved China then. Her presence as a member of the Peace Conference at the close of this war would once more make her the saviour of China and the protector of peace in Eastern Asia. As then, as now, Japan will have Great Britain for her trusted friend and ally. Great Britain and Japan working together will be able to safeguard the interests of the Asiatic peoples far more effectively than the former would have been able to do if required to work single-handed for this end. And these great powers are equally interested in the preservation of the integrity and independence of the existing sovereign States of Asia. The loss of the independence of any of these would spell considerable risk to the position of both these powers. And this is the deeper and the larger reason that stands at the back of Japan's decision to join this pan-European war. In short it was to prevent the peace that is bound to end this war from becoming a purely European compact that Japan had to join this war. And she has joined the treaty by which the Allies have bound themselves not to make peace with their common enemy except in combination and concert, and accept no terms that are not agreed to by them all. All this is to the advantage of Asia. All this is more—a safeguard of those larger humanitarian interests and ideals the promotion and realisation of which are the ordained objectives of modern historic evolution.

A fatal blow to the fish industry.

It has been brought to our notice that by declarations dated the 2nd September 1914 and 8th September 1914 respectively, and published in the Calcutta Gazette dated the 2nd and 8th September 1914 respectively, the public have been informed that about 17940 and 16064 bighas of land would be acquired in the villages of Dakhindari, Duttabad, Gururabad, Noahpati, Dha-

WE DESIRE TO CALL PROMINENT attention to the following letter which we have received from an esteemed friend on the Budget-Budge incident:—

Sir.—The public are relieved to see that the painful incident which took place at Budge-Budge on the 29th September, has not been allowed to be passed over by you without any comment. It is apparent that it resulted from a blunder, and it could have been averted, as correctly pointed out by you. The general impression on the mind of the public is that the Sikhs of the "Komagata Maru" were not so much to blame as it has been made to appear in the report of the affair. The Government had certain reasons for not wanting the emigrants to come to Calcutta, and it is likely that they did not understand the Government's attitude. They were either apprehensive of some evil designs on the part of the Government, thinking that they were being deported to some unknown place or they resented the Government's action of interference with their movements, they being free agents, which is a reasonable phase of the human mind. It can not be imagined what made them suddenly fire on the police officers without any provocation, as mentioned in the report. This happened in broad day-light, and they were aware that there were troops and armed police near by and should have understood that any force on their part would be of no avail. Only men out of their senses, who deliberately courted being instantly shot, could act in the manner as those men are said to have done. The death of so many Government officers and innocent men is as regrettable as the fate of the several emigrants. It is desirable that the impression on the public mind, especially at a crisis like the present, should be removed without delay and this can be done only by a public enquiry into the matter.

Finally I hope the Government will provide as liberally for the maintenance of the families of the lookers who were unfortunately killed, as it is their duty to do in the case of the families of its officers and men who also met their untimely death in this connection.

Our correspondent says that probably the Sikhs on board the "Komagata Maru" thought that they would be deported to some unknown place. The evidence of Sir Frederick Halliday at the Coroner's inquest lends colour to this view. Sir Frederick Halliday said in the course of his deposition, "Gurdit Singh said their destination was not the Punjab." Some deplorable misapprehension was at the bottom of this unhappy incident. If we are right in this view, as we think we are, then it would have been a wise thing for the Government to have sent up a deputation of Sikh leaders to await the arrival of Gurdit Singh and his followers who might have explained the intentions of the Government, and their explanation would have had a mollifying effect on the whole situation, and who knows, might have averted the unfortunate incident. The treatment which Gurdit Singh and his followers had received

confidence in Japanese statesmanship knew it that the moment Great Britain intervened in this conflict, Japan would also throw herself into it, on behalf of the Allies. She had very clear and definite treaty obligations with Great Britain, in the discharge of which she had to take her side in this war. That was a primary consideration with her. We fully believe Baron Kato when he says that Japan "had no desire or inclination to become involved in the present conflict," and we have no manner of doubt whatever that in doing so she had not been moved by any mean and selfish motives. Whatever the German papers might say, Japan would never think of seeking any territorial aggrandisement in China or elsewhere, and much less in China than anywhere else, through this war. Her main and obvious motive is to help her Ally. Her next and more far-reaching motive is to strengthen the foundations of peace in the East, as Baron Kato puts it, not only by bringing the two powers who just now seem to hold the destinies of Asia in their hands more than any others, closer than ever; but also by making it impossible for the present belligerents, when this conflict is over, to divide their respective spheres of influence in such a way as may threaten the peace of the non-European peoples more seriously and effectively than it has hitherto been. No body can say how long this war will last, or how exactly it will end. But whatever fortune may befall the belligerents, of one thing there seems to be absolutely no doubt, and it is that they will all, without any exception, the victors as well as the vanquished, be completely exhausted before they have finished the business, and will have brought home to them the horrors of a renewal of any similar hostility in however distant a future. The longer this war is continued the deeper will be the need of some permanent settlement of the issues between the different European powers. And this settlement will be the occasion of a division of their respective spheres of influence upon a footing of permanence. Both Asia and Africa will thus be prospectively partitioned, not as actual or possible possessions of the different powers, but what is known in the language of modern European diplomacy as their different spheres of influence. Japan knows all this. Every watchful student of modern European and world politics knows as much, indeed. And knowing all this, Japan knows this also that her presence in the Conference that will settle the terms of the peace which will terminate this war, is essential for the safety of her own interests as well as for the peace and security of Africa, and particularly of Eastern Asia. China had no call to join this war. She is under no treaty obligations like Japan to do so. But her future will be largely determined at the Conference that will draw up the terms of the peace which will end this present war. And Japan knows that her own fu-

1914 respectively and published in the Calcutta Gazette dated the 2nd and 8th September 1914 respectively, the public have been informed that about 17940 and 16064 bighas of land would be acquired in the villages of Dakhindari, Duttahad, Gurerabad, Noahpati, Dhamanpur, Krishnapur, Mahishbathan, Thakurdari as also in the villages of Dharamtolah, Dhamanpur, Hatgacha, and Hadyah for creating a spill for the river Bidyadhari. These lands are mostly occupied by fisheries which supply fresh salt-water fish to the Calcutta market, their out-turn being nearly half of the fish consumed in the city. It is a well-known fact that the present daily supply of fish in Calcutta is hardly sufficient to meet the demand and the price has within the last few years gone up from 6 annas to nearly a rupee per seer. The Government also is cognisant of this daily-dwindling fish-supply as is evident from the creation of a Fishery Department with a view to improve fish culture. Under these circumstances the proposed wholesale acquisition of such an extensive area of mostly "jalkar" lands cannot but be viewed with alarm by the people. Besides having a disastrous effect on the fish-supply of the city, which is already poor the step apparently decided on without much consideration will immediately throw out of employ a large number of Bagdies, Teors and others who live close to the fisheries and make their living by fish trade. We of course realise along with the Government the urgent necessity of improving the Bidyadhari river but as it can be very easily done by keeping the fisheries intact and acquiring lands outside them we hope that the fishing interest of the country and the larger fish-consuming public will be spared this unconscious but all the same a deadly blow to an important industry.

The "Pioneer" warned.

WE learn that the Government of India have had their attention drawn to the article which appeared in the "Pioneer" in September last, headed "Two Divisions," and the Government have expressed their displeasure and a warning has been officially issued. The action of the Government will meet with the approval of Indian public opinion. We confess we read the article with a sense of amazement.

Italian papers state that the Chair of Regius Professor of Tropical Medicine in the University of Naples, and Director of the Royal Clinic for Tropical Diseases in the same city, has been officially offered to Dr. Aldo Castellani of Colombo. The post carries a pensionable salary of over £1,000 a year, and it has recently been decided to make it more attractive for the holder who will receive in addition a personal allowance equivalent to his salary, so that the fixed yearly emoluments attached to the post amount to over £2,000 a year.