

State, in the administration of your own affairs, in your submitting yourself to the laws that you helped to make, and in submitting yourself to the regulations that you helped to impose upon yourselves and upon the community at large.

“ Hence I say that it is essentially a spiritual movement. We believe that the spirit of our race will fulfil and realise itself in and through this movement and shall realise the divinely appointed destiny of our nation.”

#### *14. ARE WE FIT FOR SWARAJ ?*

The Moderates maintained that we must deserve before we desire: and that self-government in the case of India is a very arduous task requiring a period of arduous preparation. The Swaraj is, therefore, to be necessarily obtained by stages: at each stage we have to convince our masters of our ability to run successfully the tasks allotted to us: and with their permission, we go on to a higher stage. The whole period of British rule is a period of political apprenticeship of the Indian nation.

Tilak maintained that the Indian nation has ceased to be a tender child: and now that it has grown up, it demands that the management of its affairs should be transferred to it. The trustees accept the principle that the moment the people acquire real maturity, they should govern their own affairs. But they begin to think that the head of the child has turned or that the child has not yet acquired the necessary fitness. Now will anyone say when the child will acquire that fitness and how the child will acquire that fitness? How can the Indian people demonstrate their fitness till they are actually entrusted with the task?

That Indians are not fit, that they will take a considerable period before they will be fit, if at all ever they will be, that as long as this period of immaturity continues in

the opinion of the British trustees so long they are entitled in continuing here; all these are clever lies instilled into the people's heads to justify the existence and perpetuation of the British Raj. One thing is certain, that if the Indian people accept these statements and swallow them, they will never be fit. They were fit in a way before the British came; Aurangzeb and Shivaji did not appeal to the Western powers to recognise their fitness. But the British Government sees that they will never be fit; and this is true as long as the Indians accept all their political wisdom from these clever imperialists.

The nationalist therefore started the eloquent declaration of Tilak that "Home-rule is my birth-right and I will have it." This emphatic utterance marked the birth of a new consciousness in the nation. Here is the expression of determination to refuse to accept serfdom and subordination, to continue in the present state of helpless dependency, if possible, for a single day.

The nationalist however did consider that preparation for the attainment of the Swaraj ideal is necessary. But that preparation has nothing to do with the acquisition of slow training in the art of self-government under the British masters. Let there be no confusion of thought: the British are in India not for the training of Indians, but for their own business: and the real training of Indians fundamentally conflicts with that business. The Moderates are deluding themselves and deluding the nation when they establish and preach the dogma of the gradual acquisition of fitness at the hands of their British administrators. "The new spirit," said Pal, "accepts no other teacher in the art of self-government except self-government itself. It values freedom for its own sake, and desires autonomy, immediate and unconditioned, regardless of any considerations of fitness and unfitness of the people for it: because it does not believe serfdom in any shape or form to be a

school for real freedom in any country and under any conditions whatever. It holds that the struggle for freedom itself is the highest tutor of freedom which, if it can once possess the mind of a people, shapes itself the life, the character, and the social and civic institutions of the people, to its own proper ends.

“The time has come when in the interests of truth and the civic advancement and freedom of the people, our British friends should be distinctly told that while we are thankful to them for all the kind things they have said all these years for us, and the ready sacrifices they have made to make our lot easy and their yoke light, we cannot any longer suffice to be guided by them in our efforts for political progress and emancipation. Their view-point is not ours. They desire to make the Government of India popular, without ceasing in any sense to be essentially British, we desire to make it autonomous, absolutely free of the absolute control. As in matters of individual faith every man had best beat his music out, so also in matters of civilised and free administration, every nation must reach the ideal by its own efforts and through its very failures and travails.”

### 15. *NEW NATIONALISM.*

The fundamental difference between the old nationalism of the Congress and the new nationalism of Tilak and Lajpatrai and Pal, is that the old nationalism built upon the consciousness of the weakness of the people: while the new nationalism built upon the consciousness of the strength of the people. Hence the old nationalism, obsessed with the age-long weaknesses, superstitions, divisions of the people, tried organically to connect itself with and depend upon British imperialism; the new nationalism, fired by the achievements of the people in the past, the glorious ancient Hindu