CHAPTER IX

Administrative Changes After 1858

THE Revolt of 1857 gave a severe jolt to the British administration in India and made its reorganisation inevitable. In fact, Indian society, the Indian Government and the Indian economy all underwent significant changes in the decades following the Revolt.

Administration

An Act of Parliament in 1858 transferred the power to govern from the East India Company -to the British Crown. While authority over India had previously

been wielded by the Directors of the Company and the Board of Control, now this power was to be exercised by a Secretary of State for India aided by a Council. The Secretary of State was a member of the British Cabinet and as such was responsible to Parliament. Thus the ultimate power over India remained with Parliament. The Council of the Secretary of State, known as the India Council, was to advise the Secretary of State who could overrule its decisions. In financial nutters, however, the approval of the Council was essential. By 1869 the Council was completely subordinated to the Secretary of State. Most of the members of the India Council were retired British-lndian officials.

Under the Act, government was to be carried on as before by the Governor-General who was also given the title of Viceroy or Crown's personal representative. He was paid two and a half lakhs of rupees a year in addition to his maily allowances. With the passage of time the Viceroy was increasingly reduced to a subordinate status in relation to the British Government in matters of policy as well as execution of policy. This tendency was of course nothing new. Already, as a result of the Regulating Act, Pitt's India Act, and the later Charter Acts the Government of India was being effectively controlled from London. Though India had been conquered by the East India Company for its own benefit, it had gradually come to be ruled in the interests of the dominating sections of British society. The India Act of 1858 further strengthened this tendency. But, in the past, a great deal of decision-making power was in practice left in the hands of the Governor-General. Instructions from London took a few weeks to arrive and the Government of India had often to take important policy decisions in a hurry. Control by the authorities in London was therefore often more in the nature of *post facto* evaluation and criticism than of actual direction. In other words, the London authorities superintended the administration of India but did not run it. But by 1870 a submarine} cable had been laid through the Red Sea between England and Indiar Orders from London could now reach India in a matter of hours. The Secretary of State could now control the minutest details of administration and do so constantly every hour of the day. Thus the authority that exercised ifnal and detailed control and direction over Indian affairs came to reside in London, thousands of miles distant from India. No Indian had a voice in the India Council or the British Cabinet or Parliament. Indians could hardly even approach such distant masters. Under such conditions, Indian opinion had even less impact on government policy than before. On the other hand, British industrialists, merchants, and bankers increased their influence over the Government of India. This "made the Indian administration even more reactionary than it was before J858, for now even the pretence of liberalism was gradually given up.

In India the Act of 1858 provided that the Governor-General would have an Executive Council whose members were to act as heads of different departments

and as his official advisers. The position of the members of the Council was similar to that of Cabinet ministers. Originally there were five members of this Council but by 1918 there were six ordinary members, apart from the Commander-in-Chief who headed the Army Department, The Council discussed all important matters and decided them by a majority vote; but the Governor-General had the power to override any important decision of the Council. In fact, gradually all power was concentrated in the Governor-General's hands.

The Indian Councils Act of 1861 enlarged the Governor-General's Council' for the purpose of making laws in which capacity it was known as the Imperial Legislative Council. The Governor-General was authorised to add to his Executive Council bettyfeen six and twelve members of whom at least half had to be non-officials who could be Indian or English. The Imperial Legislative Council possessed no r<;al powers and should not be seen as a sort of elementary or weak parliament. It was merely an advisory body. It could not discuss any important measure, and no financial measures at all, without the previous approval of the Government, It had no control over the budget.. It could not discuss the aotions of the administration; the membeis could not even ask questions about them. In other words, the Legislative Council had no control over the executive. Moreover, no bill passed by it could become an act till it was approved by the Governor-General. On top of all this, the

Secretary of State could disallow any of its Acts. Thus, the only important function of the Legislative Council was to ditto official measures and give them the appearance of having been passed by a legislative body. In theory, the non-official Indian members were added to the Council to represent Indian views, since it was believed by many British officials and statesmen that the Revolt of 1857 would not have occurred if Indian views had been known, to the rulers. But the Indian members of the Legislative Council were few in number and were not elected by the Indian people but were nominated by the Governor-General whose choice invariably fell on princes and their ministers, big zamindars, big merchants, or retired senior government officials. They were thoroughly unrepresentative of the Indian people or of the growing nationalist opinion. Once again, Indians had no hand in the processes of government. The Government of India remained, as before 1858, an alien despotism. This was, moreover, no accident, but a conscious policy. Charles Wood, the Secretary of State for India, while moving the Indian Councils Bill of 1861, said: "All experience teaches us that where a dominant race rules another—the mildest form of governments a despotism."

Provincial Administration: The British had divided India for administrative convenience into provinces, three , of which—Bengal, Madras and Bombay—were known as Presidencies. The Presidencies were administered by a Governor and his Executive Council of three, who were appointed by the Crown. The Presidency Governments possessed more rights and powers than other provinces which were administered by Lieutenant Governors and Chief Commissioners appointed by the Governor-General.

The provincial governments enjoyed a great deal of autonomy before 1833 When their power to pass laws was taken away and their expenditure subjected to strict central oontrol. But experience soon showed that a vast country like India could not be efficiently administered on the principle of strict centralisation.

The Act of 1861 marked the turning of the tide pf centralisation. It laid down that legislative councils similar to that of Lhp centre should be established first in Bombay, Madras and Bengal and then in other provinces. The provincial legislative councils too were mere advisory bodies consisting of officials and four to eight non-official Indians and Englishmen. They too lacked the powers, oi a democratic parliament.

The evil of extreme centralisation was most ctbvious in the field pf finance. The revenues from all over the country and liom,different sources were gathered at the centre and then distributed by it to lh<: provincial governments. The Centcal Government exercised strict control over the smallest details of provincial expenditure. But this system proved quite wasteful in practice. !t was not possible for the Central

Government to supervise the efficient collection of revenues by a provincial government or to keep adequate check over its expenditure. On the one hand, the two governments constantly quarrelled over minute details of administration and

expenditure, and, on the other, a provincial government had no motive to be economical. The authorities therefore decided to decentralise public finance.

The first step in the direction of separating central and provincial finances was taken in 1870 by Lord Mayo. The provincial governments were granted fixed sums out of central revenues for the administration of certain services like Police, Jails, Education, Medical Services, and Roads and were asked to administer them as they wished. They could increase or reduce allotments to any of these departments within the limits of the total funds given to them. Lord Mayo's scheme was enlarged in 1877 by Lord Lytton who transferred to the provinces certain other heads of expenditure like Land Revenue, Excise, General Administration, and Law and Justice. To meet the additional expenditure a provincial government was to get a fixed share of the income realised from that province from certain sources like Stamps, Excise Taxes, and Income Tax. Further changes in these arrangements were made in 1.882 during the Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon. The system of giving fixed grants to the provinces was ended and, instead, a province was to get the entire income within it from certain sources of revenue and a fixed share of the income from other sources, Thus all sources of revenue were now divided inio three—general, provincial, and those to be divided between the centre and the provinces. The financial arrangements between the centre and the provinces were to be reviewed every five years.

The different measures of financial decentralisation discussed above did not really mean the beginning of genuine provincial autonomy or of Indian participation in provincial administration. They were much more in the nature of administrative reorganisation whose chief aims were to keep down expenditure and increase income. In theory as well as in practice the Central Government remained supreme and continued to exeTcise effective and detailed control over the provincial governments. This was inevitable fot both the Central Government and the provincial governments were completely subordinated to the Secretary of State mid the British Government.

Local Bodies: Financial difficulties led the Government to further decentralise administration by[1] promoting local government through municipalities and district boards. ' The Industrial Revolution gradually, transformed European economy and society in the 19th century. India's Increasing contact with Europe and new modes *df* imperialism and economic exploitation Made It necessary that some of the European .advances in economy, sanitation, and education should be transplanted in India.

Moreover, the rising Indian nationalist movement demanded the introduction of modern improvements in civic life. Thus the need for the education of the masses, sanitation, water supply, better roads, and other civic amenities was increasingly felt. The Government could no longer afford to ignore it. But its finances were already in disorder due to heavy expenditure on the army and the railways. It could not increase its income through new taxes as the burden of the existing taxation was already very heavy on the poor and further addition lb it was likely to create discontent against the Government. On the other hand, the

Government did not want to tax the upper classes. But the authorities felt that the people would not mind paying new taxes if they knew that their proceeds would be spent on their own welfare. It was therefore decided to transfer local services like education, health, sanitation, and water supply to local bodies who would finance them through local taxes. Many Englishmen had pressed for the formation of local bodies on pother ground also. They believed that associating Indians with the administration in some capacity or the other would prevent their becoming politically disaffected. This association could take place at the level of local bodies without in any way endangering British monopoly of power in India.

Local bodies were Ikbt formed between 1864 and 1868, but almost in every case they consisted of nominated members and were presided over by District Magistrates. They did not, therefore, represent'local self- government at ali Nor did-$e intelligent Indians accept them as such. They looked upon them a$ instruments for the extraction of additional taxes from the people.

A step forward, ilioughAa veiy hesitant and inadequate one, was taken in 1882 by Lord Ripon Government. A government resolution laid down the policy of admii.i.iering local affairs largely through rural and, urban local bodies, a majority of whose members would be non-officials. These non-official members would be elected by the people wherever and whenever officials felt that it was possible to introduce elections. The resolution also permitted the election of a non-official as Chairman of a loc;>l body. Provincial acts were passed to implement this resolution. But lin: elected members were in a minority in all the district boards and in maiv* of the municipalities. They were, moreover, elected by a small number of voters since the right to vote was severely restricted. District officials continued to act as presidents of district boards though non-officials gradually became chairmen of municipal committees, The Government also retained (he right to exercise strict control over (he activities of the local bodies and to suspend and supercede (hem at its own discretion. The result was that except in the Presidency pitips of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay the local bodies functioned jiis'tjike departments of the Government and were in no -way good examples, of local self-government. AH the same, the political)/ conscious Indians welcomed Ripon's resolution and worked actively in these local bodies with the hope that in time they could be transformed into effective organs of local self-government.

Changes in the Army

The Indian army was carefully reorganised after 1858. Some changcs were made necessary by the transfer of power to the Crown. Thus the East India Company's European forces were merged with the Crown troops. But the army was reorganised most of al! to prevent the recurrence of another revolt. The rulers had seen that their bayonets were the only secure foundation of their rule. Several steps were taken to minimise, if not completely eliminate, the capacity of Indian soldiers to revolt. Firstly, the domination of the army by its European branch was carefully guaranteed. The proportion of Europeans to Indians in the army was raised and fined at 6ne to two in the Bengal Army and two to five in 'he Madras and Bombay armies. Moreover, the European troops were kept in

key geographical and military positions. The crucial branches of the army like artillery and, later in the 20th century, tanks and armoured corps were put exclusively in European hands. The older policy of excluding Indians from the officer carps was strictly maintained. Till 1914 no Indian could rise higher than the rank of a *sitbedar* Secondly, the organisation of the Indian section of ihe army was based on the policy of "balance and counterpoise" or "divide and 'rule[1] ' so as to prevent its chances of uniting again in an anli-flntish uprising. Discrimination on the basis of caste, region, and religion was practised in recruitment to (he army, A fiction was created that Indians consisted of "martial" and "non-martial" classes. Soldiers from Avadh, Bihar, Central India, and South,India, who had first helped the British conquer India but had later taken 'part in the Revolt of 18S7, were declared to be noil-martial. They were no longer taken in the at my on a large scale. On the other hand, the Sikhs, Gurlfbas, and Pathans, who had assisted in the suppression of the Revolt, were declared to be martial and were recruited in large numbers In addition, Indian regiments were made a mixture of various castcs' and groups' which were so placed as to balance each other. Communal, caste, tribal and regional loyalties were encouraged among the soldiers so that the sentiment of nationalism would riot grow among them, V For example, caste and communal companies were introduced' in most regimciiife," Chailes Wood,'Secretary of State for India, wrote to the Viceroy Canning' in 1861:

> I never wish lo see again a great Arn\y, very miiL-h the $ame in ils feeiings and pie- ju<jiccs"ind connections, iionhdent in Its strength, and so disposed to rise in -Jhillm ***i.tfithfr*** II orit refluent muilniri, I should likc'lo have the riefcf .regiment \o alii'. tl>ai ,i aoiiIJ h.'reJd> t*> lire into ,i ... . •

Thus the Indian army remained a purely mercenary force. Moreover, every effort was made to keep it separated from the life and thoughts of the rest of the population. It was isolated from nationalist ideas by every possible means. Newspapers, journals, and nationalist publications were prevented from reaching the soldiers, But, as we shall see later, all such efforts failed in the long run and sections of the Indian army played an important role in our struggle for freedom.

The Indian army became in time a very costly military machine. In 1904 it absorbed nearly 52 per cent of the Indian revenues. This was because it served more than one purpose. India, being the most prized colonial possession of the time, had to be constantly defended from the competing imperialisms of Russia, France, and Germany. This led to a big incease in the size of the Indian Army. Secondly, the Indian troops were not maintained for India's defence alone. They were also often employed to extend or consolidate British power and possessions in Asia and Africa. Lastly, the British section of the army served as an army of occupation. It was the ultimate guarantee of the British hold over the country. Its cost had, however, to be met by the Indian revenues; it was in fact a very heavy burden on them.

Public Services

We have seen above that Indians had little control over the Government of India. They were not permitted to play any part in the making of laws or in determining administrative policies. In addition, they were excluded from the

bureaucracy which put these policies into practice. All positions of power and responsibility in the administration were occupicd by the members of the Indian Civil Service who were recruited through an annual open competitive examination held in London. Indians also could sit in this examination. Satyendranath Tagore, brother of Rabindranath Tagore, was the first Indian to do so successfully in 1863. Almost every year thereafter one or two Indians joined the covcted ranks of the Civil Service, but their number was negligible compared to the English entrants. In practice, the doors of the Civil Service remained barred to Indians for they suffered from numerous handicaps. The competitive examination was held in far away London. It Was conducted through the medium of the alien English language. It was based on Classical Greek and JLatin learning which could be acquired only after a prolonged and costly course of studies in fcqglarul. In addition, the maximum age for entry into the Civil Service was gradually reduced from twenty-ihree in 1859 to nineteen in 1878. If the_ young Indian of twenty-three found it difficult to succeed in the Civil Service competition, the Indian 6f nineteen found it impossible!*) do 4o.

In other departments of administration—Police, Public Works Department, Medicine, Posts and Telegraphs, Forests, Engineering, Customs, and later Railways—the superior and highly paid posts werp likewise reserved for British citizens.

This preponderance of Europeans in all strategic posts was not accidental. The rulers of India believed it to be an essential condition for the maintenance of British supremacy in India. Thus Lord Kimberley, the Secretary of State, laid down in 1893 that "it is indispensable that an.i\ adequate number of the members of the Civil Service shall always be I \ Europeans; " and the Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne, stressed "the absolute necessity of keeping the government of this widespread Empire in European hands, if that Empire is to be maintained."

Under Indian pressure the different administrative services were gradually Indianised after 1918; but the positions of control and authority were still kept in British hands. Moreover, the people soon discovered ıhat Indianisation of these services had not put any part of political power in their hands. The Indians m these services functioned as agents of British rule and loyally seized Britain's imperial purposes.

Relations with tbe Princely States

The Revolt of 1857 led the British to reverse their policy towards the Indian States. Before 1857, they had availed themselves of every opportunity to annex princely states. This policy was now abandoned. Most of the Indian princes had not only remained loyat to the British but had actively aided the latter in suppressing the Revolt. As Lord Canning, the Viceroy, put it, they bad acted as ' 'breakwaters in the storm", Their loyalty was now rewarded with the announcement that their right to adopt heirs would be respected arvd the integrity of their territories guaranteed against future annexation. Moreover, the experience of the Revolt had convinced the

British authorities that the princely states could serve as useful allies and supporters in case of popular opposition or revolt. Canning wrote ir^ I860:

> **It was long ago said by Sir John Malcolm that if we made At! India into ztllahs (districts), It was not in the nature of things that our Empire should last 50 years: but that if we could keep up a number of Native States without political power, but as royal inttruipent), we should.exi$t In India as long as our naval supremacy was maintained. Or the substantial truth of this opinion I have no doubt, and the recent event! have made it more deserving of our attention than ever.**

It was, therefore, decided to use the princely states as firm props of British rule in India. Even the British historian P.E. Roberts has recognised : "To preserve them as a bulwark of the Empire has ever since been a principle of British policy,"

" Their perpetuation was, however, only one aspect of the British policy towards the princely state, The other was their complete subordination to the British authorities. While even before the, Revolt of 1857 the British had in practice interfered in the internal a/Fairs of these states, in theory they had been considered as subsidiary but sovereign powers This position was now entirely changed. As the price of their continued existence the princes were made to acknowledge Britain as the paramount power. Canning declared tn 1862 that "the Crown of England stood forward, the unquestioned Ruler and Paramount Power in al! India." In 1876, Queen Victoria assumed Ihe title of the Empress or India to emphasise British sovereignty over the entire Indian subcontinent. Lord Curzon later made it clear that the princes ruled theic states merely as agents of the British Crown. The princes accepted this subordinate position and willingly became junior partners in the Empire because they were assured of their continued existence as rulers of their states.

As the paramount power, the British claimed the right to supervise the internal government of the princely states. They not only interfered in the day to day administration through the Residents but insisted on appointing and dismissing ministers and other high officials Sometimes ihe rulers themselves were removed or deprived of their powers. One motive for such interference was provided by the British desire to give these states a modern administration so that their integration with British India would be complete. This integration and the consequent interference were also encouraged by the development of all-India railways, postal and telegraph systems, currency, and a common economic life. Another motive for interference was provided by the growth of popular democratic and nationalist movements in many of the states. On the one hand, the British authorities helped the rulers suppress these movements; on the other, they tried to eliminate the most serious of administrative abuses in these states.

The changed British policy towards the princely states is illustrated by the cases of Mysore and Baroda. Lord Bentinck had deposed the ruler of Mysore in 1831 and taken over the administration of the state. After 1868 the Government recognised the adopted heir of the old ruler and m 1881 the state was fully restored to the young Maharajah. On the otlier hand, the ruler of Baroda, Malhar Rao Gaekwad, was accused in 1874 of misrule and of trying to poison the British Resident and was deposed after a brief trial. Baroda was not* however, annexed; instead, a young man of the Oaekwad family was put on the throne.

Administrative Policles

The British attitude towards India and, consequently, their policies in India changed for the worse after the Revolt or 1857. While before 18J7 tly:y had tried, however half-heartedly and hesitatingly, to modernise India, they now consciously began to follow reactionary policies. As (he historian Percival Spear has put it, "the Indian Government's honeymoon with progress was over."

We have seen above how the organs of administrative control in India and in England, the Indian army and the Civil Service were reorganised to exclude Indians from an effective share in administration. Previously at least lip-service had been paid to the idea that the British were "preparing" the Indians for self-government. The view was now openly put forward (hat the Indians were unfit to rule themselves and that they must be ruled by Britain for an indefinite period. This reactionary policy was reflected in many fields.

Divide and Rule : The British had conquered India by taking advantage of the disunity among the Indian pow&rs and by playing them against one another After 1858 they continued to follow this policy of divide and rule by turning the princes against the people, province against province, caste against caste, group against group, and, above all, Hindus against Muslims.

The unity displayed by Hindus and Muslims during the Revolt of 1857 had disturbed the foreign rulers. They were determined to break this unity so as to weaken the rising nationalist movement. In fact, they missed no opportunity to do so. Immediately after the Revolt they repressed Muslims, confiscated their lands and property on a large scale, and declared Hindus to be (heir favourites. After 1870 this policy was reversed and an attempt was made to turn upper class and middle class Muslims against the nationalist movement.

The Government cleverly used the attractions of government servicc to create a split along religious lines among the educated Indians Because of industrial and commercial backwardness and the near absence of social services, the educated Indians depended almost entirely on government service. There were few other openings for them This led to keen competition among them for the available government posts. The Government utilised this competition to fan provincial and communal rivalry and hatred. It promised official favours on a communal basis {n return for loyally and so played the educated Muslims against the educated Hindus.

Hostility to Educated Indians

The Governmertt of India had actively encouraged modern education after 1833. The Universities or Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were started in 1857 and higher education spread rapidly thereafter. Many British officials commended the refusal by educated Indians to participate in the Revolt of 1857. But this favourable official attitude towards the oducaled Indian* soon changed been use some of (hem had begun to ,use iheit recently acquired modern knowledge to umlyse ihi imperialistic

character of British ru'e and to put forward demands for Indian participation in administration. The officials became actively hostile to higher education and to the educated Indians when the latter began to organise a nationalist movement among the people and founded the Indian National Congress in 1885. The officials nc?w took active steps to curtail higher education. They sneered at the educated Indians whom they commonly referred to as *babus.*

Thus the British turned against that group of Indians who had imbibed modern Western knowledge and who stood for progress along modern lines. Such progress was, however, opposed to the basic interests and policies of British imperialism in India. The official opposition to the educated Indians ant} higher education shows that British rule in India had already exhausted whatever potentialities for progress it originally possessed.

Attitude Towards the Zamindars: While being hostile to the forward- looking educated Indians, the British now turned for friendship to the most reactionary group of Indians, the princes, the zamindars, and the landlords. We have already examined above the changed policy towards the princes and the official attempt to use them as a dam against the rise of popular and nationalist movements. The zamindars and landlords too were placated in the same manner. For example, the lands of most of the talukdais of Avadh were restored to them. The zamindars and landlords were now hailed as the traditional and 'natural' leaders of the Indian people, Their interests and privileges were protected. They were secured in ihe possession of their land at the cost of the peasants and were utilised as counter weights against the nationalist-minded intelligentsia. The Viceroy Lord Lyitoa openly declared in 185J6 that "the Crown of England should henceforth be identified with the hopes, the aspirations, the sympathies and interests of a powerful native aristocracy." The zamindars and landlords in return recognised that their position was closely bound up with the maintenance of British rule and became its only firm supporters. ,

Attitude tg wards Social Reforms: As a part of the policy of alliance with the conservative classes, the British abandoned their previous policy of helping the social reformers. They believed that their measures of social reform, such as the abolition of the custom of Sati and permission to widows to remarry, had been a major cause of the Revolt of 1$57. They therefore gradually began to side with orthodox. opinion and stopped their support to the reformers.

Thus, as Jawaharlal Nehru has put it in ***The Discovery of India*, "Because** of this natural alliance of the British power **with the reactionaries** in **India,** it became the guardian and upholder of **many an evil custom and practice,** which it otherwise condemned." **In** fact, **the British were in this respect** on the horns of a dilemma. If they favoured social reform and passed laws to this effect, (he orthodox Indians opposed them and declared that a government of foreigners had no right to interfere in the internal social affairs of the Indians. On the other hand, if they did not pass such laws, they helped perpetuate social evils and were condemned by socially pro- gressive Indians. It may, however, be noted that the British did not always remain neutral on social questions. By supporting the *status quo* they indirectly gave protection to existing social evils. Moreover, by encouraging

casteism and communalism for political purposes, they actively encouraged social reaction.

Extreme Backwardness of Social Services; While social services like education, sanitation and public health, water supply, and rural roads made rapid progress in Europe during (he 19th century, in India (hey remained al an extremely backward level. The Government of India spent most of its large income on the army and wars and the administrative services and starved ihe social services. For example, in 1886, of its total net revenue of nearly Rs. 47.00 crores the Governmentof India spent nearly 19.41 crores on the army and 17 crores on civil administration but less than 2 crores on education, medicine, and public health and only 65 lakhs on irrigation. The few halting steps that were taken in the direction of providing services like sanitation, water supply, and public health were usually confined to urban areas, and that too to the I So-called civil lines or British or modern parts of the cities. They mainly served the Europeans and a handful of upper class Indians Who lived in the European part of the cities.

Labour Legislation: The condition of workers in modern factories and plantations in the (9th century was miserable. They had to work between 12 and 16 hours a day and there was no weekly day of rest. Women and children worked the same long hours as men. The wages were extremely low, ranging from Rs. 4 to to 20 per month. The factories were overcrowded, badly lighted and aired, and completely unhygienic. Work on machines was hazardous, and accidents very common.

The Government *ot* India, which was generally pro-capitalist, took some half-hearted and totally inadequate steps to mitigate the sorry state of affairs in the modern factories, many of which were owned by Indians. In this it was only in part moved by humanitarian considerations. The manufacturers of Britain put constant pressure on it to pass factory laws. They were afraid that cheap labour would enable Indian manufacturers to outsell them in the Indian market. The first Indian Factory Act was passed in 1881. The Act dealt primarily with the problem of child labour. It laid down that children below 7 could not work in factories, while children between 7 Qnd 12 would not work for more than 9 hours a day. Children would also get four holidays in a month. The Act also provided

for the proper fencing off of dangerous machinery. The second Indian Factories Act was passed in 1891. It provided for a weekly holiday for all workers. Working hour9 for women were fixed at 11 per day while daily hours of work for children were reduced to 7. Hours of work for men were still left unregulated.

Neither of the two Acts applied to British-owned tea and coffee plantations. On the contrary, the Government gave every help to the foreign planters to exploit their workers in a most ruthless manner. Most of the tea plantations were situated in Assam which was very thinly populated and had an unhealthy climate. Labour to work the plantations had therefore to be brought from outside. The planters would nut attract workers from outside by paying high wages. Instead they used cocrcion and fraud to recruit them and then keep them as virtual slaves

on the plantations. The Government of India gave planters fhll help and passed penal laws in 1863, 1865, 1870, 1873 and 1882 to enable them to do so. Once a labourer had signed a contract to go and work in a plantation he could not refuse to do so. Any breach of contract by a labourer was a criminal offence, the planter also having the power to arrest him.

Better labour laws were, however, passed in the 20th century under the pressure of the rising trade union movement. Still, the condition of the Indian working class remained extremely depressed and deplorable.

Restrictions on the Press: The British had introduced the printing press in India and thus initiated the development of the modern press. The educated Indians had immediately recognised that the press could play a great role in educating public opinion and in influencing government policies through criticism and censure. Rammohun Roy, Vidyasagar, Dadabhai Naoroji, Justice Ranade, Surendranath Banerjea, Lolcmanya Tilak, G. Subramaniya lyer, C. K.arhnakara Menon, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal, and other Indian leaders played an important part in starting newspapers and making them a powerful political force. The press had gradually become a major weapon of the nationalist movement.

The Indian press was freed of restrictions by Charles Metcalfe in 1835. This step had been welcomed enthusiastically by the educated Indians. It was one of the reasons why they had for sometime supported British rule in India. But the nationalists gradually began to use the*. press to arouse national consciousness among the people and to sharply criticise the reactionary policies of the Government., This turned the officials against the Indian press and they decided to curb its freedom. This was attempted by passing the Vernacular Press Act in 1878. This Act put serious restrictions on the freedom of the Indian language newspapers. Indian publjc opinion was now fully aroused and it protested loudly against the passage of this Act. This protest had immediate effect and the Act was repealed in 1882. For nearly 25 years thereafter the Indian press enjoyed considerable freedom. But the rise of the militant Swadeshi and Boycott movement after 1905 once again led to the enactment of repressive press faws in 1908 and]910.

Racial Antagonism

The British in India had always held aloof from the Indians and felt 'themselves to be racially superior The Revolt of 1857 and the atrocities committed by both sides had further widened the gulf between the Indians and (he British who now began to openly assert the doctrine of racial supremacy and practise racial arrogance Railway compartments, waiting rooms at railway stations, parks, hotels, swimming pools, clubs clc . leserved for “Europeans only" were visible manifestations of this racialism The Indians fell humiliated. In (he words of Jnwahailnl Nchfu:

> **Wc m India hive known racialism in all rts forms ever sincc the commencement of British rule The whole ideology of this rule was that of Harrenvolk and i he Master Race, and the**

structure of government was based **upon it;** indeed **I he idea of a master rate is inherent in imperialism There was no subterfuge about it, it** was **proclaimed** in **unambiguous language** by **those in authority. More powerful than words was the practice that accompanied them, and generation after generation and year after year, India as a nation and Indians as individuals, were subjected to insult, humiliation and contemptuous treatment. The English were an Imperial Race, we were told, with the God-given right to govern ns and keep us In'subjectlon; if we protested we were reminded of the "tiger qualities of an imperial race'.**

EXERCISES

1. Discuss the important changes made in the administration of India after 1858 especially in the fields of constitutional change, provincial administration, local bodies, the army, and the public services.
2. What changes did British attitude undergo towards Indiaa unity, the educated Indians, the zamindars and princes, and social reforms after the Revolt of 1857?
3. Write short notes on:

   (a) The Imperial Legislative Council after 1861, (b) Backwardness of social services, (e) Factory lat>our legislation of 1881 and 1891, (d) Plantation labour,(e) Freedom of the Press.