The origin & growth of the Congress.

By the sixties of the 19th century, intimate contact of a permanent nature was established with western learning in India.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy's mission to England in 1832, and the remarkable evidence on Indian matters which he gave before a Committee of the House of Commons, largely influenced the shape of things on various spheres of national life.

It was with the introduction of Western learning in the fifties of the last century, particularly through Wood's Education Wespatch of 1854, that the foundation of a modern structure of education was laid with special emphasis on Western form of Learning. The Bill was usually called the 'Magna Carta' of Indian education. The idea of importing education in English and on Western basis was fully supported by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and was appreciated by the strong opinion and approval of Macaulay. The names of Munro (MUNRO) and Elphinstone are equally memorable for their mighty effort and sincere support to the cause of the Western influence on the existing indigenous system of education. 1

This new force of education in the Society, naturally, gave rise to a class of intellectuals (mostly belonging to the middle class) who became the ideological and political leaders of the Nationalist movement in India. This new Intelligentsia was impregnated with the ideals of modern nationalism and democracy.

In the post-mutiny period, the discontent of the Indian population as a whole, was steadily growing in dimension due to the impoverishment of the agrarian population.

The increasing burden of land revenue and rents was intensely felt by the peasantry. It was Lord Cornwallis, who, during his term of office, created the first group of land-lords in India by introducing the permanent land settlement for Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1793. This was the first breach effected by the British conquest of India's tradition-bound system of land economy. The East India Company brought with it and introduced in India the British judicial and economic conceptions of land settlements. Thus, under the new land-system, fixed money payments and not the annual produce were introduced, the landlord or the peasant proprietor had to meet this fixed revenue claim of the Government irrespective of the consideration of good
or bad year. This practice led to frequent mortgages, sales and land conveyances and thus it hit the agrarian economy and population a great deal. As a consequence the agrarian population had to face the terrible agricultural depression of 1870. A number of disastrous famines broke out between 1867 and 1880. The most severe of these all was the famine of 1877, which affected an area of 200,000 sq. miles and a population of 36 millions. The discontent of the peasantry broke out in the form of a number of peasant riots. And India was seething with peasant risings and the most alarming one was the peasant rising of 1875.

There were other factors, as well, which led to bitter feelings. As regards criminal jurisdiction, it has been an object with Indian statesman to bring Europeans under Indian law courts. In 1870 the Indian Law Commission emphatically called attention to the remedy a defect so glaring in law. When Lord Rippon projected the Ilbert bill providing equal treatment of the Indians and Europeans in the orbit of criminal jurisdiction, the entire European community broke out in fierce agitation against it. They went so far as to scheme a plot to put the viceroy on board a steamer at Chandpal ghat and send him to England via Cape. The defeat of the bill due to European opposition

1. India To-day - R.P. Dutt.
2. Social Background of Nationalism - Desai.
3. Opinions in favour of the Ilbert Bill; Published by George Das Chatterjee 1885.
4. The history of the I.L Congress - P.B. Sita Ramav - n.10.
5. Ibid - p.22.
revealed to the nation, the powerful and malevolent elements of racial prejudice and discrimination.

The successes of the European oppositions made Indians realise that the opposition to the Bills was based on the assertion of racial superiority and its continuance. It instigated the national minds to the sense of their own responsibilities, and inspired them to new activities and cooperative organisations. It was round about this time that public mind began to expand and political activities and ideas began to manifest themselves in one form or another in different parts of the country.

The British Indian Association in Bengal, and the Bombay Association in the western Presidency were almost simultaneously started about the year 1851. The British Indian Association in Bengal was started on October, 29, 1851. Under the guidance and inspiration of leaders like Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitter, Ram Gopal Ghose, Raja Digambar Mitter and the celebrated journalist Harish Chandra Mukherjee, the association carried on public work for decades. This was the first political association which aimed at and worked for the welfare of the people of all the British territories in India. It had a two-fold object in view:

1. The History of the Indian Association, By Jogesh Ch. Bagal.
1. To criticise administrative measures of the Government.
2. To supply British India Society, the parent body in England, with all the matters concerning Indian affairs.

The Bombay Association was pioneered by the patriotic labours of Dadabhai Naoroji and Jugganath Sankar Seth. Later it came under the guidance of Mangaldas Nathubhai and Narooji Bordenji. In Maharashtra the Poona Sarbojanik Sabha was started under the management of Rao Bahadur Krishnaji Laxman Mulker and Sitaram Hari Chiplonker, and started its work in 1870. It finally came under the influence and guidance of the great reformist Mohadev Gobinda Ranade.

In Madras an association was formed called The Madras Native Association, organised by a little group of officials, which possessed little vitality and exercised but little hold on public mind. The political life began in earnest in Madras in 1878, only after the foundation of the newspaper 'Hindu' by P. Ananda Charlu, Veeraraghava Charis, Rangia Naidu, and Subramania Iyer. In March 1852, a branch of the British Indian Association was formed at Cudh. The moving spirit in the movement was Daksheera Ranjan Mukherjee (member of the Brahmo samaj). A considerable number of talukdars joined the new organisation. The activities and movements of the British Indian Association

gradually lapsed into parochialism and class interest. Sisir Kumar Ghose, the editor of the Amrita Bazar Patrika, persuaded the authorities of the British Indian Association to widen the membership of the body and let middle class people in as its members by reduction of subscriptions from Rs. 10 or 5, or open for them a second class membership on a monthly charge of annas eight. 1 The committee of the association failed to meet the country's demand. It had since long past turned into a zaminder's association. Hemanta Kumar Ghose, the elder brother of Sisir Kumar Ghose, founder of the Amrita Bazar Patrika, travelled round the country and visited mofussal town and villages and induced them to form political groups and associations. As the British Indian Association only upheld land holders' interests there was felt a need for a new popular organisation which should be more national in outlook.

On the 25th of September 1875, Sisir Kumar Ghose founded the 'India League'. The paper Amrita Bazar Patrika 2 claimed it as a popular organisation. It came into existence with the approval of the public, and it was a call for all to attend it, and mould it to their liking. The membership money was fixed at Rs. 5/- per annum. A strong Executive Committee.

1. The history of the Indian Association - By Jogesh Ch. Bagal
was formed with 38 members & Sambhu Ch. Mukherjee as its President. Ananda Mohan Bose, on his return from Cambridge, joined the League along with Surendranath Banerjee, and a group of eminent patriots.

They soon, however, resigned and planned the foundation of a new Association. The Indian Association came into existence on July 26, 1876, under the guidance of Surendranath Banerjee assisted by Ananda Mohan Bose and a band of enthusiastic workers.

"Most of the supporters of the India League", writes Surendranath Banerjee, in 'A Nation in Making', "joined the Indian Association". Both Rev. K.M. Bannerjee and Kali Chandra Bannerjee became ever since then the most active workers for the Association.

The programme was set forth as follows:

(i) The creation of a strong body of public opinion in the country.

(ii) The unification of the Indian races and people upon the basis of common political interest and aspirations.

1. The members who resigned are the following:
(iii) The promotion of friendly feelings between the Hindus and Mahomedans.

(iv) And finally to include the masses in the movement.

The first great national activity of the Indian Association was the Civil Service agitation. The Indian Association observed that the real power lay with the governing class, the Covenanted Civil Service of India. They immediately pressed forward the rights of the Indians for admission into this service. The reduction of the maximum limit of the age from 21 to 19 years by Salisbury/competitive examination held at England, was criticised and widely agitated upon. The Town Hall meeting of March 24, 1877 presided over by Maharaja Sir Narendra Kumar Bahadur, caused a deep stir in Bengal and also the rest of India. Surendranath Bannerjee's all India tour had great political potentialities. He came in contact with leaders like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (the father of the Aligarh movement) Raja Amin Hussain and Ranade. In his tour Surendranath tried to remove provincialism and inspire all as Indians to attain a common goal. Addressing the students everywhere Surendra Nath Banerjee made patriotic appeal.

1. A Nation in Making - S.N. Banerjee.
"You must live in a high and holy atmosphere fragrant with the breath of the Gods. Burke, Mazzini, Christ, Buddha, Muhammad, Ram Mohan Roy & Keshab Ch. Sen must be your constant companions. Your souls must be attuned to the pathos and music of Bande Mataram". 1

The period between 1870 and 1885 witnessed a steady growth of a national consciousness.

Lord Lytton inaugurated his reactionary rule with his unpopular Vernacular Act of 1878 which was followed by a series of unpopular Govt. measures.

The excessively costly Indian Durbar 1877 to commemorate India's loyalty to Great Britain and proclaim Queen Victoria as the Empress of India, while famine was raging in the country, was considered as a severe drainage on National Finance. "The costly and gigantic farce of the Delhi assemblage" wrote A.C. Mazumdar, "was enacted in 1877 when a terrible famine was committing havoc among millions of helpless population in Southern India whose dire effects were severely felt even in Bengal and the Punjab". 2

1. A Nation in Making - S.N. Bannerjee.
2. Indian National Evolution - By A.C. Mazumdar p. 28.
The years just before the Congress were among the most dangerous since 1857. 1

It was Hume among the English officials who saw the impending disaster and tried to prevent it. He went to Simla in order to make clear to the authorities how almost desperate the situation had become. It is probable that his visit made the new Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, who was a brilliant man of affairs to realise the gravity of the situation.

Mr. Hume had unimpeachable evidence that the political discontent was going underground. He came into possession of seven volumes containing reports of the seething revolt incubating in various Districts. The reports were arranged according to Districts, Sub-districts and the cities, towns and villages included in these. Hume thereupon resolved to open a safety valve for this unrest and the Congress was such an outlet.

The first step that A.C. Hume took towards the realisation of this plan was foreshadowed in an open letter dated 1st March, 1883, addressed to the graduates of the Calcutta University.

2. The History of the 1st Congress by P.B. Sitaramaya, p.8
University, as constituting the thinking section of the community. He poignantly pointed out to them their immediate task in the turmoil of the time. The part of his message read as follows: "And even if the leaders of thought are all either such poor creatures or so selfishly wedded to personal concerns that they dare not strike a blow for their country's sake then justly and rightly are they kept down and trampled on for they deserve nothing better. If you the picked men, the most highly educated of the nation, can not make a resolute struggle to secure greater freedom for yourselves and your country, a more impartial administration, larger in the management of your own affairs than at present at any rate all hopes of progress are at an end and India—truly neither longs nor deserves any better government than she enjoys."

When all his initial works were being started in India, A. O. Hume proceeded to England and visited Lord Ripon, Lord Dalhousie, Sir James Caired, John Bright, Mr. Reid, Mr. Slagg, Henry Fawcett and many other eminent men who had genuine sympathy for the cause of India. Under their advice he organised a body which later became the nucleus of the Indian Parliamentary Committee in England. Their Chief concern

1. A. O. Hume - By W. Wedderburn, p. 50
henceforward became to take earnestly questions on Indian affairs in the proceedings of the debates of the House of Commons. Hume further made arrangements for the establishment of an Indian Telegraphic Union to receive telegrams on important Indian matters for publication in the current Local Papers in England. In India, his appeal to the University students worked through many phases of political experiments.

The Indian National Union was formed and survived as a successful conference through the combined efforts of K.T. Telang and Surendranath Banerjee.

In March 1885 it was decided by the Indian National Union to hold a meeting of representatives from all parts of India at Poona and the following manifesto was issued and circulated throughout the country:

(1) A conference of the Indian National Union would be held at Poona from the 25th to the 31st December, 1885.

(2) The conference would be composed of delegates, specially the leading politicians, well acquainted with the English Language from all parts of Bengal, Bombay and Madras Presidency.

(3) The direct objects of the conference were:

(a) to enable the earnest workers in the cause of national progress, to get personally known to each other.

(b) to discuss and debate on the major political activities of the next conferences.

Encouraged by the success of the first National Conference of 1883, the three leading associations at Calcutta viz. the British Indian Association, the Indian Association and the National Mahomedan Association with their joint cooperation organised the second sitting of the National Conference at the Albert Hall in Calcutta. The difference delegates came from Pabna, Faridapore, Burdwan, Jessore, Krishnagore, Baidyabati and even as far as from the North-west Provinces. 1

The Orissa people’s Association and the Bareilly Association also sent the representatives. Bombay was represented in the person of Rao Behadur Viswanath Mandlik and Behar sent its delegates through the Maharaja of Bhanganga, the representative of Behar Land Holders Association. 2 Dr. Gurudas Banerjee and Surendra Nath Banerjee were present along with host of Bengal leaders. Among the foreign representative was present H. J. S. Cotton, who took part in the conference and its deliberations. The English Parliamentarian delegate Seymour Seay

1. Indian National Evolution - Mosmuner. p. 52.
also delivered a speech on the request of Aftanda Mohan Bose and Surendra Nath Banerjee.

The conference was a great success and on its last days sitting came the auspicious news of the birth of Indian National Congress which the delegates present hailed as their common National Assembly. Both the Congress and the conference became one and augmented the growing National feelings. In December 1884, there came a number of delegates from different parts of the country to the Annual convention of the theosophical Society at Adyar. After the convention was over 17 prominent Indian Patriots met in the house of Dewan Bahadur Raghunath Rao in Madras and thought of joining the Congress.

With the encouragement of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha the arrangements were readily made for the first sitting of Congress, but due to an epidemic outbreak of cholera, the venue of the assembly was removed to Bombay. The support of the Bombay Association and the generous offer of the Gokuladas Tajpal Sanskrit College authorities to lay open the college premises for the Congress Delegates facilitated the inauguration of the Congress.

1. Indian National Congress - By Hemendra Nath Das Gupta. p.96
By the morning of the 27th December, 1885, representatives from different parts and provinces began to arrive in Bombay. They were given welcome by Sir William Weddellburn, the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Jardine, Colonel Phelps, Prof. Wordsworth (very popular amongst his students of Edinburgh College) and a large number of distinguished citizens of Bombay who acclaimed this novel effort and national venture which the Congress deliberated to undertake.

The number of the first Congress representatives registered was 72 and was distributed in the following numbers: 1 Calcutta 3, Bombay 12, Madras 8, Karachi 2, Virengam 1, Surat 6, Poona 8, Agra 2, Benares 1, Simla 1, Lucknow 3, Ahmedabad 1, Lahore 1, Ambala 1, Ahmedabad 3, Berhampore (Madras) 1, Masulipatam 1, Chingleput 1, Tanjore 2, Kumbakonum 1, Madura 1, Tinnevelly 1, Coimbatore 1, Salem 1, Gurapat 1, Annapopore 1, and Bellory 1.

The most notable feature of the 1st Congress assembly was the eminence of the newspaper delegates. The following were the papers who were represented in the first sitting of the Congress through their editors: - The Indian Mirror, The Hindu, The Spectator, The Hindusthan, Indu Prakash.

1. Indian National Evolution - By Ambika Meumder. p. 78.
Nababivakar, the Uresent, the Na seem, the Indian Union, the Tribune, and the weekly newspapers of the Poona Servajanik Sabha viz. 'Marhetta', 'Kesari' and 'Dan Prakash'. The first sitting of the Congress took place in the mid-day at 12-O'clock on the 28th of December, 1885 in the spacious hall of the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College. It was a spectacular gathering of the representatives and the visitors, the officials and the non-officials with their common sympathy to promote the united endeavour of the Congress body.

The Object and aim of the Congress and its leaders:

On the motion of A.O. Hume and seconded by the Hon. Subramanya Iyer and K.T. Telang, W.C. Bonnerjee, the first standing counsel at the Calcutta High Court, was unanimously elected the first President of the Congress.

The most astounding feature of this assemblage was its fervent national character, and the unique feeling of oneness noted in the midst of diverse provincial interests.

"Surely never had so important and comprehensive an assemblage occurred within historical times" remarked the President taking his chair. He at the same time claimed for

It an entirely representative character. His greatest desire, as he expressed through the Congress, was that the country should be governed according to the ideas of government prevalent in Europe and that he strongly confided that it would in no way be incompatible with their thorough loyalty to the British Government. The President emphatically declared that all that the Congress desired was that the basis of the Government should be widened and the people should have then proper and legitimate share in it. Finally, he renewed the Congress programme and stated that the discussions that would take place in the Congress would be beneficial, both to the ruling authorities and the people at large.

Hajendra Lal Mitra sent a grant ovation to the National gathering and said that his long cherished dreams had at least found fulfilment in the Congress. He addressed the gathering at the Town Hall and reflected: "It has been the dream of my life that the scattered units of my race may someday coalesce and come together; that instead of living merely as individuals we may someday combine as to be able to live as a nation. In this meeting I behold the commencement of such coalescence."

He looked upon the Legislative Councils as the cornerstone of all political changes and appealed that the speakers remained moderate, which alone he thought could help India to

1. Muktir Sandhane Bharat by Jogesh Ch. Dego.
step into a better future and brighter days.

Amongst the galaxy of leaders there were present both representatives and visitors. Among those who could not act as representatives, but still were strong Congress followers, there was the celebrated reformatory Mahadev Govind Ranade, then the member of the Legislative Council and later who became the Judge of the High Court of Bombay, Dewan Bahadur R. Bakhunatha Rao, Deputy Collector of Madras and Late Baimnath of Agra and the erudites H.G. Bhandarkar and K. Sundarraman.

Among the representatives were the delegates present from almost every corner of India. It was a mixed gathering of officials and non-officials, regular workers and sight-seers. The representatives, who helped the making of the First Nine Resolutions of the Congress, came from different provinces: W. C. Bonnerjee and Narendra Nath Sen, Janaki Nath Ghosal and Mommohan Ghosh from Bengal. Sm. Ghosh was also present on this occasion as a visitor.

Mr. A.O. Rumé came all the way from Simla, the official Headquarters. W. S. Apte and G. G. Agarker came from Poona. Dadabhai Naoroji, the grand old man of India, X. T. Telang, Phirozeshah Mancherjee Mehta, D. E. Bacha, B. M. Melabari, N. G. Chandavarkar and Hashimotullah Sayani came from Bombay.

These members united together and set a new pattern of work to the Govt., embodied in the Nine Fundamental Resolutions of the first Congress. The leaders were all unanimous in their demand and pressed forward their object in the following terms:

(1) The first and foremost claim was for an immediate enquiry into the working of the Indian administration. They suggested that it should be entrusted to a Royal Commission—represented adequately by Indians.

"For our purpose, said Dadabhai Naoroji was to lay bare the actual conditions of India through enquiry into all departments of administration by adequately represented body of Royal Commission."

It was proposed by G. Subrahmanya Aiyer, the editor of the newspaper 'Hindu', and seconded and supported by Phirozezehab Mehta and Narendra Nath Sen.

1. Writings and speeches of Dadabhai Naoroji - By Masani.
(2) The second resolution urgently pleaded the abolition of the council of the Secretary of State. The main speaker on this subject was Mahadev Govinda Ranade. It was proposed by S.L. Chiplonkor and seconded by P. Ananda Chaliu. It was argued that the council added more to the expenditure than to the efficiency of the administration.

(3) The third resolution, the most conspicuous of all, asserted the claim, long pressed for that India could never be well or justly governed, nor her people prosperous or contented, until they were allowed through their elected representatives a potential voice in the legislature of their own country; so what was demanded for, was the reform and expansion of the supreme and existing legislative council, by the admission of a considerable proportion of elected members. The same resolution demanded the creation of similar councils for the provinces of North-West, Oudh, and the Punjab. It further demanded that all the budgets went to the councils for references and consideration, their members being empowered to interpellate the executive in regard to all branches of the administration. Finally, the resolution moved for the constitution of a standing committee by the House of Commons to consider formal protests from majorities in the councils. This reform cry of the Congress, enthusiastically supported by a considerable section of educated Indian opinion at that time. Memorials and resolutions adopted
at public meetings at various places poured into the Home Department of the Govt. of India. The Government of India forwarded to the Secretary of State 102 such memorials. The demand for representation in councils was the basis of all these petitions.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya strongly urged for the legislative council reform and persisted that no taxation without representation should from now be the watchword of the Congress body.

The resolution was proposed by Mr. Telang and seconded by Dadabhai Naoroji.

(4) The fourth resolution was moved by Dadabhai Naoroji which prayed for the holding of simultaneous examination for the Civil Service both in England and India, and raising the age of the candidates to not less than twenty-three years.

Dadabhai Naoroji still further explained the content of this resolution and pointed out that here was involved India's economic interest. As he explained "The fact is that the employment of a native is not only economy but a complete gain. Every pie paid to native is a complete material saving to the country. Every pie paid to a foreigner is a complete material loss to the country. In fact, it was according to 1. Writings & Speeches of Madan Mohan Malaviya.

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Dadabhai Naoroji on the whole a question upon which hinged the question of poverty or prosperity of the country. 1

The third day's proceeding ended with the passing of the above resolution.

(5) The Fifth Resolution demanded the reduction of military expenditure, which was a heavy burden on Indian taxpayer. This resolution was carried on by the subsequent Congresses year after year. In the year 1887, this resolution demanded enrolment of Indians in the higher grades of military services on consideration of their unswerving loyalty to the crown. The congress applied to the Government to establish military colleges in different parts of the country and admit Indians in fair number.

(6) The sixth proposal of the Nine Fundamental resolutions of the Congress prayed for the re-imposition of the import cotton duties and extension of the license tax and thus help Indian production. The same resolution asked for the assurance of the Imperial guarantee to the Indian debt.

(7) The seventh resolution counselled the separation of Burma from the Indian viceroyalty, as it greatly encumbered the Indian administration.

(8) The eighth resolution circulated the nine fundamental resolutions to all the political associations of the country, with a request that they all conformed with these objects of the Congress and enhanced its unity and strength.

(9) The ninth resolution was proposed by the Hon’ble president W.C. Bonnerjee, who welcomed the next sitting of the Congress at Calcutta, and was seconded by Mr. A.O. Hume and supported by G. Subramanya Ayar.

The three days’ heavy programme of the Congress was finally settled for the year and the meeting was declared close with a vote of thanks for the President and three jubilant cheers for Mr. A.O. Hume, the father of the Indian National Congress. Mr. Hume gave cheers for the Queen Empress Victoria, which was joined in by the whole audience. The dominant feature of the Congress during this period was its unflinching loyalty as expressed by Congress president Dadabhai Naoroji, in the Town Hall at Calcutta on the 27th of December 1886.

Let us proclaim that we are loyal to the backbone.

In the Madras Congress of 1887 Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao counselled moderation and forbearance. "Loyalty and moderation."

Writings & Speeches of Dadabhai Naoroji.
characterised the proceedings of the Congress in its initial stages.

"The policy of the Congress is thus a policy, not seditious or revolutionary" said Pherozeshah Mehta. "But conservative of the public welfare, strengthening the just authority of the British Govt. and adding day by day fresh lustre and dignity to the Imperial Crown." 1

Change of Government—a policy to the Congress.

At the Calcutta Congress of 1886 all the representatives present were either elected by established association, or voted for at public meetings, organised in different parts of the country. In this respect, it was more representative in character than the first Congress. As Annie Besant remarked,

"The first Congress was composed of volunteers, but the second of delegates". 2

The number of delegates attending the Congress report rose to two-hundred and thirty. 3

The next Congress at Madras, in 1887, was still a

2. How India wrought for freedom, By Annie Besant.
greater success than the previous Congresses'. It was led for the first time by a Muslim leader Budruddin Tyabji, a distinguished member of the Bombay Bar, as its president. Mr. W.C. Bonerjee proposed him most enthusiastically. Mr. Budruddin Tyabji addressed the Congress which echoed his deep sense of oneness with the Congress ideal of reform and good Government.

"There is nothing in the position of the relations of the different communities of India, be they Hindus, Mahomedans, Parsees or Christians which should induce the leader of one community to stand aloof from the others in their efforts to reform the Government."

Inspite of the anti-Congress propaganda of the followers of Sir Syed Ahmed and Nawab Abdul Latif distinguished Bar leaders like Moulvi Sarafuddin, Amir Haidar, Tafjal Hussain and other were elected by the Patna Bar Library as representative to join the Congress of 1887.

The Congress leaders were too eager to have the co-operation of their brother Muslim delegates and tried to facilitate their joining in the Indian National Congress.

"... We were straining every nerve to secure the co-operation..."

co-operation of our Mahomedan fellow countrymen in this
great national work" wrote Surendranath Benerjea. "And
sometimes paid the fare of Mahomedan delegates and offered
them other facilities".

As a matter of fact, the congress of 1887 under the
genuine sympathy of President Tysbji brought the two communi-
ties closer and tried to place before them a common picture
of reform and good Government.

The cry of Reform became the pivot of all Congress
eagitations. How to execute their repeated demands for the
reform and expansion of the Imperial and Local Legislative
Councils into the real working of the administration became
the all absorbing interest of the Congress. The leaders con-
voked different meetings and debated and discussed on new
points upon this subject. Leaflets in thousands, in English
and local languages, were circulated amongst the leaders who
were requested to send forth their criticisms and opinions.
The most widely circulated of the leaflets were A.O. Hume's
"the old man's hope", a catechism in Tamil written by Mr.
Veeraraghava Charia and a parable in the form of a dialogue
between one Moulvie Fariduddin and Rambuksh, circulated amongst
the people for attracting public attention to the movement.

The ruling authorities watched all Congress activities with great suspicion and sensed in the movement something of the Irish Sinn Féinism and the close resemblance to the anti-Corn Law League agitation in England.

The editorial columns of the two newspapers 'Englishman' and 'The Pioneer' violently abused the Congress.

The fourth Congress held at Allahabad in 1885, witnessed an astounding change in the policy of the government towards the Congress Movement. The earlier sympathies of the officials turned into complete anti-pathy which was openly marked by all. The head of the Receptionist Committee, Pandit Ajudhya Nath had to face great difficulties in trying to find location for the Allahabad Congress. The Congress sitting at Khusrabag fort was directly objected by the Government officials. The Congress Receptionist Committee was put into great discomfiture in finding suitable location. But at last, Maharaja Sir Luchmeswar Singh Bahadur of Darbhanga came forward with a large invitation for the Congress, by hastily purchasing Lowther Castle, facing the Government House, and dedicating the entire...

1. Indian National Evolution by A.C. Majumdar.
The wrath of the Government officials increased very much, as Annie Basant described how a gentleman who attended the Madras Congress in 1867 in defiance of his District Officer was called upon to give a security of Rs. 20,000/- to keep the peace.

Sir Auckland Colvin, the Lieutenant Governor of Allahabad, asked the Congress to keep their demands within the bounds of legitimate jurisdiction and not to aspire after the impossibilities. In one of the Dominion Conference he touched on this point.

You should fix your attention on matters falling within the legitimate scope of your action and not waste the discussion of mere ambitious schemes the carrying out of which requires that collective action and that practical handling of affairs which is the result of a long and laborious training in the conduct of public business such as you have scarcely even commenced yet ....... 

The official discouragement to the Congress took

1. The History of the Indian National Congress by P.B. Sitaramayya - p.86.
2. Ibid.
definite shape in 1890, when a circular was issued by the Bengal Government and distributed to all secretaries and Heads of Departments subordinate to it. The circular contained an order of the Government under which the presence of Government officials, even as visitors at Congress Meetings was declared not advisable and taking part in the proceedings in any such meetings was also prohibited. As revealed by a letter from Belvedere, to the Secretary to the Congress Reception Committee, dated 25th Dec. 1890: "In returning herewith the seven cards of admission to the visitors enclosure of the Congress pavilion which were kindly sent by you to my address yesterday afternoon, I desire to say that the Lt. Governor and the members could not possibly avail themselves of these tickets, since the orders of the Government of India definitely prohibit the presence of Government officials at such meetings." 1

The growing official opposition became so prominent to the Congress that the Muslim leader Shaik Raza in forwarding a Fatwa in 1888 supporting the Congress from the Shams-ul-Ulama, the leader of the Sunni Community Lucknow, declared: "It is not the Muslims but their official masters who are opposed to the Congress." 2

1. Indian National Evolution - by A.C. Majumdar. p. 81.
2. The Indian National Congress by P.B. Sitarameyya, p. 67.