APPENDIX-III

EXTRACT FROM THE SPEECH OF PANDIT NILAKANtha DAS IN THE CENTRAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ON THE 8TH FEBRUARY, 1927.

"SIR, I BEG TO MOVE,

"That this Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to be pleased to take immediate steps to put or publish the schemes of putting all Oriya-speaking tracts under one local administration."

To the Government this is not a new subject. It has been before the country practically in the forefront of our political issues for the last 25 years or so. The history of this movement is a very long one, and since 1903, when first the then Home Secretary considered it necessary that all Oriya-speaking tracts should be put under one administration, for some reason or other of purely administrative convenience it has been postponed from time to time. We are given assurances that all our outlying tracts should come under one Government. Sometimes some hope of a sub-province has been put forward but nothing practically has come of it yet which would satisfy the oriya people. In 1920, just towards the end of the last Imperial Legislative Council a Resolution was moved by the Hon'ble Mr. Sachchidananda Sinha on this subject. Government gave assurance that they would enquire into the matter and probably they meant to do something as early as the Reforms Scheme was put into operation. Practically the first term of the Reform Council was over and the Government did not move in the matter. At the beginning of the second term, to a question of my friend Mr. B. Das, Government, however, agreed to institute a Committee of enquiry so far as the Madras Oriyas are concerned. Accordingly the phillip-Duff Commission were sent out to enquire into the
matter and their report, though it has not been published to all the Members of the House, has been published in the Office. After all their enquiries in the Ganjam and Vizagapatam districts they have made out a clear case that the people expressed a very strong desire and anxiety to be united with their fellowmen in the present division of Orissa - I mean the four or five districts in Bihar and Orissa. In case of a few of these outgoing localities in the Ganjam and Vizagapatam districts there may be some difference of opinion on account of our census figures; but I may here inform the House that Oriyas have been under several administration in several tracts and practically in each of the tracts an intermediary ruling race with vested interests has been created, and the Bengal Government put it clearly that the census supervisors and enumerators are afraid to record people as Oriya speaking, because they fear if they put it like that, the tracts will be transferred to Orissa. It is there in the letter which was written to the Bengal Government and came to the Government of India in 1922. Actually the Superintendent of Census at a meeting of enumerators and supervisors heard it remarked by one of them that they were not willing to record people as Oriya-speaking even though they had evidence to that effect.

I may quote the passage:

(In the gathering of Enumerators and Supervisors)

"I heard some one say that if there is a large number of oriya-speaking population at Danton, there is every likelihood of Danton being transferred to Balasore."

This was the remark he heard. It is in a letter by Mr. A. M. Chakravarty, Circle Officer, regarding oriya-speaking people in Danton and Mohanpur, dated the 5th July, 1921.
Another reason is advanced that the expression of desire on the part of the people is sometimes due to agitation. It may be a fact that when a movement is started some leaders create a public opinion in favour of something which they know will be conducive to the interests of the country. Ordinary people do not understand generally the future of any new movement and it is a fact everywhere in the world that opinions are created when the masses are not in a position to understand what is what. But before I go into the history of this movement and criticise it, I should like to enlighten the House about what Orissa is, what it was in history and what are its claims for being constituted as a separate province or to be put under one administration, as I have called it, for I am put in mind of a very curious incident. I was talking to one of my friends in this House. I mean the last House. He asked me, where I came from. I said "Orissa". He looked as if he could not understand me (laughter), yes; it was a fact; then I said, Bihar and Orissa. He said, "Yes, Yes; it is somewhere near Assam." I need not say what then followed and how I explained where I came from. But it is perhaps a fact that our people being for the last two hundred years in a state of practical vivisection, so to say, other people in India do not sometimes understand who we are and who we were.

The present Orissa inherits the culture of three ancient provinces; one is Kalinga, another is Utkal, and the third is Udra. Ancient Kalinga was the first colony of the Aryans on the fringe of the Dravida country. The clear history extends so far back as the 7th century B.C. It comprises the coastal strip from Calcutta or Tamluk to the Southern extremity of Ganjam. This was the Kalinga, which was conquered by Asoka, the King of
Magadha, whose conquests made a saint of him. Kalinga had a robust culture and the present colossal art of Orissa which is a distinct type of Aryan Art is the remnant of the development of ancient Kalinga art, which in original may be found even now in the cave-temple of Orissa. The sea-faring habits and navigation of Kalinga are well-known. The name Bijay Singha is well-known to Indian history. He himself is claimed by four provinces, Orisa, Bengal, Gujarat and Burma. But it is a certain fact that his wife who accompanied him to Ceylon and colonised and civilized that land belonged to Kalinga. She was the daughter of the King of Kalinga, and the colonization of Kalinga in Burma and the Eastern Archipelago, is also a fact of history. The local name of the present Pegu is Ossa, which is a corruption of Orissa, and some temples in Burma were constructed after the pattern of the Cave temples of Udayagiri in Orissa. Kalinga navigation was still being practised in Orissa till the seventies of the last century when it was practically crushed out of existence by the high export duty on saltpetre and the salt trade which was killed on account of the baldest system of foreign salt-foreign salt being carried into this country as baldest. It was still living in Balasore and some other coastal areas in Orissa till practically the latter half of the last century and the sloops and small ships in a broken state may still be found in some sea-ports of Orissa.

Then again Kalinga was a strong Buddhist Centre of culture: the Buddhist religion made a stronghold there; then it was again Hinduised the stream of culture came from the Udra country which extended over the south-east portion of the present central provinces; and I may say here that the present temple of Jagannath, which stands out as a religious monument
throughout India, is a gift of the Udras, and the present Orissan culture may well be proud of that temple where no caste or Untouchability is in practice. You will find it no where else in India. The culture is purely Orissan; Orissa has kept it up, but that Orissa is not recognised to be a distinct individual factor in Indian federation of races.

Of Utkal I should not say more and tire the patience of this House by detaining them any longer in the domains of ancient history. It would be seen, however, that the ancient Utkal influence came from the side of Singhbhum and added many permanent and highly delicate elements of civilization and advancement to this synthetic stream of culture. Thus, it stands out as a fact that we in Orissa from ancient times developed a distinct and individual culture of our own, whose identity could not be killed, though the attempt has been perhaps seriously and continuously made to kill it for about two hundred years.

Orissa was in history always a separate province. It is not in this 20th century that we appeal to the British administration for the first time and claim it to be so. History stands, Sir, that it was always a separate province not only maintained any how with its slender revenue, but it was a flourishing state. Even during wars with neighbouring races it could build up a robust art and literature and it could spend enormously on religious art and other institutions of religious and social importance. The extent of Orissa which is now claimed to be from Midnapore to the Southern point of Ganjam and from the shores of the Sea to somewhere beyond Singhbhum and in the Eastern central Provinces is not a recent discovery. In olden times it was much larger in extent and powerful kingdom.
Even during the palmy days of Bahamani, Vijayanagaram and Bengal, our kings kept up their independence and carried their mighty peasant militia into the very heart of those countries and our separate existence as an independent race and kingdom was kept up till the latter half of the 16th century when no other province in India except Khandesh - which perhaps succumbed about the same time - kept its independence against the Imperial Mughol army. Then, when Akbar took it, he understood the position. He was a statesman and not a mere conqueror. He could understand the necessity of the separate existence of the Oriya people and he made it into a separate province. Throughout the Mughol rule it remained separate, and so I must inform the House that our Mahammedans are a respectable class of people and therefore in Orissa you will seldom find any tension between the Hindus and Mahammedans, nor has any kind of communal rowdyism ever disturbed the peaceful atmosphere of that land.

Then conquest after conquest came, and we were treated like a football. Perhaps during the British regime matters have been carried to extreme lengths. Sometimes before the time of the battle of Plassey it was made a part of Bengal. A little before that it was given to Nagpur. I do not know whether and it is quite probable that Orissa was given in lieu of the tribute of Bengal to the Marahattas by the Governor of Bengal under the influence of the merchants of Calcutta who were afraid of the Marahatta raids. Then again it was made a part of the Central Provinces, during the Second Marahatta War, it was again thrown on to Bengal, and what happened ? The famous historian in his statistical accounts, I mean Sir W. W. Hunter, has admitted how the British Government was responsible for the famine and poverty of our ancient land. It was in Calcutta that
the headquarters of Orissa were situated and without practically any notice to the Oriyas our Zamindaris were sold in Calcutta for paltry sums, and many of our Zamindars now are, therefore, absolute Zamindars, and they live in Calcutta. This is distinctly an act of the British Government, as has been pointed out very rightly by Sir W. W. Hunter in his statistical accounts of Bengal.

This has been our fate, Sir. Since that time we have been made something like a commodity. When it is necessary for the safety and happiness of a major province, we have been thrown about, either partially or wholly, practically like a football. The last of such a cruel and heinous experiments was made in putting us with Bihar ... We are practically a dying race under the present arrangements of administration, and in this state who or where are we to choose between provinces except that we appeal and plead for being under one administration. For the present any administration that is given us we shall and we must accept, for there is no other way out. Then we shall wait and when we develop as a united race we shall compel the hands of our destiny, I mean the Government to give us a separate province, which is our hope and goal and without which we cannot have rest.