

THE DAILY PROVINCE

FEBRUARY 23, 1910

**THE PROVINCE**

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**TO SUPPRESS SEDITION.**

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It would seem as if the report published in certain papers, which rely largely upon doubtful sources of their news and which are always in search of sensations, regarding an uprising at Jagdalpur, a place of considerable importance in the central provinces of India, were without foundation. At any rate there has been nothing to confirm the statement of an uprising which was said to have created a serious situation. We may be assured that had any such revolt occurred we should have heard more of it by this time.

It would not be surprising, however, to hear at any time of such an outbreak in India. The agitators of whom we in this city know something, and of whom much is known in a many other parts of the empire and in foreign countries like France and the United States, are becoming increasingly active and appear to have received much encouragement of late from certain elements of the Indian population. They have been assisted, too, by a section of the native press which has made the fullest use of the liberty which the press enjoys everywhere under British rule.

It has been found, however, that it is necessary that the vernacular press of India should be restrained, and for this purpose a bill has been introduced to the legislative council of India by Sir Herbert Risley, the secretary of the home department. The measure is one which will meet with the approval of the British people both in Great Britain and the colonies where any knowledge exists of the kind of crusade that is being carried on by the infatuated native reactionaries of India.

Bitter experience has shown that the policy of toleration can no longer be pursued, of it has borne fruit in sedition, outrage, and murder. Some of the best and bravest of Englishmen who have devoted their lives to the service of the Indian races have been murdered in cold blood by the fanatics incited to anarchical methods by the insidious appeals of the vernacular press. The record of the British in India is one of splendid forbearance(Sic) and a self-sacrificing desire for the welfare of the peoples over whom, vastly to their advantage, they exercise a beneficent rule.

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The black ingratitude which returns evil for good—and no defence can be made on the ground of racial aspiration—is deplorable. But in the circumstances with which the government is now confronted it is essential that the most stringent control over the native press should be established. That is the object of the bill which will shortly pass into law. Its provisions are by no means too stringent, but they will, it is to be hoped, enable a complete check to be applied to the malicious and dangerous instigators of disaffection.

It is laid down that all person publishing papers printed in the vernacular shall make substantial deposits in cash which are liable to forfeiture if they transgress the limits of decorous advocacy. Two copies of each edition of these papers must be submitted to the government for examination, and power is given to search for secret sources of inflammatory literature. It will be an offence to incite to murder or anarchical outrage, to tamper with the loyalty of the army or the navy, to excite racial, or religious animosity, to provoke criminal intimidation, to interfere with the course of law and order, and to intimidate public servants with threats of injury.

The intention is not to create a censorship in the sense in which that is understood in Russia; it leaves ample scope for every form of advocacy which is consistent with loyalty to the existing regime and the maintenance of the traditional desire for progress towards the full development of the Indian peoples. But the act will make it a penal offence to publish matter which is designed to render the British rule odious in the sight of the native races. How necessary this is must be evident to all who have followed the latter course of events in India.

There are some—happily very few—in the mother country who give encouragement to the natives, who, under cover of patriotic aspiration, countenance and foment these seditious movements.

The result of the license permitted to the native press has been the growth of a movement which has permeated the villages with sedition and sympathy with outrage, and these baneful(?) influences must be stamped out with the utmost rigor, if only in the interests of India, as a whole. There is no desire to restrict reasonable liberty of thought or expression and all loyal subjects will be outside the scope of the new measure. But towards the agitators, and the incendiaries no mercy can be shown, and without doubt such a policy, fortified by the evidence so abundantly given in the last few years of its necessity, will be supported by the public opinion of the whole empire.