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C.P.Ramaswamy Iyer And Annie Besant: Madras Politics And Madras Mock Parliament

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Abstract:

The period of seven years from 1912 to 1919 is of cardinal importance in the life of C.P. as it witnessed his crucial role in the political, legal, educational, civic and many other spheres. An active associate of Besant, he guided her to organise the Madras Parliament, launch the New India, establish the Home Rule League and take up the cudgels against the Governor of Madras for the treatment meted out to her. He was an equally active Congressman participating in the Congress Sessions and delivering brilliant addresses at the different District and Provincial Conferences. He also acted as an energetic Commissioner of the Madras Municipal Corporation for a decade from 1911 and was a Fellow of the University of Madras for eight years from 1912. His performance as an honorary member of various organisations and boards including the Pachaiyappa's Trust Board, of which he was a forceful trustee, was admirable. It was during these seven years that C.P. came close to Montagu, Secretary of State for India. This period also witnessed his first visit to England in 1919 to tender evidence before the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the new reforms as a member of the All India Home Rule League (AIHRL). Towards the end of 1920, in the first election to the Madras Legislative Council held under the Government of India Act of 1919, he was elected from the Madras City.

VERSATILITY OF C.P.

Speaking of the versatility of C.P. to whom all subjects under the sun came so naturally, T.V. Seshagiri Iyer said that if a new branch of the Home Rule League had to be inaugurated anywhere, C.P. would be the first to do it; if a lecture had to be delivered on the beauty of English literature of the nineteenth or twentieth century, C.P., with his up-to-date knowledge of poetry and fiction, would be ready to do it extempore; and with equal competence, he would give a discourse on religion or a speech on fiscal reform.¹

Relationship with Annie Besant

For a while after the termination of the guardianship case, C.P. remained fascinated by the glamour of his triumph over the indomitable Besant. He himself admitted more than once that, after having assiduously cross-examined Besant, S. Subrahmanya Iyer, G.S. Arundale and many other leading lights in Madras, "I fancied I had made a great hit and that I had brought about the collapse of Theosophy - as a young man in a hurry generally thinks so."² But even while conducting the case, C.P. refused to oblige his client Narayanaiah to proceed against Besant for contempt of court. He frankly told him that he would never

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encourage "vindictiveness." This matter had somehow become public and reached the ears of Besant. When the young lawyer was glorying in the splendour of his great victory with pardonable pride and ego, Besant surprised him by a frank, warm and friendly letter. She wrote that while she admired the winsome young C.P. for his chivalry, she was unhappy at his not having clapped her up in prison, as his client desired him to do. More importantly, the letter contained a request to C.P.: "I think you have fought a clean fight. Will you come and join me to work for India's uplift?" She wanted him to collaborate with her in her political and educational activities after the termination of the case. C.P. did not immediately respond to it although he certainly was overwhelmed by this unique gesture from his titanic opponent.

Such was Besant's nature that even while preparing to appeal against the judgement of the Original Court, she generously paid a tribute to the plaintiff's advocate on his masterly handling of the case. She was all praise for his persuasive advocacy and cross-examinations of the witnesses and for the presentation and summing up of the case. All these displayed his gifts of "mild irony and sarcasm" but were absolutely free from rancour or reproach, she stated. The Theosophist carried the laudation by Besant that C.P. was "a gentleman whose name for honour stands as high as his reputation for legal learning and ability. I was thus spared the difficulty arising so often in Indian cases of suborned low-class testimony. Mr. Ramaswami Iyer fought desperately for his client. .. This brilliant young lawyer should have a great career before him."³ Even when the Appellate Court confirmed the earlier judgement, she had the magnanimity to thank C.P. "for conducting the case in a way that deprived it of features which might have made it well-nigh intolerable, for unflinching delicacy, and for constantly remembering that his opponent was a woman, to whom the subject matter of the suit was necessarily supremely distasteful." She further stated: ". But I would rather have Mr. C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar on my side than against me. I have not seen his equal, so far, in the High Court for readiness of answer and clever presentation of a case. making much of its strong points and covering its weak ones ... In addition to his legal work, he is constantly engaged in making himself useful to good public causes, and his name is ever seen in connection with these. India will have a fine public worker in him, if he fulfils the promise of the present."⁴

Besant's faith in C.P. redoubled when she found his honesty transparent during the Police Court case between her and T.M. Nair.⁵ Narayanaiah had supplied Nair with documents that could be obtained only in the civil case. Though, at first, she doubted C.P., she found out very soon that he was entirely blameless in this matter and that he tried in vain to prevent the use of documents unfairly obtained. "C.P. acted most honourably in the matter - thus laying the foundation of my respect for him," she wrote.⁶ Besant's respect, for the opposing counsel and the courtesy and urbanity with which they regarded each other invited unfair criticisms from certain quarters. When The Hindu also accused Besant of trying to corrupt C.P., she remarked boldly that the "accusation shows the type of mind of Dr. Nanjunda Rao who makes it, and of The Hindu which prints it."⁷

C.P. also, for his part, cherished a chivalrous spirit of admiration for this outstanding woman who pleaded her own case in a court, which was decidedly "unsympathetic" and "hostile" to her. He disclosed years later that Besant was guilty of not one contempt of court but a series of it. How could Besant, who was more respectful of courts, judicature and the law than anyone else, be guilty of a series of contempt of courts? He himself answered that "when the law made an ass of itself, she thought it was her duty to commit contempt and suffer for the committal of contempt."⁸ After arguing with her in the court all day in a hard and pitiless fight in the summer heat, C.P. would throng to her lectures on Indian social reforms in the evenings. It was this spontaneous devotion and reverence he entertained for her that impelled C.P. to acquiesce in her request to join her soon after the litigation was over. This was perhaps the only case where a legal opponent was transformed into a political colleague and companion. The case proved a turning point in the careers of both Besant and C.P.

Either owing to the sense of frustration which Krishnamurti's case had brought on her or to her own growing genuine concern for the people of India, Besant broke her two-decade old vow of not entering the arena of Indian politics. As for C.P., his association with Besant marked a new chapter in his career, which was to continue, except for short spells of minor misunderstandings, until she breathed her last in 1933. He once said what gravitated him towards her was the fact that she was one of the very few foreigners to "plead the cause of the brown race against the white." It was this admirable quality in her that was responsible for her "galvanic activity" in the social, educational and political spheres.⁹ C.P. became her most trusted lieutenant. She relied immensely on his sound judgement and amazing ability to face difficult situations. But C.P. never became a Theosophist. Nor did he profess any religious allegiance to Besant. Addressing the delegates to the Theosophical Convention in 1933, he said that they had extended the invitation "to one, who is from the religious and the doctrinal point of view, a stranger amongst you."¹⁰

It could not be said that C.P.'s entry into the political world was sudden or that it began only after joining Besant. He was a leading light of the national movement in the Presidency almost from the beginning of the last century. In fact, C.P. was among the early public opinion leaders who wiped away the

political sobriquet "benighted" that was unmeritedly tagged on to the Madras Presidency. He was an ardent Congressman right from the year 1904. He attended the Surat Congress of 1907. "I was present at Surat myself where the Congress took place which produced the so called split," said he in answer to a certain question of Sydenham while tendering evidence in England before the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Montford Reforms.¹¹

C.P. participated in the Congress of 1910 at Allahabad, which heralded the Silver Jubilee of the Indian National Congress. Since the twenty-third Congress at Surat ended in a fiasco and the subsequent Congress held at Madras in 1908 was reckoned as its continuation, this Congress under the presidency of William Wedderburn was taken as its twenty-fifth session. C.P. made a lucid speech on the resolution of Jogendranath Mukherjee touching the age-old question of the separation of judicial and executive functions. He said that in a country ruled by Britain, a subject such as the one they were discussing, should not have arisen at all as the British were known to be "peculiarly jealous" of any executive interference with judicial administration. It was a sad commentary on the British Indian administration wherein one found this inadvisable and inexpedient combination of two intrinsic functions in one official - the Collector, who was made responsible for law and order as well as for dispensing justice. Speaking on the second half of the motion that recruitment to the Judicial Service had to be only from the legal profession, C.P. stressed the need for professional training. He ridiculed the existing system under which, while the physician and the engineer needed training, "to administer justice, the one sine qua non is that nothing need be known of the principles of law."¹²

At the twenty-sixth Congress that met at Calcutta in 1911, C.P. supported the resolution of Surendranath Bannerjee thanking the Government of India and the Home Government for annulling the partition of Bengal. He pointed out that the revocation of the partition of Bengal showed that a new spirit had come over those responsible for the Government of India - a spirit of giving "a sympathetic consideration to the reasonable demands of the people expressed in a law abiding spirit."¹³ At the twenty-seventh Congress at Bankipore in 1912, C.P. seconded the resolution on education moved by Sachindra Prasad Bose. He exhorted the public to agitate as one man and not to rest until Gokhale's Elementary Education Bill became law.¹⁴ Five months later, at the Madras Provincial Conference held at Trichinopoly in May 1913, C.P. moved a resolution which reminded the members of the promise made at Bankipore that the Congress would give Rs. 3000 per annum to the British Congress Committee and called upon them to contribute towards that amount. Seconding it, L.A. Govindaraghava Iyer announced that C.P. had undertaken to pay an annual personal contribution of Rs. 500 towards the fund.¹⁵ C.P.'s resolution at the twenty-eighth Congress at Karachi in 1913, urged the government to separate the judicial from the executive functions and place the judiciary under the control of the highest court in every province. He quoted Harvey Adamson's condemnation of a judge who had the police force at his back.¹⁶

In the twenty-ninth Congress at Madras in 1914, both C.P. and Besant participated - the latter for the first time with the avowed intention of unifying the National Congress. This session was memorable for two more reasons. It was venturesome for it was conducted just four months after the outbreak of the First World War; and it was attended for the first time by a provincial head - Governor Pentland of Madras. C.P.'s participation in this Congress was significant. He seconded the resolution on the Arms Act moved by A.P. Sen. Quoting from Milton, he highlighted the fact that no nation was a free nation unless its citizens were trained in the use of arms. He deprecated the humiliating distinctions between races and creeds made by the rules framed under this obnoxious Act. He said that it was the duty of England to grant the citizen of India his right "to defend himself, his home and his liberties" and that there should be no periodical renewals of the Act, which operated as "galling reminders of the servitude of the people." He was insistent about the Indian people being treated as self-respecting citizens of the Empire and given opportunities to develop the manhood in them.¹⁷

At the thirtieth Congress in Bombay in 1915, C.P. spoke in support of Tej Bahadur Sapru's resolution protesting against the action of the House of Lords in rejecting the proposal to establish an Executive Council in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh and urging the powers to raise that Province to the status of a Presidency. He said that both in point of population (48 million) and in point of size (48 districts), the hoary province of the United Provinces exceeded Madras, Bombay and Calcutta. The Decentralisation Committee had clearly stated that the charge of this Province was far too great a burden to be borne by a single person without the assistance of a trained Executive Council. A minute of the Viceroy and various other declarations had amply supported this proposal. The Secretary of State also, in response to the Viceroy's prayer, was eager to accede to it. But all these were negated by men "who had eaten the salt of India and to whom ingratitude seems to be as natural as it is to persons who are the sworn enemies of India," he said. If Madras and Bombay deserved a full-fledged Executive Council, so did the U.P. with its two centres of national activity - Banaras, as the centre of intellectual movement and Cawnpur, as that of

industrial movements. He said that if U.P. was treated as backward, then there was a greater need to provide it with a full-fledged government; the "deficiencies of the Governor should be supplemented by the experience of an Indian Member."¹⁸

C.P.'s contribution to the celebrated Lucknow Congress of 1916 was very substantial. This Congress had all the elements of a "United National Assembly," with the fraternising of the Hindus and Muslims, Moderates and Nationalists on a common platform. Many may not be aware of C.P.'s role in the Hindu-Muslim rapprochement called the Lucknow Pact.¹⁹ With Mohammed Ali and Shaukat Ali, who were his co-adjutors during this session and Nawab Mirza Yar Jung Bahadur of Hyderabad, who was on a sub-committee with him, C.P. had drafted the famous Lucknow Pact. At the instance of Surendranath Bannerjee and Lokamanya Tilak, C.P. was also selected by the Subjects Committee to move the motion for the repeal of the obnoxious Press Act of 1910. In his fantastic speech on the motion, C.P. referred to some of the superb ideas of Milton portrayed in his *Areopagitica*. This tract on the freedom of the press demonstrated the poet's belief in the "power of truth to win its way through free inquiry and discussion." C.P. quoted the following words of Milton: "Methinks I see in my mind, a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep and shaking her invincible locks. Methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eye at the full mid-day beam."

At this Congress, the 37 year old C.P., the popular hero of the Home Rule Movement, was the cynosure of all eyes, said C.S. Ranga Iyer, who was a great admirer of C.P. in those days and who seconded C.P.'s motion.²⁰

Prior to his joining Besant, C.P. was also an active member of the Reconstruction League launched by a group of Madras political workers to train the masses of the village population in the elements of self government.²¹

C.P. turned a new leaf in his career by flinging himself into the political world of Besant. Until he dedicated himself totally to the political activities of Besant, though he had his hand in a wide range of public activities, his principal professional activity had been as a lawyer and his exclusive source of income was from that profession. It was only after joining Besant, that he became a full-time politician and engaged himself in nationalist work in the teeth of much disapproval from his friends and relatives. And in doing so, C.P. gave up a highly lucrative practice at the Bar and underwent a great pecuniary sacrifice. What was more, his decision to join Besant helped her to regain her popularity, which was in eclipse after the Krishnamurti case. This case certainly confirmed the distrust which the youth of those days had of the "mumbo jumbo of the Theosophical Society," under her captaincy.²² As the brilliant exponent of the Home Rule creed, C.P. made young enthusiasts throughout India flock to Besant and thereby saved her from the ignominy she suffered on account of the case²³

BIRTH OF "NEW INDIA" NEWSPAPER

Besant, who had been to England for a short sojourn in 1913, returned to India with a political mission - the cry for Home Rule for India. After making the preparatory measures in 1914, she laid in Madras the foundations of the Home Rule Movement - a momentous milestone in India's epic struggle for independence. It was to grow rapidly and luxuriantly and embrace the whole of India. The principle underlying the movement was to effect a rational synthesis between the legitimate demand of the Indian National Congress for sovereign independence and British Imperialism. It was her strong conviction that such a hybrid "Nationalist Imperialism" could be achieved and the British connection with India perpetuated through the establishment of Home Rule in India. But unlike the Irish Home Rule Movement of Parnell, which was violent and aggressive, her campaign was designed to be peaceful. The demand for Home Rule was not new in India. Tilak had conceived the idea and presented a memorandum to the government as far back as 1895. What gave Besant's movement immense popularity was her "astounding tenacity, perseverance and determination" to carry forward the struggle, notwithstanding the slander and calumny indulged in by her own countrymen against her.

As a first step in inaugurating the movement, Besant started the *Commonweal*, a weekly organ, to bring India and Britain closer to each other by acquainting the latter with the Indian National Movement. Since this weekly was meant for foreign consumption, the need for starting a daily to keep pace with the growing needs of her Home Rule propaganda in India was keenly felt. C.P. played a crucial role in enabling Besant to usher in such a daily. In fact his first act after joining Besant was to help her purchase in July 1914 the *Madras Standard* and the *Standard Press* from one Kuthiravattah Prabhakaran Thampan of Malabar, then residing at Madras, for Rs. 21,000²⁴ The *Madras Standard*, founded in 1841, was the oldest daily in Madras and was for long "going downhill." It was in a very bad shape with poor printing and no foreign news save that copied from other papers. The purchase was made at "railway speed" as there was an urgent

need to save the Hindu University at Banaras from the interference of the Government. If the terms of the Government were accepted, the donations collected for the college would be diverted from the object for which they were given and the Central Hindu College at Banaras would be reduced to the status of an ordinary provincial government institution. Besant would rather not have a Hindu University than "a shell whence the spirit is fled."²⁵

To suit her political needs, Besant rechristened the Madras Standard as New India. According to one account, Besant and C.P. jointly purchased the Madras Standard, the money being partly contributed by C.P. to whom, it was understood then, the press would be left after the demise of Besant.²⁶ C.P. certainly parted with a small fortune without talking about it both for the upkeep of New India and the Home Rule Movement.²⁷ Besant herself had admitted that she had bought the New India "not with my own money"²⁸

The New India was launched on 14 July 1914, which was the 125th anniversary of the historic fall of the Bastille in France. As C.P. remarked, this was significant considering, the "tempestuous, impetuous and passionate" contents of the paper. Besant was the proprietrix and editor of the paper. Within two months of its launching, the daily circulation of New India increased five fold and very soon it became the national champion of Swaraj. Through these two organs - Commonweal and New India - which became her armaments, Besant embarked on a campaign of agitation for Home Rule. Although politics was the main theme of the papers and both were exponents of Congress principles and aims, New India covered many other subjects of human interest. It carried most edifying articles contributed by men like C.P., S. Subrahmanya Iyer, Telang and others. C.P. often acted as the editor of the paper during the absence of Besant.

YMIA AND MADRAS PARLIAMENT

The YMIA and the Madras Parliament were two among the notable institutions started by Besant in association with C.P. Besant, who had adopted India as her motherland, set before herself a two-fold task for its progress and prosperity. One was to awaken the Indians to their own greatness. The other was to help them attain political emancipation. Besant knew that the attainment of these two objectives was a mighty mission involving work in the social, economic, political, educational, cultural and religious spheres.

To do the work in right earnest, she founded many organisations, organs and movements of which the Young Men's Indian Association (YMIA), Besant's "favourite child," was founded on 11 January 1914.²⁹ In the words of its Vice President, T.V. Viswanatha Iyer, its birth was "with Dr. Besant, essentially an act of faith - the spiritual revival of the modern world through Indian thought - of which the first step was the revival of India herself."³⁰ Since it was impossible to carry the political work without an open platform, Besant erected at her cost a public Hall and named it after Gokhale. The Gokhale Hall - the core of the YMIA - was the scene of many auspicious activities including the starting of the Home Rule League in 1916 and the "1919 Club" to study the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms Scheme. The Hall had also been the scene of great attainments in oratory and public speaking as well as in music and fine arts. It had received with open arms persons of all hues regardless of caste, creed, colour or political persuasion. Pentland, perhaps out of fear, viewed the YMIA as an organisation started in opposition to the YMCA, which was doing "admirable social and educational work on very broad non-sectarian Christian lines."

C.P. was connected with the YMIA right from its inception as its Founder Trustee and Honorary Secretary of the Managing Committee. He also served as its President from 1950 to 1966. The tablet unveiled on the occasion of the golden jubilee of the YMIA by the Vice-President of India on 7 November 1964 included the words that it was the "golden jubilee of the Founder Membership of Dr. C.P. Ramaswami Iyer, Chairman, Governing Body." On this occasion, the proposal to create an endowment in the name of C.P. was announced. The endowment under the name "The YMIA Dr. C.P. Ramaswami Iyer Memorial Endowment," was actually created in 1979 so as to coincide with the Birth Centenary of C.P. Its object was to utilise the income therefrom for an annual lecture and/or publication on the following areas or "as nearly thereto as may be possible:" Indian Cultural Synthesis; Cultural and Religious Influence of India; and India as a Factor in World Civilisation. The internationally renowned Professor of Philosophy, T.M.P. Mahadevan, delivered the first lecture under this endowment in 1981 and the subject of his lecture was "The Basis of India's Role in the Modern World."³¹ The Association had the privilege of receiving C.P.'s counsels and guidance.³²

The other and the more important creation of Besant was the Madras Parliament. It should in fact be called a movement next in importance only to her Home Rule Movement. It fulfilled Besant's long-standing desire to train men and women, who were capable of taking a useful and dignified part in public life, in civic education and in methods and means of self government by giving them full scope for free discussion of all public questions.³³ Its launching was proposed on the New Year's Day in 1915 and it was

founded on 14 February 1915.³⁴ Besant called it a debating society that observed British parliamentary norms. Since India's goal was the attainment of Home Rule, it was an imperative necessity for her leaders to be oriented in the art of governance. The debates, which aimed at "self control, courtesy, promptitude, mental alertness and power of speech" were an invaluable training for those who intended to take part in public life.³⁵ The reports of the debates of the Madras Parliament and the circulation of its transactions in the form of Acts were intended to "arouse and discipline - political activity." Its proceedings were patterned on those of the Mother of Parliaments. Since public questions were thrashed out at this forum, it provided an opportunity for the intelligentsia to listen to the serious arguments carried on by men of eminence.

The nomination of the members of the Parliament and the constitution of the ministry became complete towards the end of February 1915. Besant was the Prime Minister and Secretary for the Treasury. C.P., T. Rangachari, B.N. Sarma, G. Subbiah Chettiar, M. Audinarayana Iyah and L.A. Govindaraghava Iyer were respectively the Secretaries for Education, Local Government, Industries, Commerce, Co-operation and Home Affairs.³⁶ The Parliament also had whips.

The first sitting of the Madras Parliament was held on 6 March 1915 at the YMIA with a large gathering of members and also visitors for whom separate accommodation was provided. The members comprised the leading men of Madras as well as representatives of the various classes of the country -- the Bar, Commerce, landholders etc. The Parliament thus formed the "most serious and weighty assembly."³⁷ Its very first Bill, which related to post-puberty marriage, was brought forward by K. Srinivasa Iyengar, a private member. Among the important Bills were the ones on Compulsory Elementary Education introduced by C.P., Religious Endowments by L.A. Govindaraghava Iyer and Provincial Autonomy and Commonwealth of India by Besant.³⁸

What is important in the present context is the Compulsory Elementary Education Act I of 1915, which C.P., as the Secretary for Education, introduced at the Madras Parliament. It was his priceless contribution to education at the primary level. It was the first Bill on which full discussion took place on reading it for the second time in the House.³⁹ It would be of interest to know that on 19 April 1915 when C.P. moved "that the Compulsory Education Bill be now read a second time," and Jinarajadasa seconded it, P.S. Ganapati Iyer moved to adjourn the debate on the subject till 17 July 1915. He put forth two reasons for his proposal: (1) The question of finance had to be considered since the provision in the Bill of feeding the boys once a day would cost enormously; and (2) having regard to the fact that the draft Bill was received by the members only the previous night, more time was necessary to consider carefully its other provisions also.⁴⁰ But the motion was overruled and C.P. went ahead with his speech.

This legislation comprising in all 19 clauses provided for the compulsory elementary education of children and for securing adequate fulfilment of parental responsibility. C.P.'s speech was a most exhaustive and learned survey of the subject that affected the future of the country more than any other measure. He began his speech quoting from the presidential address of his friend Hydari, Education Secretary in the Nizam's Government, at the first Hyderabad Education Conference: "The foundation of all education is primary education, and it is our duty to promote it. All cannot be wholly educated, but it is certainly necessary that all should know how to read and write, and our endeavour should be that among the subjects of the Nizam there should not be a single subject who did not receive primary education..." It was remarkable that without mentioning the word "compulsory," Hydari had made a strong plea for the spread of free education throughout the Nizam's Dominions.

As if to challenge the general argument that compulsory and free education would only remain a daydream in India, C.P. showed how the education problem was solved in England in a matter of just a decade. Prior to 1870, education in England was no better than what it was in India in 1915. The financial aid of the Government was also only in the shape of grants-in-aid given mainly for the furtherance of the activities of the National Church, which was the educational machinery. Then, proceeding to speak of the development of education in Japan, C.P. said that as early as 1872, its Emperor issued a rescript: "It is designed henceforth that education should be so diffused, that there may not be a village with an ignorant family, or a family with an ignorant member". The percentage of children attending school, which was 28 in 1872, was raised to 92 in 1892. By 1900, that was within 28 years of the rescript, education in Japan had become free and compulsory. Coming to the Indian State of Baroda where primary education had been made free and compulsory, C.P. asked pertinently, if Baroda could achieve this, why not British India? In assessing the expenses, which this crucial programme entailed for its implementation, C.P. ardently said that elementary education should be given top priority in the country's budget. He made a comparison between India and certain other countries regarding the expenditure incurred on primary education: the expenditure per child on this account in the United States was 16 cents, in Japan 1.25, in Baroda six pence and in British India only one penny. C.P. declared that unless the Government spent money substantially on education, the experiment would not fructify. In the above speech, made in support of his motion, C.P.

struck exactly "the right note of parliamentary oratory, informing in matter, well arranged in presentment, concise and singularly happy in diction," as Besant described it. He was very warmly congratulated by the members, when the House rose.⁴⁰

As an outstanding member of the legal profession, it was also given to C.P. to move at the Madras Parliament, the Indian Judicature Bill which was a supplementary Bill to the famous Commonwealth of India Act. The first section of this Bill was devoted to the old and vexed question of the separation of the executive and judicial functions. The second section related to the High Court. It underscored the fact that as the highest judicial administration in the Presidency, the High Court should have under its control, the whole of the lesser judicial establishments. The third section referred to the conflict of laws, which arose on account of the various systems obtaining in the country. The fourth and the last section kept alive the jurisdiction of the High Courts in India. None of the provisions in the Bill affected their powers or their prerogatives in their jurisdiction. This Bill went through the third reading on 10 December 1916.⁴¹

The Madras Parliament died in June 1917 following the internment of Besant by the Madras Government. But the stalwarts who were trained by this mock parliament in the art of governance later adorned the seats in the Madras Legislative Council and the Central Legislature.

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