



SOUTH AFRICA AND THE BRITISH TAXPAYER:

A BRITISH INDIAN VIEW

THE question of Ulster at present occupies the public mind almost exclusively, but there is really a much larger question which menaces Imperial interests and cannot be ignored: one, moreover, which must find a more prominent place in the political future of the Empire as time advances. If the British Indian question in South Africa is allowed to become more complicated than it already is, it will give British statesmen greater trouble than a dozen Ulsters rolled into one. I am not a Nationalist; I have never belonged to the Indian National Congress; I have never played the rôle of an alarmist. I hold no brief for Lord Hardinge; indeed, I have freely criticised his Lordship's action with reference to the removal of the capital to Delhi.¹ But with such reliable information as is before me I should be failing in my duty as a British subject if I did not strike a note of warning, advising the British nation that there is grave trouble ahead unless immediate steps are taken by them to strengthen the hands of the Viceroy of India.

The views of Lord Crewe, Lord Hardinge, Lord Ampthill, and the Indian leaders are mainly based on the ethical side of the problem, and ethics may appeal to the upper classes of Englishmen; but to make the democracy interested in the South African question one must be able to show how the matter, if not properly handled, would affect the pocket of the British taxpayer. In other words, the question at issue has to be considered from the standpoint of expediency, or what the man in the street would call the business point of view.

The existence of the Empire depends on its Imperial defences, and there can be no adequate Imperial defences unless there is a good supply of funds from the proceeds of the trade of the United Kingdom. Now from the British trade point of

¹ *Anglo-Indian Studies*, pp. 278-94. Longmans; 1913.