

## The Moderates

During the first twenty years of its life, the Congress was completely controlled by liberal leaders or the so-called Moderates. It started with modest objectives, having faith in the honesty and sincerity of the British government. The Congress during these early years, desired to encourage and consolidate the spirit of Indian nationalism among the people of all faiths, castes and religions, to regenerate the Indian society in all fields. During these early years, the Congress demanded several reforms from the government and accordingly passed resolutions in its various sessions. These demands were largely as follows:

- 1- A Royal Commission should be appointed to examine the Indian administration.
- 2- India Council should be abolished.
- 3- The number of members of the legislative councils at the Centre and in the Provinces should be increased.
- 4- Military expenditure should be reduced.
- 5- Import and export duties should be imposed which would be favourable to India's interests.

- 6- The Civil Services Examination should be held in India also and its age limit should be increased.
- 7- Local bodies should be granted wider rights.
- 8- Efforts should be made to promote industrial growth of India.
- 9- Interests of the Indians living abroad should be protected.
- 10- Judiciary should be separated from the executive.
- 11- Salt tax should be reduced.
- 12- Efforts should be made to check the exploitation of peasants by landlords.
- 13- Indian press should be granted wider freedom.
- 14- Facilities for third class railway passengers should be augmented.
- 15- Efforts should be made to know the reasons of India's poverty and remedial measures should be taken to remove it.
- 16- More technical and professional colleges should be opened.
- 17- Schools for military training should be established.
- 18- Agricultural banks should be opened which should provide loans to peasants on lesser interests. etc.

These were basic demands of the Congress during its early years. The early nationalists or

Moderates were loyal to the British government. The demands or the programme of the Moderates can be divided under the following heads for the sake of convenience -

- (1) Civil Rights
- (2) Administrative
- (3) Constitutional
- (4) Economic