

Lawrence

Relevance of these
enclosures explained at start
of disc
India Office,
Whitehall, S.W. (pp1-2)

28 September, 1913.

Lord Crews,

In company with Mr. Walton, who had brought the personal negotiations to the point already reported before my return from leave, I called yesterday afternoon by appointment at Miss Maud Allan's house in Regent's Park, and met her and her Manager, Mr. McLeod, for a final conversation. In view of what Mr. Walton had told me of her attitude on previous occasions, when she seems to have been fairly intractable and even defiant, she struck me very early in the conversation as being more alive to the real facts and to the patent disadvantages of a collision with public opinion in India than she had been before. I attribute this to the fact that she has had time to reflect on the considerations which Mr. Walton brought before her, and the improvement was therefore due to his skilful opening of the business with her.

In recapitulating the position I pointed out to her that, all other considerations apart, the Viceroy had, in causing her to be approached privately

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before



before her arrangements were fixed, taken a step which was in her own interests and most considerate to her. He had felt bound to represent privately his own objections to the tour, and to ensure that she fully appreciated, not only the mischief to herself and the public interest generally of a conflict of opinion in which she might find herself acutely involved, but also that the Viceroy's Government is responsible for the maintenance of the law and in a wider sense for safeguarding the public interest. It was therefore necessary for her to realize that, if the tour, as contemplated, takes place, the Indian Government might possibly in certain circumstances be constrained to intervene. In any event she must understand that in no case could she receive any assurances from them which would tie their hands if intervention should unfortunately become necessary. I was purposely vague in dealing with the nature of the circumstances which might bring her into conflict with the authorities, but I hinted mainly at unedifying displays of discord, and left it to her to interpret for herself how far questions of public morals were concerned and how far questions of public order merely. She naturally considers herself a great, probably the greatest

(2) existing,

existing, authority on the former, and I should have been at a hopeless disadvantage if the argument had taken that direction. On the latter point she evidently defers to the views of Government.

She acquiesced very fairly in what I had said, and was evidently sensible of the consideration shown by the Viceroy. She at once said that, short of cancelling the visit to India altogether, she was prepared to take any steps which would ease the position. For example, she will not perform the Salome dance, which she says she never takes on tour. She said that on consideration she and her Manager felt that a scheme of semi-private performances could be arranged on the Stage Society model, with postal and Club circulars and a private subscription list, and with no displayed posters or money taken at the door. I then told her that in the Viceroy's view, this would be a wise and commendable step, and would tend to ease the situation. She replied that it meant a very great pecuniary sacrifice, and that, in order to cope adequately with the question of discrimination in the sale of tickets, her Manager might be in need of some sort of authoritative advice. I pointed out that this would be inconsistent with the Viceroy's declared

inability to take any share in the responsibility for her arrangements, since his hands must be kept perfectly free either under a scheme of private performances or under the scheme originally contemplated. In order that there might be no misunderstanding on this point I subsequently sent her the letter of which a copy is attached. This point being disposed of, she was quite ready to agree that the mere fact of conducting the performances on semi-private lines would immensely reduce the chances of widespread public criticism.

At this point something was said as to local variations of public opinion in India. On my mentioning the special importance of Calcutta, she voluntarily suggested the omission of Calcutta from her itinerary. She authorised me to say that she would cancel the visit to Calcutta, unless after arrival in India she was expressly invited by a suitable body of the Calcutta public to give a private performance there. I told her that I felt sure that the Viceroy and you would regard the cancellation of the Calcutta visit as a wise step. I also gave her a strong hint of a personal kind that she would be well advised not to go to Delhi, but I cannot feel sure that she will act on it.

The foregoing exhausts the topics mentioned except for two points relating less to actual business than to her amour propre. In the first place she said that she is accustomed to a social position of some standing, to Command performances and so forth. Mr. Walton immediately pointed out that in the peculiar circumstances the Viceroy's patronage could hardly be looked for, and that the manner in which she is received socially is one of the risks incidental to her going at all. She understood this, but without, I think, at all realising how very unpleasant her social position may very probably prove to be. She then proceeded to her second point, which has a financial as well as a personal side. She feels some apprehension that her appearances might be to some extent boycotted by the official world in deference to private pressure by superior authority, and she would like to feel that if she goes out under the semi-private arrangement, which entails much sacrifice, she will be getting a fair run for her money. I said that in this matter as in the other I could give no assurances, but that I would report her observations to you.

She then thanked us in a manner which was evidently sincere for the way in which you and the Viceroy have dealt with the matter, and we left.

Copy.

India Office, S.W.

27 September, 1913.

Dear Miss Allan,

I stated in the course of the interview you were good enough to give me this afternoon that, while the Viceroy, for the reasons that I gave, maintains his view that the best solution would have been the cancellation of your Indian tour, he is strongly of opinion that the adoption of some method of quasi-private performances such as we discussed, would be commendable and wise and would greatly tend to ease the possible difficulties of the situation. I also said, and I think it best to write now in order to avoid all chance of misunderstanding, that while he thinks the suggestion of great practical value, he must leave entirely in your hands the manner of carrying it out, and cannot accept any responsibility either for himself or his Government, which would tie his hands either in your own or future similar cases.

(Sd) F.H.Lucas.