

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

**MONDAY, 24th AUGUST, 1925**

**Vol. VI—No. 3**

## OFFICIAL REPORT



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Monday, 24th August, 1925.

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The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber at Eleven of the Clock, Mr. President in the Chair.

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## MEMBER SWORN.

Sir Willoughby Langer Carey, Kt., M.L.A. (Bengal : European).

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## MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY.

**Mr. President :** I have received a Message from His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General.

(The Message was received by the Assembly, standing.)

*"In pursuance of the provisions of section 63C of the Government of India Act, I, Rufus Daniel, Earl of Reading, hereby signify that I approve the election by the Legislative Assembly of Mr. Vithalbhai Javerbhaji Patel as President of the said Assembly."*

(Signed) *READING,*

*Viceroy and Governor General."*

(Loud Applause.)

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## WELCOME BY SIR FREDERICK WHYTE TO THE NEW PRESIDENT.

**Sir Frederick Whyte :** Mr. President, the Message which I have just read from His Excellency authorises you now to take my place in this Chair. You have been long enough in this Chamber to know that the Chair has both great opportunities and great obligations ; and you have already practised the business of chairmanship in another place in such a manner as to justify us in the expectation that the hand which was so well practised in the management of public business in the Bombay Corporation will not lose its cunning in this greater arena.

I should like to bespeak for you, Mr. President, the same consideration and co-operation from all quarters of this House which I have never failed to receive. The relations between the Chair and the Legislative Assembly are one of the most important features in the Indian Constitution and it lies in the successful co-operation between Mr. President and all his colleagues to answer some of the difficult questions entailed in the future progress of India. I commend my successor, Mr. President Patel,

[Sir Frederick Whyte.]

to every Member in this House and I bespeak for him that co-operation and cordial regard which it has been my privilege to enjoy. (Applause.) And one further thing I will bespeak for him and that is the same unfailing assistance, given at times when the assistance perhaps was not easy to give, by the officers of this Chamber upon whom, though perhaps Members do not always realise it, a very heavy duty falls. (Applause.) Mr. President, you will find Mr. Secretary and his assistants very essential to your comfort and to your welfare ; and I am quite sure that if I make my appeal to them, as I do now, they will accord to you the same assistance and co-operation which I have received.

Mr. President, it is a matter of pride and pleasure to me to invite you to take my place in this Chair.

**Mr. President** (the Honourable Mr. V. J. Patel) : Sir, I rise to thank you most sincerely for the welcome you have extended to me on this occasion. I do not think it is proper for me at this stage to make any reply to the speeches that will be made hereafter after I take the Chair. At present what I am concerned with is to express on my behalf and, if I may be allowed to say so, on behalf of every Member of this Assembly, both officials and non-officials, Members of every section and of every Party, our high and grateful appreciation of the excellent work that you have done during the last four years. (Applause.) You were called upon, Sir, to take this office at a very difficult time and you were called upon to guide the deliberations of a peculiarly constituted Assembly, an Assembly in which we have got a majority of elected Members, who could not control and have no power to control the executive. Therefore, the traditions and conventions of the popular Assembly, namely, the House of Commons, could not possibly be applied in full under all the conceivable circumstances that may arise in this Assembly. Your task was, therefore, rendered much more difficult. You had to adjust those traditions and conventions to the circumstances of this peculiarly constituted Assembly. It will be a matter of satisfaction to you, Sir, to know that from every section of this House you will have the congratulations of Members for the work you have done.

The position that you occupied hitherto was the position given to you by His Excellency the Governor General. The position which your successor will occupy will be the position accorded to him by the elected and the nominated representatives of this Assembly, namely, the whole House. In spite of the fact that you were a nominated President, it is pleasing to note that you have not only satisfied His Excellency the Governor General and the Members of His Excellency's Council, but also the elected representatives of the people. (Applause.) Sir, you have created precedents and you have established conventions and it will be the duty of your successor to be guided by those precedents and those conventions.

Sir, I do not think it is necessary for me at this stage to detain this House any longer, but you will permit me to mention one or two conventions and precedents which you have created. I want to mention them particularly because, when I read them up, they appealed to me. In the first three years of this Legislative Assembly, I was not a Member and, therefore, those who were in this Assembly at that time will be able to speak with authority on your work. So far as I am concerned, I used

to read the proceedings of the last Assembly with keen interest, although I had boycotted this Assembly. I was attracted to the Assembly and I was also attracted to the proceedings of the Assembly because I have taken an interest in it ever since I was a Member of the old Imperial Legislative Council ; and I did not give up and have not given up that interest even now. Therefore, Sir, when I was reading those proceedings in the first year of your office, I was in the very first year delighted to find that you, Sir, allowed the convention of an annual Finance Bill to be introduced by the Government into this Assembly. Although the Government of India Act does not require the Government of India to bring before the Legislature any such measure, it was you, Sir,—and I sincerely believe it was you—who helped materially in persuading the Government in establishing a convention of that character.

The second thing with which I was much more delighted was this that, when the first Finance Bill was under discussion in this Assembly, you allowed certain amendments to the Finance Bill involving or suggesting new or alternative proposals of taxation. That was, to my mind, a great step forward. It has been generally said that proposals for new taxation must always emanate from the Crown, but you gave a liberal interpretation to the whole matter and allowed certain proposals by way of amendments suggesting new or alternative forms of taxation. That was a very advanced step, in my opinion, and I was so pleased at that moment when I read those proceedings that I was half inclined to give up non-co-operation and come to this place. (Applause.)

Sir, the other thing was in connection with Resolutions. I have always noticed during the time that I have been here in this Assembly that you have allowed amendments to Resolutions, which ordinarily other Presidents perhaps would have disallowed on technical grounds. You have allowed amendments to Resolutions to be moved in a substantive form; in substitution of the original Resolutions, so long as they were in substance in order. I must confess I was taken by agreeable surprise when I found that you were allowing amendments in the form of substantive propositions to be substituted by way of amendment in place of the original Resolutions. That was a liberal measure of interpretation that you introduced which, so far as I have read them, is not usually found in the proceedings of other popular assemblies or representative bodies.

One word more before I have done, and that is in regard to the Committee on Petitions. It was during your régime that the Standing Orders were altered so as to enable this Assembly to appoint a Committee to hear and investigate into petitions. Of course we know that that Committee has not done and cannot yet do any tangible work, but I hope and trust that this Assembly will see that in course of time that institution grows into a real and living Committee on Petitions to hear and investigate into popular complaints.

I have not the slightest doubt in my mind, Sir, that you have made a splendid President, and by doing so you have made my task much more difficult. I know I will be judged by the standard you have set, and I shall have to strive my utmost to come up to that standard. I have absolutely no doubt that the Members of the Assembly will expect me to carry out the high traditions of this office which you have set up, and I will try my best to see that I acquit myself honourably.

## VALEDICTORY SPEECHES TO THE RETIRING PRESIDENT.

**The Honourable Sir Alexander Muddiman** (Home Member) : Sir Frederick Whyte, it is with unfeigned regret that I rise to address you for the last time in your Chair of office. This is a historic occasion, and when I say that it is a historic occasion, I use the words with a full responsibility of their meaning. I am not one of those who use large words for small matters. This is the first occasion when a landmark has been reached in the Government of India Act. This Assembly, in the exercise of the powers conferred by that Act, has for the first time elected its own President. That, Sir, is a stage that will be remembered for many years to come. It marks, I hope, the first of a succession of a long series of Presidents, who will make for the Presidentship of this House in time the reputation which attaches to that office in other Parliaments. But the exercise of that right has brought with it, as the exercise of many rights does, a loss, and it is this, Sir, that we lose you from the Chair. From the width and depth of your Parliamentary knowledge and your knowledge of the customs and conventions of the Mother of Parliaments you have guided the steps of this Assembly in the first momentous years of its existence with a firm hand. You have, if I may say so, well and truly laid the foundations of our procedure. (Applause.) On those foundations I trust that succeeding Presidents will develop what in the end will be a magnificent superstructure. That you have exercised your powers of control with absolute impartiality and with complete fairness goes without saying ; but the manner of the exercise of those powers of control was of the greatest moment. You have shown us from the Chair that firmness does not mean discourtesy, that impartiality is not necessarily accompanied by harshness, that to lead is better than to drive, and that the gift of humour is most helpful in the exercise of your difficult task. You have shown us, Sir, that it is the duty of the Chair to protect minorities and to secure the exercise of the right to the expression of opinions, however unpopular they may be. You have prevented debate being abused for purposes which are foreign to its spirit, and you have commanded the respect of every Member of this House in the discharge of your great and difficult task. (Applause.) When you took up the high office which you are now laying down, great hopes were expressed for the success of your effort. Now these hopes have come to fulfilment and you put off your armour with the full consciousness of a duty fully and nobly discharged. Permit me, Sir, on behalf of the Benches from which I speak, to express to you our regret that you are leaving us, and our best wishes and hopes for your future prosperity and success. "*Olim meminisse juvabit.*" I think you will not forget us, Sir, when you have left us ; I think at times your spirit will return to this House and you will watch over our debates with the interest that you have always displayed in them, and I hope you will find they are being conducted in an atmosphere similar to the atmosphere you have done so much to inculcate and promote. (Applause.)

**Pandit Motilal Nehru** (Cities of the United Provinces : Non-Muhamadan Urban) : Sir, on behalf of the Swaraj Party I rise to bid you farewell, and in doing so, I associate myself with the remarks which have been made by Mr. President Patel and the Honourable the Home Member. They have more or less exhaustively dealt with the various aspects of your office, and the admirable manner in which you have dis-

charged its duties. You have set, Sir, a very high standard, which it will be well for your successors to follow. You have discharged your duties with conspicuous ability, becoming dignity, and unfailing courtesy and fairness. (Applause.) When I say that, Sir, I think I say all that can be said of any President of an Assembly. We have worked under your guidance and deliberated under your guidance in this Assembly for nearly two years now. That is a long enough period to be replete with memories, and this is an aspect which I wish particularly to touch upon as it has not been mentioned by my predecessors. Those memories must of necessity be both pleasant and unpleasant. To expect them to be invariably pleasant would be to expect you or us, or both of us, to be more than human. It is in the very nature of things that in a House, the total strength of which is over 140, there should occasionally arise slight differences of opinion about the procedure followed or the rulings given by the Chair. What matters is not that such a difference should arise from time to time but the feeling that it leaves behind in its wake. I think, Sir, I can most confidently say that if any such difference has happened the feeling left behind has invariably been of complete goodwill on both sides. Sir, I do not wish to detain the House and you at any great length but I wish to conclude my remarks with expressing the regret of my Party on parting with you. The duty that we have to perform to-day is both a pleasant and an unpleasant one and when we are dealing with the unpleasant part of it—namely the parting with you, we have but one feeling and that of sincere regret. The pleasant part of it is to give you our sincere appreciation of the work you have done in an un-grudging spirit, and I hope, Sir, brief though my remarks have been, you will take it that the depth of the sentiment behind those remarks is not to be measured by their brevity. With these words, Sir, I wish you God-speed on behalf of my Party and success in all your future undertakings.

**Mr. M. A. Jinnah** (Bombay City : Muhammadan Urban) : Sir, the moment has arrived when we have to part with you as the President of this Assembly over which you have presided now for nearly five years with dignity and honour to yourself and to any House. Sir, I would quote the words of the Joint Parliamentary Committee ; the kind of President that they desired should preside over this Legislature is described in the following words :

“ He should be qualified by experience in the House of Commons and a knowledge of parliamentary procedure, precedents and conventions. He should be the guide and adviser of the presidents of provincial councils and he should be chosen with a view to the influence which it is hoped he will have on the whole history of parliamentary procedure in India.”

Sir, I entirely agree with the Honourable the Home Member that the day was a new landmark in the constitution of India when you were selected by the late Secretary of State for India, Mr. Montagu, for whom India has the profoundest respect. His selection of you has been justified to the fullest. You brought to bear upon the procedure of this House your parliamentary experience, your knowledge of the precedents and conventions of the Mother of Parliaments, your natural abilities. During the time that I have had the privilege and the honour to come under your presidency, you have displayed a sound sense of judgment, great presence of mind, quick decision and always with the best of intentions to arrive at the fairest and most impartial decision.

[Mr. M. A. Jinnah.]

Sir, your work was not seen only when you presided over this Chamber in that exalted Chair, where you undoubtedly maintained the dignity of the House and where the severity of your detachment from every single individual Member was accompanied by a complete attachment to the House and full sympathy, while you had directly under your control the entire pulse of this House ; but behind the scene, in your little room, where that severity which is essential to maintain the dignity and order of the House was no longer to be seen, there was your presence genial, kind, affectionate, ready to help and extend uniform courtesy to every Member of this House.

Sir, your work has been, if I may say so, a most fascinating work. I believe—and I have had the opportunity of watching the legislative chambers not only of this country but others, including France—I believe, Sir, and I say this in all sincerity, not to flatter you because you are going away and I am not afraid of you any more, that you would have presided over any Parliament with credit to any nation or any Parliament. But I think the work would not have been so fascinating as the work that you had to perform during the last five years in that Chair. There you would have been tied down by the procedure, by the conventions and the precedents which have already been established : and opportunity for originality would have been rare. Here you had a far more fascinating work, a creative work, where you have created precedents, where you have established precedents. You will be remembered, you will be honoured, and your name as the first President of the Indian Legislature, which must in time grow to its full stature, will be handed down in the history of India. We shall be parted from you, but I hope that wherever you may be you will remember India. It is no small wrench to part with you and I am sure this House deeply regrets that we have to.

**Sir Darcy Lindsay** (Bengal : European) : Sir, by reason of my connection with the Assembly from its first meeting my colleagues have chosen me as their spokesman to address to you a few parting words and never has a task been entrusted to me that I valued so much. My only fear is that I may not do full justice to it. I remember, Sir, in the early days of 1921 when we met, many of us for the first time, from all parts of India, a little doubtful possibly of each other ; but you, Sir, by exercising that tact with which you are so richly endowed very soon put us at our ease and we became united in striving to work together in living up to your example and ideals. By the end of the Session we were a happy family, looking forward to meeting again in Simla at the next Session. Ever courteous, ever kind, firm when necessary but never severely and always ready to help those who wanted your assistance, you have proved yourself, Sir, the ideal President, and we on our part have done our best to please you and thereby give some small return for all you have done for us.

What I said about the first applies equally, if not more so, to the second Assembly. For, when we met in Delhi at our first meeting there is no denying there were doubts and suspicions of each other in our minds. You, Sir, by the atmosphere you created very soon dispelled all this and we came to understand one another's views. We may, at times, Sir, say nasty things in the Assembly, but when we go into the Lobby the scene is changed and we are good friends. We realise that

in the heat of debate we do not always mean all we say. Speaking personally, I have made many, what I hope will be, lasting friendships, and I think others have done the same. It is by these means and by, understanding one another and by toleration of each other's views that we can best help India, and to you, Sir, much of the credit is due in bringing this about. That we are more than sorry to lose our guide, philosopher and friend—may I say, our Guru—is very certain. But for the fact that the rules require that we should elect from amongst ourselves our new President and any departure from the intention of that rule might have been misunderstood, I am sure, Sir, that your friends in the House would have liked to pay you the compliment of asking you to accept the Chair until the term of the present Assembly ends. The best that we can now offer you, Sir, is an undertaking that we, by co-operation with the new President, will do all we can to maintain the high standard you have set us and preserve the dignity of proceedings that were so dear to your heart. We wish you God-speed and all success in any work that you may take up. We would be best pleased if ere long you were to return to this country, the India you love so well, and take up an appointment even more exalted than the one you have just now vacated. Sir, officially we bid you farewell, but our affection will remain for ever.

**Diwan Bahadur T. Rangachariar** (Madras City : Non-Muhammadan Urban) : Sir, it is a matter of peculiar pleasure and gratification to me to be allowed to take part on this most historic occasion of bidding farewell to the first President of the Indian Parliament. Sir, I have been associated with you as a humble Member of this Assembly, sometimes as one of a Panel of Chairmen, and lastly as your Deputy President. I know how difficult it is to discharge the duties appertaining to the high office which you had the honour to occupy, and which you have occupied with such dignity and ability that you have rendered the task of your successors for a long time to come a task so difficult to follow. Sir, I well remember the days when we first entered this House, both officials and non-officials alike, with distrust, distrusting each other and really sceptical as to the potentialities of this Legislative Assembly,—we on our part believing, although we were sincerely willing to co-operate, that it was not an adequate instrument for effecting the ends we had in view ; and the officials, on the other hand, mistrusting the non-officials not knowing what they were likely to turn out to be, whether they were going to be instruments really for the advancement of the country or really whether this new experiment, as they called it, to put India on the road to self-government or responsible government, was going to be a success or not. Both sides were sceptical. Sir, this House can be truly described to be a house of magic presided over by the mistress of co-operation calling to her aid two hand-maidens, reformation and transformation—words which can be writ large on the front doors of this House. This was a House of reformation in the first Assembly. This is a House of transformation in the second Assembly. In the first Assembly, the officials were willing to co-operate, were willing to recognise merits in the non-officials, were willing to do them justice, were willing to see what merit underlay the recommendations made by this House ; and the non-officials began to see in the officials a growing desire to understand the true spirit of the suggestions which were made on this side of the House. Within six months we became an attractive House ; we brought down Sir William Vincent from the Upper House ;



[Diwan Bahadur T. Rangachariar.]

we brought down Sir Denys Bray from the Upper House ; we brought down Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas from the Upper House. So attractive we became to people within our near neighbourhood. But, Sir, we became attractive also to those people who first looked with scorn and antipathy upon this House. I remember, Sir, they thought this House was fit for dogs and asses, and they let loose dogs and asses against us as competitors, when we sought the honour of being elected to this House, with placards round their necks, "Vote for me." This House became so attractive to them that those gentlemen who had boycotted this House found themselves unconsciously attracted to it. Sir, so we reformed ourselves ; we reformed others. We became an attractive House. Then the second stage came. It brought transformation with it. I need not enter, Sir, into much detail as to how the transformation has taken place and is taking place. It may be truly said of this House—although it may be but a figure of speech in other matters—that those who came here to curse have remained to bless. He who entered the House to wreck it is now going to guard it. Sir, who is the agent chosen by the mistress of the House to work such wonders ? It is you who preside over this House ?

Sir, what can it be which has rendered this House so attractive not only to people in India but to people abroad, people who have been brought up for centuries in democratic institutions ? They have been attracted to this spot, they have made this a place of pilgrimage ; I know from personal knowledge that people have flocked to Delhi and Simla to see the work of the Assembly. Sir, how is it that this first new experiment in this country has succeeded so well ? It is in no small measure due to the firm and yet gentle hand which guided it, to the ability you displayed in the discharge of your duties, to the great knowledge of practice and rules which you brought with you, and, Sir, to your abiding interest in the true welfare of India. You did not take a narrow view of the capabilities of my fellow-countrymen. You soon realised, Sir, that any doubt, any scepticism about the capacity of Indians for self-government was not well based on any solid reasons. You did not share the doubts of the official ranks as to the capacity of the people of this country to advance to the goal of self-government. You soon realised the potentialities of the race to which we have the honour to belong. Sir, that being the spirit which guided you in the discharge of your duties, it is no wonder you have succeeded so well. It is the good spirit which really commands success, and I appeal to the official benches, to all, to discharge their duties in the same sympathetic spirit, willing to recognise merit, willing to ignore failings. And if they guide themselves in the discharge of their duties in the way in which you have done, Sir, you will have set a good example to them.

Sir, we will miss you very greatly. The fact that we are going hereafter to be presided over by a patriotic countryman of ours is no consolation for the great regret that we feel at your going. Sir, we are proud of the incoming President. But, Sir, we are prouder of you. As the first President of the Assembly you have made your mark not only yourself, but you have made the whole world take an abiding interest in the way in which we are progressing. We are attached to you for what you have done. We wish you *bon voyage*. We wish you a long life and a glorious life.

**Sir Frederick Whyte :** Mr. President, and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly, I do not know how to thank you for your kind treatment of me during these past five years, nor for this climax of generosity in the speeches just delivered by the Leaders of all Parties in the House. The work of the Chair has an absorbing interest of its own, and I am glad to confess that, though at times it presented difficulties, I have always found it congenial. Indeed, I believe that the longer and more constantly one attends the sittings of the Legislative Assembly, the greater does their interest become ; and so, in one respect, my tenure of the Chair has been its own reward, both in the pleasant co-operation which I have received from Members in all quarters of the House and in the intrinsic interest of the task itself. And, now, you have all added to the President's reward such a volume of generous appreciation that I find it difficult adequately to express my gratitude.

You have been good enough to say that you will miss me. I shall miss the Assembly more, perhaps, even than I know now ; for in these five years I have grown greatly attached to it, not only attached to the Assembly as an institution, but to the individual Members who form the human quality in it. And, moreover, I have watched with pride how the country generally has gradually come to realise the importance of this Chamber and how, slowly but surely, it has laid hold upon the imagination of India.

Those who have co-operated to secure this achievement are, I believe and hope, entitled to the praise of their fellow-countrymen, and to a very natural feeling of elation and pride. We have only to look back to those stormy days in which the Legislative Assembly was first brought into being as one of the most important instruments of the new order—and well indeed do I remember those days—to realise how slender was the thread by which the life of India's Constitution hung five or six years ago. But do not be afraid that this exordium will lead the Chair to tread forbidden political ground. It would, indeed, be a strange thing if the first President, as his last act, were to break the unwritten but inviolable rule that the Chair knows no politics. (Applause.) And, therefore, it is only as a reminiscence—perhaps not without a lesson concealed in it—that I recall the clouds in the sky when I first took office in India. And, so, let me turn from the threshold of dangerous ground and, with your forbearance, sound briefly a more personal note.

I am more sorry than I can say to leave this Chair, which also means leaving India. The experiences I have had, the friends I have made, and I hope I may add, the lessons I have learned, have combined to make my sojourn in India a time of great interest and pleasure. Perplexities there have been and, as my Honourable Colleague and successor will speedily find if he does not know it already from them, the Chair can never be wholly free. There are times indeed when the Chair is a very lonely place,

[Sir Frederick Whyte.]

when the task of holding the even scales of an impartial judgment seems almost too delicate. Let me quote you the words in which an English statesman described that task many years ago :

“ The occasions are frequent and occur unexpectedly, when the Speaker is called upon unaided, and alone, and at once, to decide upon difficult points which may have supreme consequences—points which require not only accurate knowledge of the forms and procedure of the House, but which demand the greatest courage and firmness to apply these precedents to the exigencies of the moment.”

That is a high standard, Gentlemen. But I have the words of an even greater voice to give you regarding a public office such as that of President :

“ Certainly, Gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him ; their opinions high respect ; their business unremitted attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasure, his satisfactions, to theirs,—and above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own.

But his unbiased opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living. These he does not derive from your pleasure,—no, nor from the law and the constitution. They are a trust from Providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable. Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment ; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.”

That was the ideal set before himself by Edmund Burke, one of the greatest of English Parliamentarians, as he was also one of the greatest political thinkers and writers. He set it up in public on the night on which he was elected Member of Parliament for the city of Bristol, one hundred and fifty-one years ago, as the pattern of conduct for a Parliamentary representative. It is a pattern which belongs not only to his time, not to England only, but to every land in which representative institutions are established. It may be taken to heart by the members of all representative assemblies in all countries of the world. But if it be the pattern of conduct for a Member on the floor of the House, how much more is it the very image of behaviour for him who is called to preside over it. Herein, Gentlemen, is the very marrow of a President's function. It is an ideal seldom reached by any occupant of the Chair, and I quote it to you now, well knowing that I have not survived the test which it imposes, but also in the sure conviction that only by holding an almost unattainable ideal before himself can the President hope to win and to retain the confidence of those over whom he presides. (Applause.) Yes, Gentlemen, the President, above all men, must not fail to magnify his office.

And, now, the time has come, all too soon for me, to bid you farewell. It is never a light thing to take leave of friends ; and the generous words which have been used by the Leaders of all Parties in this House to-day,

do not make it any the easier for me to find the true expression of my thanks. That I am grateful to you all goes without saying. That I owe you my thanks needs no words of mine in proof.

“ As the perfume doth remain,  
In the folds where it hath lain,”

so the memories of my time in India, both in this Chamber and outside, will not quickly fade.

I am a debtor to you all for many things : for your unfailing co-operation with the Chair in all the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, for your cheerful acceptance of rulings some of which, sometimes, must have nipped a cherished hope in the bud ; but perhaps, most of all, for your great forbearance in those moments when the human failings of the Chair must have been all too evident. And you have now added a new account to my debt to you by the manner of your farewell. In response I can only say that I have encountered difficulties not a few in the discharge of my duty as President ; I have been confronted by problems which almost seemed to evade solution ; I have had to pronounce an opinion where the bricks were made without straw ; but never in any of those situations have I found it so difficult to choose the right word or to give it utterance as now. So, I must fall back upon the simplest word of all and say from the bottom of my heart, “ I thank you.”

Now, Gentlemen, will you do me the honour and give me the pleasure of shaking hands with me before I leave the Chair for the last time.

(The Members then shook hands with the retiring President, Sir Frederick Whyte, who then vacated the Chair.)

### WELCOME TO THE NEW PRESIDENT.

(The new President, the Honourable Mr. V. J. Patel, then took the Chair.)

**The Honourable Sir Alexander Muddiman** (Home Member) : Sir,

12 Noon. as Leader of the House I beg to welcome you to the Chair to which you have been elected by the votes of this Assembly, and in doing so, I desire to assure you of the support which it is your right to expect and it will be my duty to accord. You have been called to a great office with great responsibilities and we have a confident hope that you will discharge them greatly. I trust that the relations that have existed between the Chair and the House during the tenure of office of your distinguished predecessor will continue. In our personal relations, as Leader of the House it will be frequently my duty to visit you in your room and discuss the scope of business of the House and I trust that the same cordiality and the same harmony will prevail as has prevailed in the past. I assure you, Sir, that you will have the support of these Benches from which I speak in no less a measure and marked by no less a loyalty than your predecessor has received.

[Sir Alexander Muddiman.]

Sir, I express the most cordial hope that the initiation of this new constitutional development may be attended with all success, and I assure you, again, that you, as the first elected President of this Assembly, enter upon your new duties with the best wishes and good-will of the whole House for the successful discharge of that high office. (Loud Applause.)

**Pandit Motilal Nehru** (Cities of the United Provinces : Non-Muhamadan Urban) : Sir, I beg to accord you a most hearty welcome on behalf of the Party which had the honour of claiming you up till a few moments ago and which still hopes to claim you as a member after you have discharged the functions of your new high office. Sir, you have yourself from the floor of the House spoken of the high qualities of the Honourable Sir Frederick Whyte and you have yourself said that it will be your endeavour to come up to that standard which has been set by him. I may say at once that I am not a worshipper of the rising sun. I like to worship the setting sun, and all I can say at the present moment is that you have filled us with high hopes and expectations and that we are confident that you will fulfil them worthily.

**Mr. M. A. Jinnah** (Bombay City : Muhammadan Urban) : Sir, it is easier to pass a verdict after we have seen the work of the President of this Assembly. You are going to preside over this House and, if I may say so with the greatest respect, you are on your trial. You have been elected by this House, and according to the law and the constitution you are authorised to discharge the duties and the functions of this high office. Whatever apprehensions there may be, I hope that they will be dispelled and I feel that you will try your utmost to fulfil the expectations of your friends. Sir, to quote the words from an authoritative book which perhaps you know too well :

"The latest historian of the House gives a capital description of the situation in the following terms :

'The Speaker's constituents not only do not go to the poll ; they cannot, according to present-day usages, call on their representative to vote either for or against any measure which may be before Parliament.

As the Speaker never meets his constituents to discuss politics, one of the chief means of present day political education is lost to them. Political organisation is suspended in a Speaker's constituency ; for a present day speaker has no need of any local party organisation to secure his return, even if he deemed it proper to contribute to party funds. The newspapers in the constituency have necessarily to refrain from criticism or comment on the parliamentary conduct of its representative ; and in nearly all the essentials which go to make representation the constituency is unrepresented. In the constituency represented by the Speaker of to-day, political life is dormant ; for all its outward activities, as they concern both political education and local political organisation, are suspended. But no constituency complains or frets under its temporary and peculiar political disabilities. It is honoured in the honour done by the House of Commons and the country to its representative'."

Sir, let me assure you, although I do not belong to the Party to which you belong, that in the discharge of your duties and the functions of your high office you shall have every support, every co-operation, not only from me individually but, I believe I am speaking on behalf of my Party, the entire Party. I wish you every success and I trust that you will, if not excel, at least come up to the standard of, your predecessor.

**Colonel Sir Henry Stanyon** (United Provinces : European) : It is my privilege, on behalf of the non-official European Members of this House by whom this honour has been deputed to me, to join in the chorus of congratulations which is being sung to you this morning. In

## WELCOME TO THE NEW PRESIDENT.

doing so, I must necessarily sing many of the same notes as my fellow choristers. Two short days ago this House was almost evenly divided in the allotment of its votes between you, Sir, and your gallant opponent. To-day, the same House is unanimous in extending to you a sincere and hearty welcome as its first elected President. The reason for this apparent change of attitude is as obvious as it is sound. Before you were elected, you were still a member of one political party without responsibility to the rest of the House, and you were the executive agent of your individual political opinions. By election you have become detached from your political adherents, and your private political views,—my friend Pandit Motilal Nehru will not like me to say they are dead—have gone into hybernation. (Laughter.) During the term of your Presidentship you are incapacitated from fighting the battles of Swaraj, and you are prohibited from acting on the political convictions and predilections and prejudices of Mr. V. J. Patel. You are now, at one and the same moment, the ruler of procedure in this House, and the bond slave of the conventions which surround and sustain your Chair. You have passed from a forensic arena to a judicial bench. The loss of the Swaraj Party is the gain of the House (Applause)—in accordance with the proverb—*Kissi ka ghar jalle—koi tape*—when one man's house burns, another warms his hands. (Laughter.) In that Chair, Sir, you have no political opinions of your own to guide you. It is no part of your business to pronounce judgment on—or even, if you can avoid it, mentally to explore—the merits of any controversy raised before you in this forum. Your jurisdiction is limited to an administration of the adjective law governing this Assembly. But that is a jurisdiction which will demand all the intelligence, all the time and all the care that you can bring to bear on it. The cross currents of controversy will sweep around you; the waves of stormy debate will dash themselves against your Chair: but they must leave you placid and firm in demeanour, quick and impartial in judgment and sagacious in your control of the conflicting elements for the maintenance of order. I do not say these things in any didactic or dictatorial spirit. We know that you are fully alive to all the qualifications and incidents of your high office, and that it is your purpose to act up to them: and that knowledge gives us confidence that you will carry out your responsible duties after the manner of your distinguished predecessor, to the entire satisfaction of the House and to the utmost of credit to yourself. Some might be inclined to say—you yourself might be discouraged by the thought—that you are handicapped by having to follow immediately after the brilliant expert who has just left the Chair that you now adorn. Your predecessor is verily a super-man, blessed with character and deportment of an exceptional kind, and aided by expert knowledge of and training in parliamentary rules, conventions and traditions. You should not consider it in any way derogatory to you—and we certainly do not—to play second fiddle to him—at least until you have learnt to play as well as he does. On the contrary, your succession to him is a great advantage to you, because he has left a most instructive and helpful model for your guidance of which you will not fail to avail yourself. The momentum of his example will carry you and us along the right way for a long time to come. As has already been said by others, you are not without experience in the duties and difficulties of the chairman of a corporation. You have served and earned distinction as the President of the Municipal Board of one of the first cities of India and we have no doubt that, as such, you have learned much that will

[Colonel Sir Henry Stanyon.]

stand you in good stead here. We non-official Europeans are a small group in this House, but we have been brought up with high ideals regarding the status and duties of the Chair in corporate institutions ; and we are very jealous of the reputation of this Assembly of which we have the honour to be Members. We look, and, as I have said, we look with confidence, to you to maintain the high level initiated and sustained by your distinguished predecessor. In that expectation we offer you our sincere congratulations, our hearty welcome, and our assurance that, in the due discharge of your responsibilities, you can count on us, at all times and in all circumstances, loyally to support the authority and dignity of your Chair. We sadly miss the President who has gone : we gladly welcome the President who has come. *Le Roi est mort, vive le Roi ! !*

**Diwan Bahadur T. Rangachariar** (Madras City : Non-Muhammadian Urban) : Sir, I need give no assurance to you that if I take part in welcoming you to the Chair to-day, it is in no spirit of idle formality that I do so. But, Sir, the outside public I think needs such an assurance from me. You know, Sir, how far we have differed in views from each other. I contested the seat with you. It was a fair contest. It is true you have snatched the victory at the last moment which was so easily and near within my reach. Nevertheless it is in no grudging spirit that I join in extending to you this hearty welcome which has been extended to you already. (Cheers.) Sir, I have known you but a very short time ; but I have heard of you for a very long time. I know you have a great reputation as a great patriot of the land. Patriotism does not mean hatred of others. You have discharged the duties of high office by presiding over the deliberations of a most advanced Municipality, and I have heard from all parties how ably you discharged your duties. I have not the slightest doubt, nobody need have the slightest doubt, that in discharging the duties of this high office you have now earned that there will be any deviation from the high standard set for you by your distinguished predecessor who has just left the Chair. Sir, as a Member of the House and as your Deputy, I promise you my hearty co-operation in the discharge of your duties.

**Mr. President** : Gentlemen, I thank you most sincerely for electing me to this Chair. I thank you again for the kind words that you have spoken this morning and for the best wishes that you have expressed. I frankly confess, gentlemen, that the feeling uppermost in my mind just at this moment is that it will be difficult for me to carry on the duties of this office after having been engaged for 12 or 15 years in public activities. But I assure you that I have accepted this office with high hopes and fully realizing the implications involved therein. I had to consider, in my mind, whether I would be more useful to the cause of my country by remaining a non-official Member of this Assembly or whether I could serve my country as usefully by accepting this Chair if you offered it to me. Before I made up my mind to stand as a candidate, the decision of this question worried me for days and nights, and ultimately I came to the conclusion that I would be serving the cause of my country better by the choice I have made and therefore I accepted it. The Swarajists are often described as critics, destructive critics : and it has therefore become their duty, whenever an honourable opportunity offers to show not only to this House but to the whole world that, if they know how to destroy, they know

also how to construct. They have to show when real responsibility comes to them that they are ready to discharge the duties placed upon their shoulders. You know, gentlemen, that His Excellency the Viceroy was good enough to plead for co-operation for the new President from all sections of the House ; my predecessor, to whom we just bade good-bye, also pleaded for such co-operation, may I also appeal to every section of this House for the same co-operation ? When I ask for co-operation, Gentlemen, I assure you that I am conscious of the fact that it cannot be one-sided. Co-operation is always mutual ; and I particularly ask the official Benches to bear this in mind that when I appeal to them for their co-operation, I am ready in every sense of the term to extend my co-operation to them. (Cheers.) The principles which will guide me in the discharge of my duties have already been expressed by me in my letter to the Members of the Assembly. I should have liked to read out those words now, but I am sorry I have not got them with me. In the discharge of my duties, I shall, I assure you, observe strict impartiality in dealing with all sections of the House, irrespective of Party considerations. (Cheers.) From this moment, I cease to be a Party man. I belong to no Party. I belong to all Parties. (Hear, hear.) I belong to all of you and I hope and trust, my Honourable friend, the Leader of the Swaraj Party, will take immediate steps to absolve me from all the obligations of a Swarajist Member of this House, if, indeed, it has not been done by implication in consequence of my election to this Chair. (Cheers.) Misgivings have been expressed in some quarters, fears have been entertained, that I would not meet the Viceroy, that I would do this, and that I would do that. I assure you, friends, that I am going to do nothing of the kind. If the duties of my office require me to see the Viceroy ten times a day, I am here to do so. If for the discharge of my duties it is necessary that I should see every official Member of this House, I will meet him. None need have any doubt about it, and none need have any apprehensions about it. Once again, let me thank you for the co-operation that you have promised in the discharge of my duties. (Cheers.) I will now ask Honourable Members to come up and shake hands with me.

(The Members then shook hands with Mr. President.)

(Sir Frederick Whyte also shook hands with Mr. President.)

(Loud applause.)

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, the 25th August, 1925.

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