

Wednesday, 27th February, 1929

THE
COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES

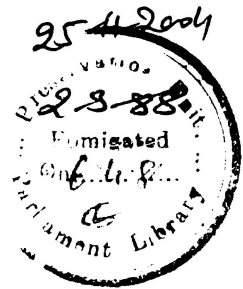
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OF THE

SECOND COUNCIL OF STATE, 1929



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CONTENTS.

Pages.

Tuesday, 12th February, 1929—

Members Sworn	1
Recent Illness of His Majesty the King-Emperor	1-2
Questions and Answers	2-11
Deaths of Mr. S. R. Das and Sir Muhammad Rafique	11-13
Messages from His Excellency the Viceroy	13-14
Committee on Petitions	14
Governor General's Assent to Bills	15
Message from the Legislative Assembly	15
Motion for the Election of a Panel for the Standing Advisory Committee for the Department of Education, Health and Lands—Adopted	15
Motion for the Election of a Panel for the Standing Advisory Committee for the Department of Industries and Labour—Adopted	16
Motion for the Election of a Panel for the Central Advisory Council for Railways—Adopted	16
Presidency-towns Insolvency (Amendment) Bill—Introduced	17

Wednesday, 13th February, 1929—

Resolution <i>re</i> Development of Waterways—Negatived	19-28
Resolution <i>re</i> Establishment of Steamer Services in conjunction with State Railways—Negatived	29-32
Election of two Members to represent the Council of State on the Court of the Delhi University	32

Monday, 18th February, 1929—

Member Sworn	33
Message from the Legislative Assembly	33
Election to the Panel for the Standing Advisory Committee for the Department of Education, Health and Lands	33
Election to the Panel for the Standing Committee for the Department of Industries and Labour	34
Election to the Panel for the Central Advisory Committee on Railways	34
Resolution <i>re</i> Repeal of the Indian Arms Act—Negatived	34-42
Resolution <i>re</i> Return Tickets on State Railways for Third Class Passengers—Withdrawn	43-48
Resolution <i>re</i> Betting at Races—Negatived	49-55
Statement of Business	55

Tuesday, 19th February, 1929—

Member Sworn	57
Elections to the Panel for the Standing Advisory Committee for the Department of Education, Health and Lands	57
The Railway Budget for 1929-30	57-65
Presidency-towns Insolvency (Amendment) Bill—Passed	65-66

	Page.
Friday, 22nd February, 1929—	
General Discussion of the Railway Budget	67-91
Statement of Business	91
Monday, 25th February, 1929—	
Member Sworn	93
Questions and Answers	93-96
Resolution <i>re</i> Separate Karnataka Province—Negatived ...	97-102
Resolution <i>re</i> Slaughter of Milch Cows for the Supply of Beef to the Army—Negatived	103-137
Resolution <i>re</i> Extension of Banking Facilities—Withdrawn ...	113-18
Wednesday, 27th February, 1929—	
Resolution <i>re</i> Import of Vegetable Oil, etc—Adopted ...	119-33
Resolution <i>re</i> Reconstitution of the Central Advisory Council for Railways—Withdrawn	134-38
Thursday, 28th February, 1929—	
The General Budget for 1929-30	139-53
Statement of Business	153
Monday, 4th March, 1929—	
Member Sworn	155
Message from Her Majesty the Queen-Empress	155
Questions and Answers	155-80
Congratulations to the Honourable Colonel Nawab Sir Umar Hayat Khan and the Honourable Sir Annamalai Chetty on the Honours conferred on them	180-81
Resolution <i>re</i> Reduction of the Price of Postcards—Negatived	181-93
Resolution <i>re</i> Assessment of Income-tax on the Annual value of Residential Property—Withdrawn	193-203
Wednesday, 6th March, 1929—	
Questions and Answers	205-10
General Discussion of the General Budget	210-55
Statement of Business	256
Tuesday, 12th March, 1929—	
Questions and Answers	257-66
Bill passed by the Legislative Assembly laid on the Table	266
Resolution <i>re</i> Deductions when determining Income-tax of Losses incurred by Persons who stand Surety or lend Money	266-75
Statement of Business	276

	Pages.
Monday, 18th March, 1929—	
Questions and Answers	277-85
Bill passed by the Legislative Assembly laid on the Table ...	286
Message from the Legislative Assembly	286
Resolution <i>re</i> Jury Trials in cases of Sedition—Negatived ...	286-94
Resolution <i>re</i> Leader of the Indian Delegation to the League of Nations—Withdrawn by leave of the Council ...	294-305
Resolution <i>re</i> Distribution of Spinning Wheels to the Famine-stricken people of the Northern Districts of the Central Provinces—Negatived	305-11
Tuesday, 19th March, 1929—	
Questions and Answers	313-20
Statement laid on the Table	320
Motion for the Election of the Panel for the Standing Committee on Emigration—Adopted	320-21
Indian Tariff (Amendment) Bill—Passed	321-23
Wednesday, 20th March, 1929—	
Questions and Answers	325-30
Date for the Receipt of Nominations to the Panel for the Standing Committee on Emigration	330
Resolution <i>re</i> Investigation into the Systems of Land Revenue in the Different Provinces—Negatived	331-57
Statement of Business	357
Saturday, 23rd March, 1929—	
Member Sworn	359
Questions and Answers	359-63
Elections to the Panel for the Standing Committee on Emigration	363
Workmen's Compensation (Amendment) Bill—Passed	364-65
Alleged delay in the Disposal of Government Business in the Legislative Assembly	365-68
Saturday, 30th March, 1929—	
Questions and Answers	369-75
Bill passed by the Legislative Assembly laid on the Table ...	375
Election of a Member to the Governing Body of the Central Council of Agricultural Research	376-77
Indian Finance Bill—Considered and Passed	377-400
Monday, 8th April, and Tuesday, 9th April, 1929—	
Monday, 8th April, 1929—	
Questions and Answers	401-02
Election of the Panel for the Standing Committee on Roads ...	402-05
Election of a Member to the Governing Body of the Central Council of Agricultural Research	405
Tuesday, 9th April, 1929—	
Member Sworn	407
Bill passed by the Legislative Assembly laid on the Table ...	407
Trade Disputes Bill—Date for consideration	407

	Pages.
Thursday, 11th April, 1929—	
Recent Bomb Outrage in the Legislative Assembly ...	409
Trade Disputes Bill—Considered and Passed ...	409-30
Elections to the Panel for the Standing Committee on Roads	430
Message from His Excellency the Viceroy ...	431
Friday, 12th April, 1929—	
Address by His Excellency the Viceroy to the Members of the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly ...	433-35

COUNCIL OF STATE.

Wednesday, 27th February 1929.

The Council met in the Council Chamber of the Council House at Eleven of the Clock, the Honourable the President in the Chair.

RESOLUTION *RE* IMPORT OF VEGETABLE OIL, ETC.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS (Punjab : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I rise to move the Resolution which stands in my name and which runs thus :

“ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that—

- (a) the import into India of solidified vegetable oil, *vanaspati*, and other similar products, be entirely prohibited unless they are given such permanent harmless colouring as may readily distinguish them from and render them unfit for readily mixing without detection with natural pure ghee ;
- (b) a prohibitive excise duty be levied on solidified vegetable oil, *vanaspati* and other similar cheap products manufactured in India, unless they are also permanently coloured in the same way as is suggested in clause (a) for imported articles, in order to render them unfit for readily mixing without detection with natural pure ghee.”

Sir, I have come again before this House to induce Government to take some effective steps to prohibit absolutely the import into this country of solidified oils, *vanaspati* and other similar cheap products. The producers of these commodities are forcing on the people of this land a food which is admitted by the medical authorities to be deficient in important vitamins. In support of this, Sir, His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief in answer to one of my questions on the subject asked some time ago in this Honourable House said :

“ It is not thought desirable to deprive the Indian soldier of an article which contains substances essential to his growth and physical fitness in favour of one which does not and which would probably be much less acceptable to him than the article to which he has been accustomed from childhood.”

That is the reason, Sir, why the Military Department does not buy adulterated ghee or any of these *vanaspatis*, because it affects the vitality of the Army in India. This question, Sir, was taken up seriously by the Punjab Council, and from a very few extracts which I will give to the House I will prove that in the Punjab, which is mainly a ghee consuming province, the representatives of the people in the Council have all expressed their wish to stop the adulteration of ghee and the import of this *vanaspati* into the province. The Honourable Malik Feroz Khan Noon, Minister for Local Self-Government in the Punjab, dealt with the subject very fully and I shall give only a very few extracts from his speech. He said :

“ If you wish to find out as to what the Indian mind feels about the effect of *vanaspati* ghee you have got to go to the streets and see the labourers who eat simple *chappatis* and *dal* and have nothing more to eat. You will find there are many in that class in this country with whom natural ghee is the only stuff which gives them the necessary vitamins. If you cut ghee out of their *dal* or out of their *chappatis*, you will find that their food will not be as nourishing as it ought to be.”

[Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das.]

Further on he says :

“ It has been argued that *vanaspati* is not directly injurious. I certainly agree that it is not injurious, as arsenic, for instance, is injurious. On the other hand *vanaspati* has not got that effect. It has this effect, that it greatly reduces a man's vitality and the effect of that article of food in the long run is, I think, as injurious as that of any poison. I have been trying to study this question as minutely as possible. I have thought of the question of prohibiting the import of *vanaspati* into this province. I am sorry to say that to prohibit the import of this article into the province was not within my power and not within the power of this Government. Then, I further went into the question of requesting Municipal Committees to prohibit the sale of this article within their limits and of prohibiting its being disembarked at certain railway stations. This method again was found defective, because a man who wishes to cheat the public need not necessarily detain his *vanaspati* consignment at a particular railway station where there is a Municipal Committee. For instance, in the case of Lahore, he can easily detain at some 10 or 15 miles out and then bring it into Lahore by a motor lorry. So even that method could not be as effective as it was desired.”

In another place he says :

“ With the support of your speeches in this Council we will certainly at once proceed to address the Government of India on the subject and try to bring about some sort of legislation or executive order by which all *vanaspati* produced in India or imported is coloured in such a way that if it is mixed with real ghee it is spotted at once.”

Then at the end he says :

“ It is my intention as well to keep this danger away as far as possible.”

In this connection, Sir, I might say that in my present Resolution I do not want that the sale of so-called *vanaspati* or solidified oil should be stopped. Let those people who cannot afford to pay a high price for ghee and who willingly want to buy *vanaspati*, buy it. There being no other suitable method of regulating the sale of this *vanaspati* and of easily detecting its being mixed with pure ghee, the only way which my friends and I and the Punjab Government as well think it could be done is to give it a permanent harmless colouring, a colouring which will easily distinguish it from pure ghee and which when mixed with pure ghee will give ghee a different colouring. Last time the Honourable the Commerce Secretary said that as *vanaspati* was a better substitute for being mixed with ghee, perhaps it was more harmless, I should say, than other things with which ghee was being at present mixed. In this connection, Sir, I should like to say that *vanaspati* is an odourless and tasteless product. When anything else but this is mixed with pure ghee, that can be distinguished by scent or by taste, while in case this *vanaspati* is mixed with pure ghee neither the tongue nor the nose can easily detect it. In the Punjab, as the House would have learnt from the speech of the Honourable the Minister for Local Self-Government, various Punjab Municipalities imposed on *vanaspati* an octroi duty or terminal tax varying from Rs. 30 to Rs. 50 a maund. That was done, as far as I can see, at the instance of the Punjab Government. But when these Municipalities in the interests of their own people levied that tax and approached the Punjab Government for approval, if I am not wrong, the Punjab Government approached the Central Government. I do not know the nature of the reply which the Government of India sent to the Punjab Government, but I know this much, that all the Municipalities which imposed these prohibitive duties on the import of *vanaspati* were refused their request. They were not allowed to impose what they wanted to do. This shows, Sir, how local self-government works in practice. Whenever anything is done which

does not suit the wishes of the Imperial Government or the Local Government, the Municipalities even in their legitimate work are virtually refused free scope. I hope, Sir, the Honourable the Commerce Secretary will throw some light in this House as to the nature of the reply that the Government of India sent to the Punjab Government. The result of this indifference on behalf of the Government of India on a question of vital importance to the Punjab which contributes to the manpower of the Army is now being differently interpreted in certain quarters. People say that it is the intention of the Government to kill the manhood of the Punjab by this indirect method. I do not agree with this myself, but I think those who think so have really some ground for suspicion, and I think the reply of the Honourable the Commerce Secretary will correct this mistake, if there is any.

The second part of my Resolution, Sir, deals with another aspect of the same subject. Some time back, Sir, a representative of a big *vanaspati* concern came to the Punjab with the idea of establishing a *vanaspati* factory there. He saw various people whom he thought were interested in his new venture and he approached the Punjab Government as well. I do not know what reply the Punjab Government gave him as regards certain patronage which he wanted. But all the same, Sir, I find that there is a movement in certain circles in foreign countries to come to India and to establish these factories to escape the legislation which they anticipated might perhaps ensue as a result of the strong agitation which is now being raised against this commodity by the public and the Press. My prayer simply is that *vanaspati* ghee ought not to be imported into India unless it has a harmless permanent colouring, and in case such article is produced in India, that also should be subject to the same prohibition unless and until that is also permanently coloured. Some people say, Sir, that if a permanent colouring is given to *vanaspati* it will not sell in the market. . . .

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. A. NATESAN : It could easily be removed by another chemical.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : In case it can be removed by another chemical, the import of that chemical or the use of that can be dealt with later on as circumstances require. In case we go on in the way suggested by the Honourable Mr. Natesan, then I do not think that we shall be able to move at all in this matter, because whatever we might do, there will be some sort of solution for it. But all the same, I see, Sir, that coloured aerated waters are now in great popular demand—green, pink, blue and all sorts of colours. In the beginning people were doubtful whether these coloured waters might or might not sell, but we now find coloured waters are in great demand. Some people say, Sir, that England passed through a similar difficulty some time ago and that was in connection with margarine. In that connection, Sir, I want to say only a few words, and that is, as far as the consumption of butter or margarine is concerned in England and in India by those who live in English style, butter is used with toast on a very small scale. There of course colour may be a question. I do not consider that it does matter at all, but perhaps some people may want the white coating for the bread. Dr. Maddison, who was the President of the Health Committee of the League of Nations, during the course of an interview with a Punjabi in Lahore, remarked that margarine was the cause of blindness in children which resulted in various sorts of legislation. I do not know, Sir, personally whether this effect of margarine has been perceived elsewhere, but coming from an authority like Dr. Maddison I think, Sir, that there is good reason to suspect that this *vanaspati* is likely to do us harm. Sore eyes are generally the trouble

[Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das.]

in the Punjab now. I need not dwell, Sir, on the good or bad qualities of *vanaspati* because in my present Resolution I do not want to say anything against it for those who want to use *vanaspati* knowing what it is. Let them use it, but I want the public to be saved from being cheated. Now in the Punjab cheating is going on to such an extent that it is very difficult to get pure ghee. Even for religious purposes it is very difficult for one to get pure ghee. Ghee is now being adulterated in every village. It is being mixed with milk and after that the milk is churned. So it is of very great interest to Punjabis at least, and to the people of the United Provinces and North-West Frontier Province who also largely use ghee, that some prompt and effective action in this direction should be taken. Unlike Bengal, Madras and other provinces, where oil is mostly used, in the Punjab, the United Provinces and the North-West Frontier Province ghee is the principal commodity which forms a principal part of our food. Therefore, Sir, to give to the provinces which consume pure ghee an equivalent in oil is, I think, not proper. It does not suit the constitution of the people because they have not been accustomed to it from ages past. I might here give, Sir, some idea of the quantity of this *vanaspati* which is being imported into India. I gave these figures last year and I give a few more figures to revive the memory of this House. From April to December 1927 the total imports of such vegetable products were valued at Rs. 1,40,04,839, while in the year 1928, from January to December, the total import amounted in value to Rs. 1,92,10,355. This shows, Sir, how the demand for this ghee is rising and the extent to which the people in the Punjab, the United Provinces and the North-West Frontier Province in particular are being cheated by this *vanaspati* being adulterated very freely with the ordinary ghee. Realising, Sir, the danger to the manhood of their own people, the Governments of Jammu and Kashmir have totally prohibited the import of this *vanaspati* into their territory. The Kapurthala Durbar has done the same. Many other States, Sir, have already taken action in the matter in the Bombay Presidency as well. I will just mention a few States where its import has been prohibited—Porbandar, Navanagar, Junagadh, Wadhwan, Palitana, Rajkot, Edar, Dhrall, Soyia, and so on.

In Gwalior State, Sir, an import duty of Rs. 50 a maund has been imposed on this *vanaspati*, which means that the entry of this article into that State is absolutely stopped because the price of ghee there ranges from Rs. 42 to Rs. 48 a maund. There was a conference held at Poona in the Bombay Presidency at the instance of Government where it was resolved :

“ to entirely prohibit the import of these imitations of butter and ghee and thus save the butter and ghee business of this province from ruin. Also to put a complete stop to this adulteration of butter and ghee throughout the Bombay Presidency by more stringent and more effective measures.”

I need not dilate on this point any further, but this much I want to say before I sit down, that every other effort to control the sale of this *vanaspati* in the Punjab has failed because the adulteration has begun at the manufacturing centres of butter. Villagers and farmers, dairymen and merchants, all buy this *vanaspati* and mix it with ghee, and the result is that ghee *vanaspati* is being sold as pure ghee and not as *vanaspati*. It may be said that legislation may be undertaken requiring that the sale of *vanaspati* be allowed only in such tins which indicate this fact, but it is of no use because the food value of vegetable ghee as such is practically nil. With these few words, Sir, I want the support of this House in this very important matter. I need not go into details again, Sir, and I simply want to remind this House of the statement

I made when I spoke on this subject on the last occasion, namely, that Captain Thomas, Chemical Examiner of the Punjab, reported adversely on this *vanaspati* when he said that of two kittens, one was fed on *vanaspati* and another on pure ghee, and the result was that after some time one lost weight heavily and health, and the other gained. So, Sir, it is not a question whether *vanaspati* is harmless. It may be harmless in the sense that it may produce no disease directly but, Sir, it has no food value for those who consume it. However, Sir, that question I now leave to the House and I think that my Resolution which concerns the health and the vitality of the people will be supported by this House.

THE HONOURABLE SIR GEOFFREY CORBETT (Commerce Secretary) : With your permission, Sir, I rise at once to explain the attitude of the Government towards this Resolution. I think I ought to say in the first place that there is, of course, no sinister design to kill the manhood of the Punjab. In fact, I think that the robust presence of the Honourable the Mover here today and other Punjab Members suggests one of two things : either that they find it possible to get their ghee pure, or that *vanaspati* is not so deleterious to health as they would have us believe. (Laughter.) I am glad to find that the Honourable the Mover has indeed modified his attitude substantially on this point. He no longer claims that the use of solidified vegetable oil would be prohibited, but that it should be sold as such and not as ghee. When he gets as far as that, there is very little between us. I find, I believe I am correct in saying, that the manufacturers of solidified vegetable oil do not wish that it should be sold as an adulterant of ghee, but wish that it should find its own market on its own merits. Only this morning, Sir, I saw in the *Times of India* an advertisement published by a manufacturer of solidified oil, in which the housewife is urged to use solidified oil openly. This is a picture of the housewife, Sir, (showing a picture in the *Times of India*) and this is what the advertisement says :

“ Please, Georgie, don't go to the nasty old club for dinner any more,—mother told me her secret, and I'm cooking in Cocogem too now.”

(Laughter.) Sir, when we have got to that stage, that it is the point of view both of the Honourable the Mover and of the manufacturers, the matter really comes down to this, that it is merely a question of a correct trade description. We want to ensure that the public know what they are buying, and that the manufacturer sells his goods for what they are.

I was rather surprised that the Honourable the Mover did not refer to what the Agricultural Commission said on this subject, for they approached the question from a point of view which is, I believe, of interest to him, and certainly of interest to many Members of this House, and that is, the point of view of the agriculturist and the effect on the primary producer of ghee. They say :

“ The purity of *ghi*, like that of milk, is a subject affecting the interests of the producer”

—it was from his point of view they were looking at it—

“ *Ghi*-making is not only a widespread village industry, but an important aid to successful dairy farming on a large scale. Many complaints of the adulteration of *ghi* have been made to us, and our attention has also been directed to the increasing sale of substitutes known as “ vegetable *ghi*”. No exception can be taken to the sale of substitutes for *ghi* if these are properly described, and are sold under names which do not lead the public to suppose that they are *ghi* ; for in all countries such substances are recognised as cheap and wholesome foods ; but there are grave objections to mis-description. The position in India is now very similar to that which arose in the British butter market

[Sir Geoffrey Corbett.]

when margarine was first introduced. To protect the producer of butter from unfair competition, and the consumer from imposition, the sale, under the name of butter, of any article composed partly of fat from other sources than milk was prohibited; and to prevent sellers of margarine from using names which might lead customers to think that they were being served with some kind of butter, the law required that names under which manufacturers proposed to sell their margarine must be approved by the Department of Agriculture.

We are of opinion that similar action is required to protect producers of *ghi*."

And also from the point of view of the Commerce Department, I would add, to protect the consumers of ghee and the manufacturers of solidified vegetable oil.

My Honourable friend's Resolution, as now worded this year, is substantially the same as the proposal made by the Punjab Government which I referred to in this Council last year. The Punjab Government wrote to us as follows :

"In these circumstances, it appears to the Punjab Government that the only effective method of dealing with this wholesale cheating would be to prohibit the import of such products into, or manufacture within, British India unless they are coloured in such a way that they could not be mixed with or passed off as natural *ghi* without immediate detection."

As I told the Council last year, we referred this proposal to the various Local Governments. We have only received the opinions of a few of the Local Governments so far, and the major Local Governments and commercial bodies have not yet replied. In these circumstances, I am sure the Honourable the Mover will understand that it would be improper for the Government of India to express an opinion, or indeed to hold an opinion, until they have received and considered what the Local Governments have to say. Thus the position of the Government towards this Resolution is this. We will take no further part in the debate and we will not vote, but we shall be very glad to hear what the views of Members of this House are, in order that, when we come to consider the opinions of the Local Governments, we may have the considered opinions of Members here too.

THE HONOURABLE COLONEL NAWAB SIR UMAR HAYAT KHAN (Punjab : Nominated Non-Official) : Sir, coming from the Punjab and also its martial classes, it is my concern to speak on this subject. I think my Honourable friend Rai Bahadür Lala Ram Saran Das has himself brought forward most of the arguments and I need not repeat them. But I must mention, Sir, my own experience. Some time ago, when the holdings were large, the people of the Punjab could keep cattle, and for their own consumption they always had the best ghee. But directly they had anything surplus to their own requirements for sale, sometimes they adulterated it. This *vanaspati* ghee has got so common now and is sold everywhere that, unfortunately, these zemindars buy it and mix it with other ghee for selling purposes and you cannot get pure ghee at all. I have had this experience myself here in Delhi when buying ghee for a very large household. They could not get any proper ghee and their health is suffering. When I was in Peshawar in the Army, I used to get my ration just as any other ordinary soldier gets, and I found that the ghee supplied was not pure at all. So, I bottled it and sealed it and sent it to Simla and from there the answer was that it was not pure ghee. The Army has taken the matter up since and they are doing their best to get as much good ghee as they can. But if adulterated ghee was allowed to be sold like that, I do not think it will be possible for anybody to get good ghee. We are concerned, Sir,

with the health of our soldiers. If they are looked after and the Army authorities try to secure good ghee for them, should not we go further and see to the material from which they are drawn? If the people from whom our soldiers are drawn do not get good foodstuffs their health will naturally deteriorate and the soldiers drawn from that class will also deteriorate in consequence. I would support this Resolution from another point of view as well. A large portion of India is vegetarian, and their only source of nourishment is derived from ghee. If this is cut out of their diet they will naturally not be so strong as they should be. Though we may not be concerned with them from the point of view of the Army, still they are the inhabitants of India and we should think about them also. So I think that for the sake of the health of the country we ought to take steps, as recommended here, and I am glad that the Government is to-day willing to hear us and will not oppose us. In these circumstances, we can easily carry this Resolution and when we have backed it and passed it, some action will be taken upon it. . . .

THE HONOURABLE SIR MANECKJI DADABHOY: What about the poor people?

THE HONOURABLE COLONEL NAWAB SIR UMAR HAYAT KHAN: I think the poor people, Sir, want to live just as much as anybody else. To begin with they do not get sufficient food because they are poor, and if on top of that you go and give them this cheap stuff—I will not say that Government wants to kill them off, but nature will kill them, as others have pointed out before me.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. RAMADAS PANTULU (Madras: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I rise to support the Resolution which has been very ably moved by my Honourable friend Lala Ram Saran Das. Of course this old friend *vanaspati* is rather a hardy annual, and I have been really guilty in the past of not having given the Honourable the Mover my vocal support, though I would always have voted with him if there had been a division. He has given very good reasons for actually prohibiting the import of this stuff into India. I was wondering why he did not actually ask for the prohibition of its import into this country. The answer made by the Honourable Sir Geoffrey Corbett is apparently of a non-committal character. But when analysed it does not appear to be non-committal as all that. He has said enough to give us an indication of the view of Government, which is that if these solidified oils are sold as such and there is no deceit the Government will not be prepared to prohibit their importation. I think that is a wrong attitude to take. I have read the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Agriculture on this matter, and I regret to say that I cannot agree with that recommendation. My very simple reason is this. When once you introduce a foreign cheap substitute for any Indian article, the chances are that the indigenous article will be very soon driven out of the market. If there are two things in this country which ought to be supplied by indigenous enterprise, and the importation of foreign substitutes of which ought to be prohibited, they are foodstuffs and clothing. It is no secret and this House knows that I am one of those people who are very strongly in favour of boycotting every foreign article in this country, if possible. If I am not able to do it, it is only because of our inability to manufacture the articles concerned; but the moment that India can manufacture any article herself, I shall certainly advocate the Government taking every possible step to prevent the importation of that article into this country from abroad. Therefore, my reasons for supporting this motion are broad-based on national interests, which ought to commend themselves to the Government,

[Mr. V. Ramadas Pantulu.]

if they only had the vision to pursue a right policy, namely, the prohibition of a foreign article of food which is a substitute for an indigenous article. Two years ago when the members of the Royal Commission on Agriculture were in Delhi, His Excellency the Viceroy, who is very deeply interested in the agricultural progress of this country, presided over a lecture at one of the cinemas in Delhi delivered by a Government expert. His Excellency showed how deeply interested he was in the promotion of cattle welfare and the promotion of dairy farming in India. But if tinned butter from Denmark and condensed milk from Switzerland and *vanaspati* from Holland and other things from all over Europe are to come into India, I can assure the Government of India that its good intentions will remain absolutely unfulfilled for generations to come. If two crores rupees worth of *vanaspati* is imported into this country every year it means so much competition with ghee and less consumption of the latter. If the Government of India had the proper vision they would improve agricultural conditions and the cattle wealth of this country to such an extent that India might be able to supply milk products not only to satisfy its own needs, but to export dairy produce to foreign countries. Therefore, I cannot congratulate the Government of India upon its agricultural policy or even upon the recommendations which the Royal Commission made with regard to the promotion of agricultural industries and cattle welfare in this country. Therefore, I very strongly feel that this *vanaspati* ought to be absolutely prohibited from being imported into India if cattle wealth is to improve and dairy farming is to be encouraged, and, generally, if the agriculturist is to be made prosperous. No agriculturist can thrive unless the cattle wealth is improved. That is one of the first requisites of agricultural prosperity. Therefore, I think the whole policy is a vicious one, and I support this Resolution on the ground that the importation of *vanaspati* is absolutely inimical to the agricultural prosperity of this country.

It is said that the article might be sold under its proper name without any prospect of deceit. But I wonder how that is going to be done. The laws against adulteration are very difficult to administer, even if the article which is used for adulteration can be readily detected. But if it is really odourless and tasteless, as has been said, its detection would be impossible. But even if it were possible to detect the adulteration, the local bodies and municipalities who administer the laws regarding adulteration are very slow to move in the matter. There are only two ways of preventing adulteration. One is the wholesale destruction of the adulterated article, and the other the imposition of fines or other punishment on the offenders. My experience as a member of a municipality long ago convinces me that very few Bench Magistrates would go to the length of destroying hundreds of thousands of tins of ghee if they found it was adulterated. They are very tender on that point. I knew one Magistrate who once ordered a hundred tins of ghee to be poured into the river and he was very much disliked by the people in consequence, because above all things Indians are very much against an article being destroyed, and that feeling gets the better of their ideas on sanitation and considerations of that sort. Therefore, destruction is more easily preached than performed, and the imposition of fines upon these adulterators hardly has the desired effect.

Therefore, it is very easy to say that the laws of adulteration may be brought into play in order to detect and punish the adulteration of ghee. As for medical opinion and as for advertisement in the *Times of India*, which the Honourable Sir Geoffrey Corbett has quoted, there is nothing very unusual. I read another advertisement recently of a coffee dealer in America and he quoted a great scientist, a great medical man, who said that, unless a man

drank 175 cups of coffee a day, it does not come anywhere near a poison and he adduced a lot of scientific opinion in his favour. These people who want to push their trade will certainly say such things, but we who are asked to consume the deleterious stuff are not quite easily prepared to accept advertisements in the papers. Now, production of these cheap and valueless articles from the food point of view ought in the long run to have the effect of destroying the real enterprise in producing dairy products. I think even my British friends ought to recognise how the cheap yarn and cheap cloth of Japan have harmed the textile industry of even England. Once people get cheap food substitutes, poor people will go in for the cheapest stuff in the market, because their idea is not yet of strength and health, but to live somehow. Non-starvation itself is a problem with three-fourths of the population of India, let alone health, strength and luxuries. In a country like this, where millions are starving for food any cheap stuff will do. Therefore, the danger of this must be evident to those who care to realise it, and I hope the Government of India will not be over-tender to these foreign manufacturers and importers, but will have more concern for the agriculturists of India and their cattle wealth and the people who will suffer by the use of deleterious stuffs like *vanaspati*. I think the public of this country really owe a debt of gratitude to my friend the Honourable Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das for fighting out this question which concerns not only public health, but also agricultural prosperity. Year after year I hope he will continue to bring it up until Government take action.

With these words, I have very great pleasure in supporting the Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE SIR GEORGE GODFREY (Bengal Chamber of Commerce): Sir, I rise to oppose this Resolution. To start with, may I quite frankly say that there are many members of the constituency which I represent who are interested in the importation of this article which is under discussion. If I say that, I will perhaps remove all ideas of suspicion that I may be influenced in my opinion on that account. The fact that they do import this article means that they stepped in to supply what India urgently required. If local factories can be financed and built in India to turn out a similar article out of India's own nuts, ground-nuts and other seeds that produce valuable oil, let them be started by all means. There is no reason surely why some of our energetic commercial Members of this House, who are interested in the subject, should not start them themselves. But my objection is not based at all on the fact that many European firms are interested in the importation, but because I consider that the Honourable the Mover is endeavouring to bring about legislation which is going to favour the rich as against the poor. Pure ghee is insufficient in India. It has been proved so over and over again, and the price of pure ghee is hopelessly beyond the purse of the poor people. A bad monsoon in any particular area will reduce the amount of fodder available for cattle, and that reduction will react to diminish what there may be of pure ghee available in that area. This will only make it more expensive still. It is all very well for the rich people, they can afford to keep their own cattle or they can afford to pay their neighbours who keep cattle a high price for pure ghee, they can obtain supplies of pure ghee and probably can be sure of getting it. But my friend's proposal would make the ghee which is used by the poor more expensive, and it would induce the poorer classes to buy inferior ghee. I will explain it in this way. He wants to introduce a permanent harmless colour. Well, as regards the permanency of the colour, I think it is very doubtful as to whether that could be attained. If a colour can be inserted

[Sir George Godfrey.]

into vegetable oils so as to produce a very distinctive colour, that colour could also be removed by subsequent treatment. But even supposing a permanent harmless colour was attainable and that it was distinctive and that this artificial ghee was used for adulterating pure ghee, the poorer classes would be frightened when they see this nasty colour; they will say, "That is not the stuff we are accustomed to use," and they would not buy it and they would look about for some other ghee which is bound to be adulterated. They could not afford to pay for pure ghee; they would look about for some ghee which was not so coloured and yet would be undoubtedly adulterated with much more harmful material, more deleterious to health. The imported artificial ghee is a perfectly pure, harmless, pleasant article for cooking. We need not discuss it in detail now. It has been threshed out over and over again as to whether it is short of vitamins as compared with genuine pure ghee; but to hamper the import, as I said, would be a serious imposition on the poorer classes. As regards vitamins a reference was made just now to some experiments with animals. We all know it. We have read about it several times before. The ordinary person who is using ghee is not eating it as his sole food. He is merely using it as a cooking medium. He is not even spreading it on his breakfast toast to add to the substance of that article. He is merely using it for cooking, and in the process of cooking some of the vitamins of real ghee disappear, so that the result is that as a cooking medium as between real ghee and artificial ghee there is very little difference in regard to vitamins. Reference was made to the Army Department trying to buy or buying real, genuine ghee. If they can do so, so much the better; however, from the remarks subsequently made it seems rather doubtful whether they do get real ghee. If they do get it, then the fact that a very large quantity is bought for the Army must surely be a further argument towards the well known fact that real ghee is in defect all over India as a requirement of the poor people, and that it is a physical impossibility to obtain a sufficient quantity: therefore it is far better.....

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: Can you quote figures?

THE HONOURABLE SIR GEORGE GODFREY: I cannot quote figures. I am only going by statements which have been repeated over and over again, that people are unable to obtain pure ghee in the market except at a prohibitive price. It is far better, therefore, I consider, that the lower classes in towns and cities should have available a perfectly pure harmless adulterant or substitute. The Mover admits he does not want importation stopped. Surely this is an admission of its necessity, and colouration will undoubtedly discourage its use and limit its importation which, as I have shown, will be harmful to, and will inflict hardship on, the poor inhabitants of the towns. I would ask what right has the Honourable the Mover or anyone else in this House to stand up and advocate measures which will penalise the poor, rob them of food, while the richer people are fattening and thriving on the pure ghee which they alone can afford to buy.

With these few words, I beg the House not to be influenced by the statements that have been put forward, but to look at the question from the point of view of the poor people who must be given something in the place of very expensive ghee.

THE HONOURABLE RAJA MOTI CHAND (United Provinces Southern : Non-Muhammadan): Our thanks are due to the

12 Noon.

Honourable the Mover of the Resolution which has my unqualified support. As far as my experience of my own Province goes, I consider the whole arrangement of the sale of vegetable ghee as a regular fraud upon the unsuspecting public which generally buys this article as genuine ghee. From the big city down to the poorest hamlet genuine ghee is steadily making room for this harmful commodity. Without being a doctor, I have no fear of contradiction when I say that the article is injurious to human health.

It may be urged that its import cannot be checked and also that medically it is not a *poison* but it is a *panacea*. Even then I say that this *panacea* or *poison* should be sold only as such and should not assume the garb of pure ghee, and be a distinct commodity and it should be made to have some distinctive colouring like the one suggested by the Honourable the Mover of the Resolution. I may inform the House that those that sell this product generally adulterate pure ghee with it, and those that are less scrupulous, try to pass it off as pure ghee and charge the same price as for genuine ghee.

If ghee, which is an essential article for the very life of a large section of Indians, is becoming scarce through causes so well known to Honourable Members here, I am sure the House will not countenance its replacement by any commodity which has only pretensions to ghee and which is not expected to afford the same religious or physical relief with which we have come to associate real ghee from time immemorial.

With these few words I strongly support the Resolution brought forward by the Honourable Lala Ram Saran Das.

THE HONOURABLE SRIJUT RAMA PRASAD MOOKERJEE (West Bengal : Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I am thankful to the Honourable Sir George Godfrey for the words of solicitude and sympathy for the poor which he has repeated more than once during the five minutes that he spoke. The arguments that have been advanced by him would have been quite appropriate if the suggestion of the Honourable the Mover had been to stop all importation of *vanaspati* or vegetable products. The proposal which we are now to consider is, whether some steps ought not to be taken by which the adulteration of a vegetable product with ghee could be stopped. If we are to take the argument of Sir George Godfrey literally, then it comes to this that, because the poor people would be getting the adulterated ghee cheap, therefore let adulteration continue. But, Sir, are the poor people, or as a matter of fact any person, getting ghee cheap whether it is adulterated with a vegetable product or any other adulteration? Let the article be sold as a vegetable product and not under the false colour of ghee. Some time ago a Ghee Act was passed in Bengal; but merely passing an Act without taking adequate steps to stop adulteration would not decrease the price of the commodity or stop adulteration, and the result in Bengal is that adulteration has been going on as before, but the price has increased by about 20 to 25 per cent. At the present moment in the midst of the bazars you will find that ghee is mixed with vegetable products and the price that is charged for this adulterated ghee is the same as you will be charged for pure ghee. It has been repeated more than once in this House that it is not possible easily to detect whether there has been adulteration with a vegetable product or not. The reason is that it is odourless, colourless and tasteless. An examination which was conducted in the laboratories of the Calcutta Corporation some time ago showed that it was not easy to find out whether or by what quantity ghee was adulterated with a vegetable product.

[Srijut Rama Prasad Mookerjee.]

An attempt was also made in the Calcutta Corporation to stop this adulteration ; but the law is wholly inadequate to cope with the present menace, and unless some steps are taken by the Central Government—the suggestion as made by the Honourable the Mover is accepted or another suggestion which was made elsewhere that a vegetable product should be sold only in closed tins and not retail,—you cannot stop the adulteration of vegetable products with ghee. The Honourable Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das thought that we in Bengal were not so much affected by this adulteration, but I am afraid he is not posted with all the information in Bengal. Ghee is one of the principal commodities in Bengal, as much as it is in any other portion of northern India. When I speak of it as being one of the principal commodities I mean that it is one of those things which you will find to be a necessity and in use in every household. I cannot speak with authority of the Muhammadan household, but in every Hindu household it is one of the principal things in use. When we take into account the kind of food that is taken by the vegetarians generally or the Hindu widows specially throughout the country, it is clear that unless pure ghee is made available to that section of the public at least, the food that is taken by them will be wholly inadequate in vitamins. Whether the vegetable product is deleterious or not, whether it is harmful or not, I would not quarrel with at the present moment, but that it has not got the same quantity of vitamin and so is not as healthy as pure ghee, that would be accepted by every Member of this House ; and once that proposition is accepted, I am sure the Government of India will take every step possible to see that a vegetable product is not allowed to be mixed with ghee. It has also been mentioned by one Honourable Member that by taking any such step as suggested by the Honourable the Mover we would be restricting the import, and touch the pocket of the European traders ; but should that point of view trouble us in the least ? On the other hand we are faced not only with the danger of the importation of this product but I have seen advertisements of at least one Company being floated for the production of this vegetable product in Bengal and other companies may be floated in other parts of India. The position then will be that between the imported article and the product which will be produced in India pure ghee would be absolutely unprocurable in India. We ought for these reasons to take immediate and deterrent steps to stop the present attempt of adulterating vegetable products with ghee.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : Sir, I am rather surprised to hear from my Honourable friend the Commerce Secretary that, even within a period of one year, he has not been able to get replies from the various Local Governments whom the Government of India have addressed on the question of *vanaspathi*. This, Sir, is an abnormally long period and does not reflect well on the red tapeism which exist in the Imperial Secretariat.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MANECKJI DADABHOY : It may be the fault of Local Governments.

THE HONOURABLE SIR GEOFFREY CORBETT : Why the Imperial Secretariat ?

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : It is the fault of the Imperial Secretariat because they have moved in the matter after a very long period.

THE HONOURABLE SIR GEOFFREY CORBETT: You can take a horse to the water, but you cannot force him to drink.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: The Honourable Sir Geoffrey Corbett has referred to my well-built body as well as of my other Punjab friends. I might mention to him, Sir, that this is the result of the pure ghee on which we have been brought up, and not on the present ghee, and I think that if the Government of India patronise the import, directly or indirectly, of *vanaspati* as they are at present supposed to be doing, 30 years hence the Government of India will find the Punjabis lean and thin. My Honourable friend Sir George Godfrey has very rightly represented the case of *vanaspati* importers. He has been advocating the cause of the poor. By his trying to do this by getting more facilities for the import of this *vanaspati* I think he is really poisoning the poor. I use that word, Sir, because I know that it comes to that.

My Honourable friend Sir Maneckji Dadabhoj also threw out a remark, "What about the poor?" I must thank my friend the Honourable Srijut Rama Prasad Mookerjee for correcting me in my assumption that in Bengal people mostly use oil; I am glad that Bengal also is similarly placed to us as regards the consumption of ghee. In the Punjab, Sir, as in the North-West Frontier Province, the poor people live on ghee. In their daily meal, namely, *chappati*, they coat it with ghee, and I might inform my friend Sir George Godfrey that these poor people do not use ghee for cooking purposes. They coat their *chappati* with ghee as toast is coated with butter. So, Sir, the poor labouring classes of the Punjab must buy ghee for their own use. In case my friend goes to the Punjab I think his opinion will be radically changed. The poorest Punjabi will buy ghee for his own physique and for his own vitality. The poorest of the poor also will spend at least one anna on ghee, if not more. In the Punjab, Sir, at present the rate for the labouring classes varies from 12 annas to 14 annas a day. In the Punjab these high rates prevail because the people are strong and they can put in more work than people who are not so strong, and I think ghee is mainly responsible for it. In case the import of *vanaspati* is allowed as at present, these poor people, who cannot afford, as my Honourable friend Sir George Godfrey says, to buy the costly article, will be forced to buy the cheaper article in which there is absolutely no vitality. Although there is quantity in it there is no quality. A man can live on eating mud or grass, but that is no reason, Sir, for saying that this is being done in the interests of the poor. I am here, Sir, advocating mostly the cause of the poor. The rich people to whom he has been kind enough to refer can afford to keep a cow or buffalo of their own and make ghee for their own use. I am not advocating their cause. We people who are landowners in the Punjab can also do it. But I am here advocating the cause of the poor mostly. They are the people who suffer. If you go to the Punjab you will find in some quarters the poor people saying, "Sircar is *marrowing* (killing us) us. Even our ghee we cannot have pure". You know the poor people are the people who ought to be protected, and I can assure my Honourable friend that his assumption is absolutely wrong.

Then, Sir, my Honourable friend has said that the demand for ghee is more than the supply. I asked him, Sir, from what authority he quoted it, whether he quoted from any official agricultural statistics or any market reports. My friend says that this is his information, but he cannot give figures—not from any reliable source, I presume. Then he said that my agreeing to allowing the import into this country of coloured stuff even indirectly shows the

[Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das.]

necessity for it. I myself am absolutely against the import or sale of this product, but in the interests of those people who want to use this stuff, I would allow them to have it ; and those people ought to know what it is worth. In case they want to use it, I do not want to stand in their way. But, at the same time, my main object in moving this Resolution is to stop absolutely the adulteration of this *vanaspati* with the pure ghee. I might, Sir, mention again that the production of ghee in India is perhaps, so far as my information goes, sufficient to meet the requirements of India. Why I say so is this. Before the War, Sir, the demand of the Army Department for ghee was 28,000 maunds a year. During the War it rose and in 1916 the total quantity consumed by the Army Department touched 9 lakhs of maunds per year. My information is that out of these 9 lakhs of maunds per year, 4 lakhs of maunds had to be imported and 5 lakhs of maunds were found in India. Now the demand of the Army Department is about 54,000 maunds a year, and so, Sir, from these figures, it is clear that 5 lakhs of maunds was found in India for the Army Department as a surplus over the requirements of the Indian people themselves.

Another point which was raised is that the price of ghee has been going up. In 1918 the price of pure ghee was Rs. 64 a Bengal maund. Now the price has gone down. But we find that this price is for the adulterated ghee. In case the increase is taken into account, it means that we are deliberately allowing the poor people to be cheated by having an article which is not ghee and for which I think the Government too is responsible.

My friend Sir Geoffrey Corbett referred to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Agriculture. I went through those recommendations. I did not mention them myself because I thought the Honourable the Commerce Secretary would bring them forward. I am glad he has brought them forward and has thereby proved that even the Royal Commission was satisfied by the evidence before it that this adulteration of ghee was now a universal thing and that it needed some sort of drastic action. Then my friend Sir George Godfrey assumed that the Army Department was not buying pure ghee. I might for his information state that the Army Department sends all its ghee to Kasauli to be examined by a chemical expert before the ghee is actually purchased, and so I might inform Sir George that his assumption is also wrong. They are buying pure ghee.

THE HONOURABLE SIR GEORGE GODFREY : I never said so.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : You said that somebody said so and so, that is the reason I corrected it. Then he said we are penalising the poor.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : The Honourable Member has dealt with the penalising of the poor. He is speaking at great length and introducing new arguments in exercising his right of reply.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : Well, Sir, I will not take the time of the Council any longer. I think, Sir, I have made out a very strong case in favour of the acceptance of my Resolution and I hope I will get the support I deserve.

THE HONOURABLE SIR GEOFFREY CORBETT : I must apologise to the Honourable the Mover for suggesting that he ever eats anything but pure

ghee, but the fault was not altogether mine. Last year, I remember, he was complaining of a nasty hacking cough and he told me it was entirely due to eating *vanaspati*. (Laughter).

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : That is the trial of the stuff we made on our own persons.

THE HONOURABLE SIR GEOFFREY CORBETT : I suggest that on investigation it may be found that the universal cough prevailing in the Punjab is due not to *vanaspati* but to Punjab dust. Well, Sir, the Honourable the Mover has complained of the delay of Local Governments in replying to this reference of ours. I think we really ought to be grateful to them for giving this important question due consideration. I know myself from my experience of western countries how very greatly the use of solidified vegetable products has added to the amenities of life amongst the poorer classes, and I do think that, whatever the final decision is, it would be very regrettable if the decision was influenced or affected in any way by haste or prejudice. The Honourable the Mover in his opening speech referred, perhaps in a chaffing way, to the suggestion in the Punjab that it was a plot to undermine the manhood of the Punjab. Well, it is dangerous to speak of these things even in jest. We all know in this country how far even the most absurd rumours can go. If that kind of propaganda is going to be used to influence the decision, it will make the position of all of us more difficult. In the same way my friend Mr. Ramadas Pantulu tried to stir up prejudice against this product on the ground that it is a cheap foreign foodstuff and ought not to be allowed to compete with Indian produce. I dare say he knows that the *vanaspati* coming to India now is almost entirely made in Holland. I believe I am correct in saying that the raw materials from which it is made come almost entirely from India, namely, linseed and rapeseed. The raw materials of this foodstuff are just as much the produce of Indian agriculture as ghee. The Honourable Mr. Rama Prasad Mockerjee has told us that there are proposals afoot in Bengal to start factories there to make this foodstuff from Indian produce. It is a very useful food and can be made cheaply and I hope that my Honourable friend Mr. Ramadas Pantulu will cordially support this valuable Swadeshi product. Well, Sir, I have listened with great interest to the views expressed here and they will all be taken into consideration when the views of Local Governments are received and we have to come to a decision on this very difficult and important question.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : The question is :

“ That the following Resolution be adopted, namely :

‘ This Council recommends to the Governor-General in Council that

- (a) the import into India of solidified vegetable oil, *vanaspati*, and other similar products, be entirely prohibited unless they are given such permanent harmless colouring as may readily distinguish them from and render them unfit for readily mixing without detection with natural pure ghee ;
- (b) a prohibitive excise duty be levied on solidified vegetable oil, *vanaspati* and other similar cheap products manufactured in India, unless they are also permanently coloured in the same way as is suggested in clause (a) for imported articles, in order to render them unfit for readily mixing without detection with natural pure ghee ’.”

‘ The motion was adopted.

RESOLUTION *RE* RECONSTITUTION OF THE CENTRAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RAILWAYS.

THE HONOURABLE RAO SAHIB DR. U. RAMA RAU (Madras : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I beg to move the following Resolution which stands in my name :

“This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that the Central Advisory Council for Railways be reconstituted so as to give complete effect to the recommendations made by the Acworth Committee in paragraph 141 of their Report and at the same time to enable the said Council to co-ordinate its activities with those of the various Local Advisory Committees for Railways and to guide their policy generally.”

I think it will be a sheer waste of time, money and energy if the recommendations of Committees and Commissions appointed by the Government of India from time to time are not given effect to in their entirety. One such Committee, from whose recommendations there had been a substantial departure, was the Acworth Committee. The Acworth Committee, it will be remembered, was appointed some years ago to go into the question of the entire Railway Administration in India and to suggest necessary reforms. The Committee was surprised to find that the Railway Administrations here were all autocratic bodies concerned more with profits and dividends than with the comforts and conveniences of the travelling and trading public whom they were supposed to serve. The Committee justly remarked in paragraph 142 of their Report :

“The Indian public is deeply and justifiably incensed by the condition to which both passengers and traders have long been subjected and it is desirable that their representatives should at the earliest possible moment be acquainted with the steps that are being taken for the redress of their grievances.”

The Committee proposed the establishment of a Central Advisory Council to advise the Government Member in charge of the Railway Administration in India and Local Advisory Committees, one for each railway system, to advise the local agents on all matters touching the changes and improvements in train service and alterations in rates for and classification of merchandise and other cognate subjects relative to the comforts and conveniences of passengers. Now, what do we find with regard to the Central Advisory Council ? Paragraph 141 of the Report, dealing with the constitution of the Central Advisory Council, reads as follows :

“The Council should include representatives of departments of commerce and industries, agriculture and possibly some others. One half of the non-official members should be nominated by the leading commercial and industrial associations both European and Indian. The other half should be representatives of rural interests and of the Indian travelling public in different parts of the country.”

But the Central Council as actually constituted has been so far altered as to confine it exclusively to the Members of the Central Legislature. Sir Charles Innes, in addressing the Legislative Assembly on the 25th February, 1927, made the following observation with regard to the formation of the Central Advisory Council. He said :

“I am quite prepared to agree that in forming a Central Advisory Council, such as we have formed, we did depart from the recommendation of the Acworth Committee. The Acworth Committee had the idea in mind of a Central Advisory Council outside the Legislature, composed very largely of leading business men and representatives of other classes and bringing their influence to bear upon the railway policy of the country. Well, for reasons that may have been good or that may have been bad, we definitely thought that, in the first instance at any rate, we should begin with a Central Advisory Council drawn from the ranks of our own Legislature.”

We know how this Central Advisory Council has been functioning all these years. It had seldom met, seldom took any initiative and its advice was seldom acted upon. Informal meetings during the legislative season, not more than two in a year, used to be held and only such subjects as were brought before the Council were discussed. So far as the constitution of this Council is concerned, I do not grudge the Members of the Central Legislature the privilege of sitting on that Council, but as a further step in advance I would suggest that three more members be added from outside, one representing the European commercial community, elected by the European Chambers of Commerce all over India, one representing the Indian mercantile community similarly elected by their organizations all over India, and one representing the Passengers' Associations all over India elected likewise. By these three additions, the Council will neither become unwieldy in size nor diminish in importance. The Council must have the power of initiation and some sort of control, and its decision must be binding on the Government. Even in Prussia, where the control of railways is said to be more autocratic than in any other part of the world, the Railway Administration very rarely acted except in accordance with the views expressed by the Councils in all matters within their competence. Finally, with regard to the relationship between the Central Council and the Local Advisory Committees, I think there ought to be some clear and definite understanding. These bodies are as far apart as the poles and there is no co-ordination of their interests or activities. Not a day passes when questions regarding administrative details do not crop up in the Central Legislature and every time we are told to go to the Local Advisory Committees. In other words, we are asked to delegate our functions to these bodies who owe their existence to the good graces of the Agents of the respective Railways. The Government may desire to grant independence to the Railway Agents, but the Central Legislature are jealous of their powers. They are not prepared to surrender their rights to some unknown bodies over whom they have no control whatever. It is therefore necessary that the proceedings of the various Local Advisory Committees be placed before the Central Council for approval, adoption or modification and any suggestions made in the Central Council be referred to respective Local Committees for consideration and report. There will then be a healthy kinship formed and so much time and energy will then be saved in the Central Legislature in regard to the discussion of minor railway matters. Another important suggestion I would like to make is that the Central Council should be vested with powers of conciliation in all cases of railway strikes. They may set up a permanent sub-committee of their own every year which may be called the Arbitration Board, to enquire into the causes of strikes and advise the Government as to the course to be adopted or action to be taken. This will remove all friction between the railway employers and employees, avert unnecessary losses of life and property and promote goodwill among them. These are the lines on which the Central Advisory Council for Railways should be formed, if it is to be an effective and efficient body, and I trust the Government will accept my Resolution, which is of an innocent kind, without demur.

THE HONOURABLE SIR GEOFFREY CORBETT (Commerce Secretary): Sir, I found some difficulty in understanding exactly what the Honourable Member was intending by his Resolution, and I listened very carefully to his speech to find out, if I could, what was in his mind. He has read out to us the constitution of the Central Advisory Council which was recommended by the Acworth Committee, and I understood from his Resolution that he desired this House to recommend that we should adopt it. He says it should be reconstituted so as to give complete effect to the recommendations made by the Acworth

[Sir Geoffrey Corbett.]

Committee in paragraph 141 of their Report. The Honourable Member has omitted to inform this House, though he must be well aware, that the present constitution of the Central Advisory Council is determined by the convention for the separation of Railway finance. Clause 6 of the Resolution on the separation of Railway from General finances, which was adopted by the Legislative Assembly on the 20th September, 1924, runs as follows :

“ A Standing Finance Committee for Railways shall be constituted consisting of one nominated official member of the Legislative Assembly who should be Chairman and eleven members elected by the Legislative Assembly from their body. The members of the Standing Finance Committee for Railways shall be *ex-officio* members of the Central Advisory Council, which shall consist, in addition, of not more than one further nominated official member, six non-official members selected from a panel of eight elected by the Council of State from their body and six non-official members selected from a panel of eight elected by the Legislative Assembly from their body.”

That is the constitution of the Central Advisory Council, and we are bound for the period of the Convention that it should continue to be so constituted. At the present moment, my Honourable friend is no doubt aware that the renewal of this convention is being considered by a Committee, and doubtless this Committee will also consider any modifications in the constitution of the Council that should be made. But meanwhile surely he will understand that it would be inappropriate for Government to express any definite views on the subject. I found it very difficult to believe that the Honourable the Mover should really desire that this House should recommend to the Governor General in Council that it should no longer be permitted to elect Members to the Central Advisory Council. I have understood that this is an opportunity that Honourable Members rather value, that this House should be represented on the Council ; and I should like them clearly to understand that if they adopt this Resolution it will mean that they are of opinion that the Council of State should no longer have the privilege of electing Members to the Central Advisory Council.

THE HONOURABLE RAO SAHIB DR. U. RAMA RAU : I did not say that.

THE HONOURABLE SIR GEOFFREY CORBETT : The Honourable Member did not, but that is what the Resolution says. We have to vote on the Resolution, not on the speech of the Honourable Member. I was the more surprised that the Honourable the Mover should have put forward his proposal, because he was a member, like I was, of the Indian Road Development Committee, which had to discuss various proposals put before it for a body outside the Government and outside the Legislature to consider road development; and we were unanimous in our recommendation that there should be a Standing Advisory Committee of the Legislature for Roads. The Honourable Member having signed that report, I am surprised to find him now having a Resolution, that that procedure, which is now adopted for railways, should be discontinued. However, when he came to his speech, if I heard him correctly, I understood him to say that the present constitution of the Advisory Council should continue *plus* the addition of three members. Is that correct? (*The Honourable Rao Sahib Dr. U. Rama Rau* : “ Yes.”) Well, that is a different thing. That is a practical suggestion which will receive the due consideration of the Government of India. But it is clearly entirely different, it has nothing whatever to do with the wording of this Resolution. For as he has already read out, the

constitution of the Council as proposed by the Acworth Committee makes no provision at all for the representation of the Central Legislature.

The other part of the Honourable the Mover's Resolution deals with the co-ordination which should exist between the Central Council and the Local Advisory Committees. Well, co-ordination is a word that is often in our mouths. On the Road Committee to which I have just referred, we gave a good deal of prominence to it. I am not certain that we all knew what we meant. I do not know exactly how the Council should guide the activities of the Local Committees. But it is a good word anyhow, though I do not quite know what it means. But the point I wish to make is that these two bodies deal definitely with different subjects. The Central Advisory Council exists to advise the Government of India on large questions of policy, and the Local Committees exist primarily to bring local opinion to bear on the Railway Agents in matters of local importance. It is for this reason, as the Honourable Member has observed, that when, as he frequently does, he brings before this House a Resolution dealing with a railway crossing in some obscure Madras village, I suggest that this is a matter which might appropriately be left to the local Advisory Committee. I think the Central Council will probably take the same line as I do. They would not wish to co-ordinate or to guide the policy of these Local Committees in these minor local matters on which no one outside the district or outside the province is really competent to express an opinion at all. At the same time, I quite agree that there is a considerable number of subjects in which there is a definite overlap, that there are many subjects of general importance that are also of great local importance; and it is desirable that the members of the Central Council should be in touch and know the views of the Local Committees or local opinion, however it may be expressed. I should rather like to put it that way, not that the Central Council should control the policy of the Local Committees, but rather that the Central Council in making their recommendations to Government on large questions of policy should be aware of and take into consideration the local view. Just as I do not expect the Honourable the Mover to control or co-ordinate his own constituency, but rather to express in this Council the views which are locally held in that constituency. I think there is room for co-ordination here; and there is nothing in the Resolution appointing this Council, as I dare say Honourable Members are aware, which prevents a member of the Central Council being also a member of a Local Committee. That makes for some liaison. And a proposal has recently been adopted, or rather the Central Council have recommended that it should be adopted, that when large questions of policy are being discussed at Local Committees the local members of the Central Council should be invited to be present if they are not already members of the Committee. I think there is a good deal to be said for that. It is being tried experimentally in several places, and these experiments are being watched with interest with a view to further developments. These Councils, as I said last year, are only growing, we have to feel our way a little to get the thing going on the right lines, and I think on the whole they are going fairly satisfactorily. The other recommendations for co-ordination that the Honourable the Mover made will be most carefully considered and we will adopt them if it is desirable, if they are found to be good ones; or rather we can put them before the Central Council for their views and their adoption. I cannot say more than that. I am bound, if the Honourable the Mover presses his motion, to oppose it for the simple reason that the Resolution as it stands involves the elimination of this House from any voice in the election of the Central Advisory Council. I oppose the motion.

THE HONOURABLE RAO SAHIB DR. U. RAMA RAU : Sir, in view of the assurance given by the Honourable the Commerce Secretary that the Government intend to take this matter into their serious consideration, I withdraw my Resolution.

The Resolution was, by leave of the Council, withdrawn.

The Council then adjourned till Five of the Clock on Thursday, the 28th February, 1929.