

THE  
COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES

VOLUME I, 1930

*(17th February to 3rd April, 1930.)*

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EIGHTH SESSION

OF THE

SECOND COUNCIL OF STATE, 1930



CALCUTTA: GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
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# COUNCIL OF STATE.

*Thursday, 20th March, 1930.*

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

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## MEMBER SWORN.

The Honourable Kumar Nripendra Narayan Sinha (West Bengal : Non-Muhammadian).

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## NOMINATIONS FOR ELECTION TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PILGRIMAGE TO THE HEDJAZ.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : For the election of two Members to the Standing Committee on Pilgrimage to the Hedjaz, five nominations have been received, namely :

The Honourable Nawab Sahibzada Sayad Mohammad Mehr Shah.

The Honourable Mian Ali Baksh Mohammad Hussain.

The Honourable Sir Ebrahim Jaffer.

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Shah Mahammad Yahya.

The Honourable Mr. Mahmood Suhrawardy.

The election will take place probably at the next meeting of the Council.

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## RESOLUTION *RE* PUBLICATION OF AN ABRIDGED VERNACULAR EDITION OF THE ANNUAL SUMMARY OF INDIA'S PROGRESS.

THE HONOURABLE SIR EBRAHIM HAROON JAFFER (Bombay Presidency : Muhammadan) : Sir, I beg to move the Resolution which stands in my name and which runs as follows :

"This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that an abridged edition of the annual summary of India's progress, written by the Director of Public Information in accordance with the requirements of section 26 of the Government of India Act, be prepared annually for translation into the leading vernaculars of India, in order that the large body of Indians who do not know the English language may be able to obtain accurate information regarding every phase of India's progress : and that the publication of these abridged vernacular editions be undertaken by the Government of India for sale at as low a price as possible."

Now, Sir, I do not think it is necessary for me to make a long speech in commending this Resolution to the mind of this Honourable Council. There are a hundred things to be said in favour of its adoption, and not one against it, unless it be the matter of ~~expense~~ in these days of "financial

[Sir Ebrahim Haroon Jaffer.]

stringency". Yet I think that even the most parsimonious protector of the country's money must agree that even a Government must at times indulge in publicity.

It is an old saying that Government are in the fortunate position of being the only organisation which is able to make money without advertising, for the Mint does that excellently; but at the present time, the great need of the Government of India is, we must all admit, not merely money, but friendliness. And in this case, without the right sort of advertising, call it publicity if you like, this atmosphere of friendliness can never be produced.

We have to accept as a solid fact, in the first place, that the Government have accepted the principle of the necessity of publicity regarding the country's progress; and although some of us might at times disagree with an occasional argument used or conclusion drawn by the Director of Public Information in the admirable series of annual surveys of the country's advance, we must all admit that probably no country in the world publishes such an excellent advertising announcement regarding its progress and achievements in every sphere of politics, administration, social reform, literature, and science as does India. A vast amount of information about India is to be found packed into the annual survey of India, and we must be devoutly grateful to the framers of the Government of India Act for their foresight in making the preparation of such a compilation essential under the Reforms.

It is probable, however, that at the time the Reforms Act was introduced the question of the illiteracy of India's masses overshadowed any suggestion that this annual survey should be anything more than an official publication in English especially prepared for the British Parliament. There was an idea, however, that this book might be of more popular service than of a dry report to Parliament, and for that reason it was made exceedingly readable for general publication, and has, I think I am correct in saying, become a reasonably popular official publication.

But in these days, there is a very large section of India which is interested in India's progress even though the people do not know the English language. Why should these people be deprived of learning the real situation of the country? Why should this large and influential section be ignored by Government as an important audience to reach with the message of India's progress? Taking the progress as a general thing, the Government of India have nothing to be ashamed of, nothing to hide under a bushel, nothing that will not do good by publicity. Indeed, it is imperative that by making the annual story of advancement known to the literate "middle-class" of India, the Government should cultivate the support and friendship of that class. I do not think this point needs any reiteration on my part; and for that reason I have every confidence that my Resolution will receive the support of this Honourable Council, both of the officials and the non-officials.

Coming to the question of expense, I think that it is quite possible that after a year or two, this scheme of abridged vernacular editions will pay for itself. But even if it did not return the actual cost price of the printing, the good which the circulation of such books would do must in the long run amply compensate for any small loss on the printing. It might even be possible to have the work turned out by a commercial printer at competitive rates if tenders were called for, or, as another suggestion, it is possible that one of the leading Indian publishers would agree to taking the risk of publication.

if given the official right of undertaking the work for Government on a commercial basis from translations and abridgements supplied by the Government of India. I am only making these suggestions to show that the only possible argument of expense could be met if the Government were really desirous of tackling this problem with seriousness and with a recognition of the good which would follow.

As far as the abridgement is concerned, I think that could safely be left to the Director of Public Information, although I would suggest that for purposes of economy only the chapter dealing with political progress could be omitted at the outset, so that the book would be regarded more as a book of reference on India than any special method of political propaganda on the part of Government.

There now remains but the question of languages. I admit that this is a complex one, but it is a problem which has been met more than once already by the Government of India in its administrative capacity. I do not wish to be dogmatic on this point, and therefore I hesitate even to suggest possible languages with which this scheme could be started ; but, of course, Urdu, Marathi, Bengali, Gujarati, Tamil and Burmese would be adopted, with possibly others according to the suggestion of the Director of Public Information.

This, Sir, is all that I will say on this Resolution. I trust it will not be regarded as a controversial one, for it is being moved with the sole object of placing India's progress in its rightful place as far as the literate masses are concerned ; and Government could go a long way before they found a more suitable medium of enthusing, inspiring, and educating the masses about their own country's advancement.

I therefore, Sir, commend my Resolution to this Honourable House.

Before I resume my seat, I appeal to Government to show me the courtesy of giving a reply to this Resolution of mine. Only two days ago, another Resolution of mine received no response from Government. We, non-official Members, come here at a great personal sacrifice and devote time and labour and bring important matters of public interest to the notice of Government but receive no reply to our Resolutions. Why are we here then ? I think the Government owe me and the Honourable House an explanation of their silence on that day, and I trust the Leader of the House or the Director-General, Indian Medical Service, will enlighten us as to why no reply was given to me on Tuesday last.

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. G. HAIG (Home Secretary) : Sir, I certainly have no intention of allowing the interesting Resolution moved by my Honourable friend to pass without a reply which I hope he will find satisfactory. On behalf of Government I welcome the action of the Honourable Member in raising this important question. The importance of publicity in modern conditions needs no emphasis from me. Publicity is really the vital spark of a democratic system of Government and ever since some 10 years ago Government in India advanced on the development of democratic institutions they have realised the great importance of publicity and I think every year more and more have appreciated what it means. My Honourable friend remarked that even Government must indulge in publicity. I will go further and say that there is no interest in this country which

[Mr. H. G. Haig.]

is more in need of, and which will get greater value from, publicity than Government, for indeed, as my Honourable friend said, Government have nothing to fear from publicity.

The report referred to in the Honourable the Mover's Resolution is the annual summary of India's progress which was prescribed by the Government of India Act for presentation to Parliament. But the object of this publication goes now far beyond the original intentions of Parliament. People both in England and in India, and indeed all over the world, are taking a great interest in the conditions and developments in India, and this Report enjoys a wide and growing circulation. The Government of India would naturally wish its contents to be more widely known in India itself. The circulation in India is, I think, increasing in a satisfactory way. But if we could reach a wider public by means of translation into the vernaculars, from the point of view of the Government it would be all to the good. The question whether such translation could be undertaken has from time to time been considered in, I am afraid, a somewhat desultory way. We have in our Bureau of Public Information a very limited staff and we have at their disposal a very limited sum of money. So far as the staff is concerned, the preparation of an abridged edition would entail an appreciable addition to their work, and with the numerous other urgent necessities which are continually being pressed upon them, there has been a tendency to leave this particular point on one side. But I do not think that this is likely to prove an insuperable obstacle. Nor should there be much difficulty in arranging for translation except the difficulty of expense. And that brings me to the main problem in facing this proposal of my Honourable friend. It is as usual a question of money. It is proposed by my Honourable friend that the book should be sold at as low a price as possible. I have got some information from the Director of Public Information about the cost of the production of the existing Report. The English Report is produced at Rs. 2-8-0 a copy and of course the translation would mean additional expense. Even with an abridged edition we must expect that the cost of production would be appreciable. Now one of the first things we shall have to do is to ask the Local Governments what sort of demand there is likely to be for a book of this nature and what would be approximately the limit of price which the people into whose hands we are trying to get it would be ready to pay.

THE HONOURABLE SARDAR BAHADUR SHIVDEV SINGH UBEROI : May I know how many copies of the English edition are published now-a-days ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. G. HAIG : I am afraid I have not the figures available. There is sure to be an appreciable gap between the price that the people who want to buy this book would pay and the cost of production, and that gap must be filled either from the purse of the Central Government or from the purses of the Local Governments. That is another matter which obviously would require to be considered very carefully, whether the whole cost of production of such an abridged edition of the report should fall upon the Central Government or whether the Local Governments would be sufficiently interested to pay their share. All these matters clearly require careful consideration before we could agree to accept the recommendation of my Honourable friend. I am grateful to him for raising this question and I may assure him that the whole matter will be examined with care and in a



sympathetic spirit with the desire to surmount some of the practical difficulties which I have indicated. That being so, I trust that he will not wish to press further a Resolution which would commit Government to a course of action the feasibility of which has not yet been ascertained. My Honourable friend will have the satisfaction of knowing that as a result of his Resolution we shall take up in a practical spirit the line of inquiry which he suggests.

**THE HONOURABLE SIR EBRAHIM HAROON JAFFER :** Sir, I am pleased to hear the speech of my friend the Honourable Mr. Haig. I have no desire to press this Resolution to a division because I know what the fate of this Resolution will be. I think I had better accept something rather than get nothing. I accept the assurance of the Government, and I hope and trust that the line of inquiry which my friend has suggested, as I have proposed, will be taken up as soon as possible and action taken accordingly. With these words, Sir, I ask the permission of the House and of yourself to withdraw my Resolution.

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

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT :** The Honourable Mr. Surput Sing.

**THE HONOURABLE SIR EBRAHIM HAROON JAFFER :** May I have a reply to the query which I put at the end of my speech.

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT :** The Honourable Mr. Surput Sing.

### CATTLE PROTECTION BILL.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. SURPUT SING** (Bihar and Orissa : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to prohibit the export trade in cattle meat.

As stated in the Statement of Objects and Reasons, the value of cattle cannot be overestimated in a mainly agricultural country like that of ours. Cattle is in fact the wealth of the agriculturist class. Then again it is evident that there has been a marked degeneration in our cattle breed. The result is that there is a steady inadequacy in the number of cattle, affecting agricultural operations on the one hand and the health and vitality of the nation on the other. I need hardly impress upon the House that to send out of the country meat of such a valuable livestock without let or hindrance means nothing but disaster to the whole population. I admit that we cannot check the waste that is so far inevitable within the country itself without special legislation, but surely for the sake of our most vital interests it behoves us to legislate for some sort of check against the free export of our cattle meat.

Sir, I move.

The motion was adopted.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. SURPUT SING :** Sir, I introduce the Bill.

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\* Vide page 471 of these Proceedings.

## RESOLUTION *RE* DATE FOR THE CONVENING OF THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE.

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIAR (Madras : Non-Muhammadan) : Mr. President, I desire to have the attention of the House this morning to a Resolution which I have ventured to put forward for the consideration of this august assembly :

"That this Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that he be pleased to convey to His Excellency the Viceroy and the Right Honourable the Secretary of State the opinion of this House that the Round Table Conference should be convened as early as possible and in no case later than in October 1930."

I am aware, Sir, that this House had an opportunity in the very recent past, of discussing the question of the Round Table Conference and of conveying to His Excellency the Viceroy the opinion of this House that that Round Table Conference is acceptable to it. Various other Legislatures and various public bodies, Conferences and Congresses have passed opinions in identical terms and have conveyed their assurance to His Excellency the Viceroy that the idea of a Round Table Conference is welcomed widely by the country and by most political and other influential parties in this country. I have no desire this morning, Mr. President, to enter into the question of the merits of this Round Table Conference. I desire to confine myself and to confine the attention of this House to the small but very important question that has been raised in this Resolution as to the date when the Round Table Conference is to be convened. I desire to adduce certain reasons which in my opinion make it essential that this Round Table Conference should be convened as early as possible, preferably before October of this year. I desire to examine some further reasons which I have heard alleged and put forward in various quarters as to the desirability of postponing the convening of this Conference to a later and more convenient date. It is only these two points that I wish to speak on, and I would ask the forbearance of this Council if I make my remarks at some little length. Sir, it is known to all those who have followed the political history of this country that after the announcement of His Excellency the Viceroy a spirit of compromise has to a certain extent come over this country, and that politicians and leaders of public parties who have been holding aloof from the Government and not co-operating in those activities of Government which they wish the people to co-operate in, have all realised that this Round Table Conference is after all going to be the way out of the difficulty. His Excellency the Viceroy made his pronouncement on the 31st October 1929. Almost five months have elapsed since the date of that pronouncement and the country is exactly where it was. There have been no further rumours, no further suggestions, no further statements in regard to when this Conference is going to be held, how this Conference is going to be organised and what is going to be discussed at this Conference. Sir, on the other hand, there have been activities on the other side, and I wish this House and the authorities who are intended to be approached by this Resolution to realise the activities which are now going on in this country and to see the bearing which those activities have on the question of the early convening of the Round Table Conference. We are aware that during the last few weeks a campaign has been inaugurated in the country by one political party, a campaign of civil disobedience, a campaign whereby the laws of the country are tried to be upset, to be violated; and, Sir, I feel that anyone with any little political sagacity will realise that that campaign can only be

met if a counter-attraction, to put it on the lowest scale, is put forward, a counter-attraction which diverts the attention of the public from these campaigns and tries to engage it on matters of wider moment. The Round Table Conference is in the air, very much in the air; but the campaign which has been started of civil disobedience is engaging at present the attention of the public. Day after day we read of the progress that has been made and that is being made, of the resolutions that are being passed in all parts of the country by certain political associations, and I ask what he who believes in constitutional methods is to do in all this time, whether he should sit tight with folded hands hoping that something will turn up, some day an announcement will be made on behalf of the British Government and by the Government of India that a Round Table Conference will be held. It is not fair, it is not proper, it does not do justice, to the man who believes in constitutional methods of agitation, who believes in Parliamentary life and in Parliamentary systems of Government, that he should be asked to wait with folded hands for an announcement to be made some time or other of a Round Table Conference to be held at some time or other. Sir, that is not my only reason for asking that the date of the holding of the Round Table Conference should be expedited. The position in the provinces—and I claim to know a little more minutely the exact position in the provinces than many other Honourable Members of this House, for I have had the advantage of having been a Member of the Provincial Legislative Council for over six years and of having continuously followed the activities of Provincial Governments and Provincial Ministries and Councils during the last nine years—the position in the provinces is very much worse. We have come to a stage when we can neither advance nor go back, a stage of stagnation, of not moving forward, of waiting for something to turn up, for a new constitution which will come into existence in the near future, of Ministries holding up their policies because they do not know what the next stage of constitutional development will be. I ask, Sir, whether it is proper, whether you are doing justice to the Provincial Governments and Provincial Ministries, to those who believe that there will be an advance in the very near future if there is this sort of dilatoriness to be pursued in the holding of the Round Table Conference. The unsettled state of the country is largely due to the fact that people do not know where they are, when they will advance and how far they will advance. This unsettled state of the country has been going on, if the House will permit me to say, for nearly a decade, and I wish not to refer to the activities of my own countrymen, but rather to refer to the activities of the Government to show how far Government themselves have been a party to this unsettled state of political feeling and political situation in the country. You, Sir, remember that in 1921 a former Viceroy intended to confer with a Leader.....

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT:** Order, order. I am afraid I cannot allow the Honourable Member to go back to 1921. He himself at the beginning of his speech said that the matter with which his Resolution deals came into being on the 31st of October 1929 and that there was no need for him to go behind that. I am sure the Council would also rather wish that he should start with October 1929.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. RAMASWAMI MUDALIAR:** I bow to the ruling of the Chair, Sir. I was stating that the present unsettled state of the country requires that, as early as possible, a decision should be arrived

[ Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliar. ]

at which will make people realise where they are and how far they have advanced. This sort of unsettlement, this sort of policy of hanging in the air, if I may say so, ought not to be continued very much longer. It is obvious now that whatsoever reforms may be conceded to the country, whatsoever political advance this country may have, the Round Table Conference has first to be constituted and the result of the Conference has first to be known before any further constitutional advance can be thought of. Therefore, Sir, for that constitutional advance the hastening of the idea of this Round Table Conference is essential. Sir, His Excellency the Viceroy in a speech which breathed sympathy to this country and its aspirations has suggested that the parties in this country might first meet together and try to get over their differences before this Round Table Conference can be held. I do not understand His Excellency the Viceroy to have suggested in that speech that the holding of the Round Table Conference depends to any extent on an agreement which would be come to by the various political parties in the country on such vital and controversial issues like the Hindu-Muslim problem. But I appreciate the spirit in which the suggestion has been made and leaders in this country have already taken up the suggestion of His Excellency the Viceroy, have conferred together, have held the All-Parties Conference and proposed to see as far as possible whether an agreed settlement on this important question can be arrived at. But I venture to think that whether that settlement is to be had or not, the Round Table Conference cannot be delayed very much longer. I have attended All-Parties Conferences for several years now. I do not want to go back to history before 1929 in the face of your ruling, Mr. President, and therefore I only wish to state this, that though I have the fullest hope, the fullest confidence, in the prayer that the All-Parties Conference which is now meeting may come to a more successful conclusion than its predecessors, I am not of those who believe that that is essential and indispensable before the Round Table Conference is convened. My reason is merely this. It is human nature—you know it better than many of us, Mr. President—that people who are away from their native land have a tendency to come together, to join, to forget differences and to omit distinctions than those who move in their own usual atmosphere, in their own homelands. Englishmen and Scotchmen and Irishmen, however much they might differ in their own country and fight with each other and have Parliamentary and unparliamentary battles in their own land, when they come over to this country on this side of Aden there is neither Englishmen nor Scotchmen nor Irishmen, but the Great British Empire and Great Britain itself. May I not hope that my own countrymen away from their own homelands, Mussalmans, Christians and Hindus, gathered together in a foreign place, in an atmosphere which is new and perhaps to a certain extent unsympathetic, may I not hope that my own countrymen gathered at that Round Table will try to forget their distinctions and differences more effectively than either at Delhi or Bombay or Poona, that they will compose their differences to their satisfaction and to the good of this country? May I not hope that in spite of the incident in the recent past, the unhappy incident, at the Round Table Conference in any case, whatever may be the result of the All-Parties Conference, my countrymen will present, what I might call in the best sense of the term, a united front to solve the country's problems and advance its constitutional progress? Sir, it has been suggested in some quarters that till the political situation in this country improves the idea of holding this Round Table Conference may be delayed, that it will

not do when there is so much of political excitement in the country to go forward with this idea of holding the Round Table Conference. I venture very respectfully to dissent from that view, and I venture to state further that the political atmosphere to-day is such that it does not force them to think that the idea of holding the Round Table Conference need be delayed or that the people are not ready to undertake the responsibility of appearing as delegates and representatives of their countrymen at this Round Table Conference. What is the political situation to-day that justifies the postponement of this idea of Round Table Conference to a later date when the political situation would be less complex, and, it is supposed, more easy than it is to-day. I venture to think that to-day there exists the largest amount of harmony, that to-day there exists the greatest amount of political difference in the country with a certain programme and, that the amount of difference that has been exhibited over certain resolutions of a political party all over the country and from leaders of political parties, is the measure of the amount of support that is behind this idea of the Round Table Conference, a measure of the goodwill that will be ready to respond to any invitation which His Excellency the Viceroy and the British Cabinet may make to the representatives of Indian opinion together at London and to sit at this Round Table Conference. Sir, I am not one of those who believe that the British Government in this country has been or is a curse. I rather think—and I am elaborating this point merely to prove that the political conditions in this country to-day are not such as to justify any delay in the Round Table Conference—I am one of those rather who believe with Sir Pherozshah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, and Sir Surendranath Banerjee, a galaxy of stars of the first magnitude in the political firmament of my country, I am one of those who believe that there has been a providential dispensation by which Great Britain has come into touch with India. An inscrutable Providence has organised in its own inscrutable way the linking of these two great countries in the past and so far as I can look ahead in the future, the linking of them in the future to the advantage of both and to the disadvantage of neither. I am not one of those who believe therefore or can use the very violent thought or the more violent words, that the British Government in this country even to-day is a curse. It had its disadvantages in the past; it is going to have its disadvantages in the future. But that does not mean that I can bring myself to believe that it is anything like a curse. And to-day I am echoing not my personal opinion but the opinion of the vast multitude of my countrymen when I say that they believe in constitutional advance, in Parliamentary forms of government, in broadening down from precedent to precedent, in advancing further to that goal of self-government by the goodwill, by the co-operation, and by the help of all parties, Indian and European, in this country. I therefore believe, Sir, that there is nothing in the political circumstances of to-day which would justify the delaying of the holding of this Round Table Conference.

Sir, I should like to make one other observation. I do not want to repeat the thanks that have been conveyed to His Excellency the Viceroy for the step that he has taken in making this announcement. I was reading very carefully through the debate on the last occasion and can only endorse the sentiments which have been expressed by the Honourable Members of this House conveying to His Excellency their thanks for the great and noble part that he has played in bringing about this idea of the Round Table Conference. My Honourable friend, Sir Sankaran Nair, described His Excellency the Viceroy almost as Casabianca-like standing alone,

[ Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliar .]

absolutely unafraid, with the Conservative Party against him, and yet having the courage of his conviction, the boldness to go forward and make an announcement which he thought was for the good of the country. I ask myself whether it is not the opinion of this House certainly and of the vast bulk of my countrymen that this Round Table Conference and the reforms which will follow it should be during the term of office of His Excellency the Viceroy? Is there one who has followed the activities of His Excellency the Viceroy in recent years in this country who does not believe that it will be for the good of this country, for the great good not merely of this country but even of England itself if this Round Table Conference should be held during the term of office of His Excellency, Lord Irwin, and that thereby both countries stand to gain; that that sympathetic spirit which has been brought to bear on the consideration of this question should continue, that the personal magnetism which has drawn away so many of my countrymen from the barren fields of fruitless agitation, to which they were committed in the recent past, that that personal magnetism should continue to sway in the consideration of this question? Sir, if I might describe what has happened in this country after the announcement, I would like to take this House to an old pagan legend which is a beautiful one. In the olden days it is said that there were two Lacedaemonian heroes, Castor and Pollux, both of them great and good men, honoured while they lived, more honoured still when they were dead, when a star was named after them; and the ancient Greeks thought that, whenever there was trouble on the sea, whenever their ship was in danger, when all hands were despairing of coming to a safe port, when there was utter confusion on board the steamer and the clouds looked dark and menacing, then when there was a little drifting away of the clouds, and this star came on the horizon and shone, they believed that the day had come for their emancipation from these seas of trouble, then all danger was averted, then all despair left them and the mariners came home safe and sound. The pronouncement of His Excellency the Viceroy is that star on the political firmament of this country to-day and the shipwrecked political mariners of this country and those who are tossing on the heavy political seas, afraid of what is going to happen to their slender bark, have realised that this star—the announcement of His Excellency the Viceroy—foretells plainly calm seas and a safe haven. Is it not proper that he who has navigated us so far should continue to navigate us till the Round Table Conference has been held? And I would go further and give it as the expression of this House and of the country that he should be in office till the time when the new constitutional reforms have been introduced into this country. Sir, this country has gone through much trouble in the past. And if the omens are read aright, there are troublous times still ahead of us. But if the unwavering determination and faith which most of us have in constitutional methods of agitation is kept up, if both on behalf of the Government and on behalf of the people there is an attempt to face problems straight and if the solution of these problems is brought about without undue delay—for that is the point which I am at after all—if an attempt is made to solve these problems without undue delay and the holding of the Round Table Conference is expedited so that at least some time this year it may become an accomplished fact, there will be time for us to look back with satisfaction on our work and to say that we have after all contributed what we could to the relieving of the political situation, to confirm the opinions which have been held and are held to-day by the vast majority of my countrymen and to bring

about that calm and peaceful atmosphere which is essential for all political and administrative progress. In the hope that that atmosphere will be brought about as early as possible by the holding of this Round Table Conference, in the trust that that peace and goodwill which is so lacking to-day will be restored once more as it existed in the past, in the firm prayer that by means that have been foreshadowed for us by the Round Table Conference India and England may once more march hand in hand towards that great goal—the goal of being a free and equal partner in the Commonwealth of Nations, I have ventured to have a say at this time to induce the House to confirm and adopt this Resolution.

Sir, India stands expectant to-day at the bar of the future, hopeful and almost prayerful. She wants a blessed oblivion of all the past and that oblivion ought to be provided for as early as possible, for in that oblivion of the past those who govern and those who are governed have an equal and almost the same interest. We wish to forget the horrors of the past on either side, and will you not hasten the day when that blessed oblivion would be an accomplished fact, when we can say that we are beginning practically on a clean slate? And therefore by this Resolution I am asking this House and through this House the august individuals who control the fortunes not merely of this nation but the fortunes practically of the British Empire, I ask them all to think well, to think wisely, to think not for the moment but for the pregnant years to come and adopt this Resolution.

Sir, I move.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. KHAPARDE (Berar Representative):  
Sir, I have sent in an amendment which reads :

“ That the words ‘ and in no case later than in October, 1930 ’ be omitted from the Resolution. ”

That is the last line practically and a few other words. I am very glad that the Honourable the Mover has spoken about delay. My amendment may be mistaken as a plea for delay, but I do not want any delay at all. So far as I can see, nobody else is more anxious that the Round Table Conference should take place as early as possible than myself. I do not think I yield to anybody in that respect. I shall therefore give you the reasons why I have brought in this amendment at all. I am in agreement with all that has been said by my Honourable friend, with all that has been said in regard to thanking His Excellency the Viceroy for bringing about this Round Table Conference. I recognise the good motives and everything else. Then why do I move this amendment? It is open to the construction of being a delaying motion. I do it with no intention of delaying at all. In fact, delay is not what I want. What I want is that hasty action taken without due consideration should be avoided. That is the great point in this. I put to you an analogy. I hope the Council will forgive me for it. Suppose there is a ship and it is in a storm. We have good confidence in the captain and we know that he is steering it so as to land us safe. Then do you think it is the duty of the passengers to go about and tell the Captain, “ Look here, we are going there; let us go here ? ” (Laughter). I think that would not be permitted on boardship. Similarly we are now in deep politics, in deep difficulties. We have perfect confidence in His Excellency the Viceroy. In fact, he went to England at a very critical period and avoided what I thought was going to be a disaster and proposed this Round Table Conference and thus in a manner rounded

[Mr. G. S. Khaparde.]

off an awful point. My friend spoke of the inscrutable ways of Providence. I quite agree. But Providence must also have some time to accomplish its purpose. If you say it is Providence, and if you try to force Providence, then you are certainly going wrong. The way to depend upon Providence is to say what you like, pray for what you like and then sit quiet and see what is being done by Providence. In this particular instance Providence has been invoked and I also invoke Providence on my behalf. I really want that this matter should go through soon and in such a manner as will meet my wishes. But then a difficulty comes. There is an impression that the Round Table Conference is to be a kind of statutory body invoked on purpose to improve on what has been done before or to sit in judgment on what has been done before—a sort of appellate court or a court in revision. But I humbly submit that so far as I can see from the speeches of His Excellency the Viceroy, none of these functions are going to be assigned to the Round Table Conference. The idea is to find out the greatest common measure—the greatest common denominator if you speak in arithmetical language—of agreement; that is to say, to find out as many points as possible on which there is no difference of opinion. Then you put those points on one side and then take up the points about which there is difference of opinion, and you discuss them in the Round Table Conference and try to arrive at a common agreement. The greatest attempt that you make to secure this kind of agreement will show the greatest statesmanship. The people assembled together at the Conference will have to adopt an attitude of give and take, and practise a great deal of patience, perhaps more patience than is ordinarily practised by human beings. The results of this deliberation will be laid, I suppose, before the India Committee and it will go ultimately, as modified by the Law Officers, to Parliament. That is the function. So, from the arguments advanced by my friends it appears to me as if they are under the impression that this Round Table Conference is something like a revisionary body, a body to revise what has been done before. It is nothing of the kind. However, I do not want to put any limit on the hopes of anybody. I hope it is true that this Round Table Conference is a revisional body. Well, will it and can it do these things? That is the next question. Of course it will wish to do so. Whether it can do it is a different question, because it will have to run the gauntlet of a debate in Parliament. It will have to go through the India Committee and so on. When things have to pass through many channels, when water passes through many channels it naturally acquires the colour of the channel through which it goes. Opinion when it travels through many bodies naturally gets corrected and modified to the extent to which the members through whose hands it has got to go hold opinions themselves on those points. I suppose, as my Honourable friend says, the Viceroy knows all these things. I suppose we had better let him steer as he thinks best through this danger. Even if I owe a debt to a person and that person asks me for the money, I tell him, "Yes, I owe you the money; I shall pay it". But if he comes to me every day and at dinner time and asks, "My money, my money", then I get angry and tell him, "I will pay nothing at all". That is how it works. The Viceroy is doing everything he can to give it to you and if you go on troubling him I suppose you run a danger, and because there is that danger, I have brought in my amendment. There is such a thing as spoiling a thing by too much solicitude. Of course, you can spoil it by negligence also. But too much solicitude is worse than negligence in certain respects. We have already thanked His Excellency the Viceroy; we are thankful to him now and we are prepared to thank him



in future also. But if you bother him by saying, "Do this, do this, do this" I am afraid it will act against us. I object to these words "not later than October, 1930" because they carry a very mild and veiled dictation. It means, "Do this within this time; if you do not do this, I shall see what I can do", or something of that kind. This suggestion of dictation in the Resolution is to my mind wrong, and ought not to be made. Therefore, I suggest the omission of these words.

There is another reason for my amendment. I mean no disrespect to anybody. Our Central Committee went to London and they had their discussions. Of course they had their differences. I like to let some time pass for these differences to disappear and ask them to agree to something. It does not matter whether it is advantageous to one community or to another or to neither or to both. It may be anything, but I will tell them, "For God's sake, agree to something." That is what I call hasty action, wrong action. They may not care to listen to my counsel. But I want to leave them some time to think it out, and therefore I brought this amendment.

Lastly, Sir, I believe that His Excellency can do nearly everything that he wishes to do. But you must also remember that he has got to steer in the English Channel. The English Channel is a very difficult sea to navigate, Sir, and very many people have failed and might fail. Then there are in Home  
12 Noon. politics all sorts of questions like the coal question and other domestic problems of the Home Government, and it is through all those cross-currents that we have to navigate our bark. And our Indian bark after all is a very fragile bark which is likely to break at any moment, and that has to be navigated through many cross-currents. It is a very difficult position. I say, Sir, give His Excellency full power and do not put a time limit in the matter. Let Providence do its own work. That is the reason for my amendment which I commend to the Council.

THE HONOURABLE SIR ARTHUR FROMM (Bombay Chamber of Commerce): Sir, should I be in order in speaking on the original Resolution as well as the amendment?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

THE HONOURABLE SIR ARTHUR FROMM: Sir, I listened with the greatest attention to the most admirable speech of the Honourable the Mover of this Resolution. I should like to assure Members of this House that with most of his remarks I am in complete agreement. The difficulty in which the Honourable Member found himself, as I understood him, is that there is pervading this country a movement which can only result in great disaster if it is allowed to progress beyond a certain limit, or even if it is allowed to progress any further than it has done up to the present time. And the difficulty, as I understand the Honourable Mr. Mudaliar to find himself in, is that it is so easy for any politician or so-called politician to get hold of a tub, turn it upside down, jump on the top of it and shout "Down with the Government". It is not quite so easy for any one who does not share those sentiments to get hold of another tub and stand on top of it and shout "Up with the Government". That is always the position in the case of these movements, and recognising that position I take it that the Honourable the Mover of this Resolution seeks that some action should be taken to counter-act this revolutionary movement which is spreading throughout the country

[*Sir Arthur Froom.*]

and that such action should be taken by the Government as soon as possible. The action he suggests is that the Round Table Conference should be convened as early as possible, and he adds "and in no case later than in October 1930". I now come to the amendment moved by my Honourable friend Mr. Khaparde. He has shown why these last words in Mr. Mudaliar's Resolution should be omitted, and I thoroughly agree with Mr. Khaparde. Now, if Honourable Members will carefully study the Resolution as it stands, the implication is that if the Round Table Conference is not held by October 1930 there should be no Round Table Conference at all. Now, it is conceivable that there might be some catastrophic happening—I hope not—which necessitated the postponement of the Round Table Conference till November 1930. But if this House accepts the Resolution moved, it would not be possible for them to agree in a Round Table Conference being held any later than October 1930. I think that if the Honourable the Mover of the Resolution had omitted the month "October" his Resolution would have been much more reasonable. We all want the Round Table Conference to be held as early as possible. The reasons given by the Honourable the Mover are undoubtedly sound reasons. Where I think he errs is in mentioning a specified month. For that reason, Sir, I heartily support the amendment moved by my Honourable friend Mr. Khaparde.

THE HONOURABLE SARDAR BAHADUR SHIVDEV SINGH UBEROI (Punjab Sikh): Sir, the question of the revision of the constitution of India has been agitating the minds of Indian politicians for several years. Fortunately it also entered the minds of the British Cabinet, in whose hands the destinies of India lie, in the latter part of the year 1928, and the machinery for the consideration of the question was set in motion in the early part of 1929. It is a well known fact which does not require much elaboration that this step of the British Government was objected to by certain sections of Indians. But there still remained a section which held a different view with regard to the Royal Commission. Every province, with the exception of one, co-operated with that body by electing a Provincial Committee to sit in the Joint Conference, and the Indian Central Committee, also partly elected and partly nominated, was created and worked with it. It was thought then by everybody concerned and especially by those who had co-operated and worked at great sacrifice with the Simon Commission, that the Report of the Commission would come out some time at the end of the year 1929, that the machinery of the British Parliament would begin to move some time in the early part of 1930 and the revised constitution would come out as an Act of Parliament by the end of the current year. But those hopes have not been realised. The Simon Commission has not been able, owing to their arduous task both in India and in England, to bring out their Report. Those seven stars are still shining in the firmament of courts of justice, and we can only hope that they will shine broadcast in India some time at the end of April, since it is expected that the Report will be published soon after Easter. In the meantime a very valuable and important idea came into the minds of those who are interested in the welfare of India and in whose hands the working of the constitution rests, that no constitution would work unless there is some sort of understanding between British India and Indian India, that is, the Indian States. That idea arose out of the correspondence between the Chairman of the Commission and the Premier, and that showed

that the future constitution of India must take into consideration the Indian States and that their Report would contain a very important suggestion about that also. Over and above that, Sir, the idea of holding a Conference came into the head of . . . . .

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT:** I do not know whether the Honourable Member was in the House when I gave a ruling on this point. The Honourable Member is describing the events which led up to the announcement that there would be a Round Table Conference. Those remarks are not relevant on this occasion.

**THE HONOURABLE SARDAR BAHADUR SHIVDEV SINGH UBEROI:** I accept your ruling, Sir. What I meant to say was that a time came when His Excellency the Viceroy made an announcement, on the 31st October, that a Round Table Conference would be held between the representatives of India and the Indian States and the British Cabinet, that they would sit together and join heads to consider the future constitution of India. I think we owe a debt of gratitude to my Honourable friend for bringing forward this Resolution with a view to inviting the attention of the authorities here and in England to the necessity of holding the Conference as early as possible. As my friend remarked, more than five months have elapsed and we do not see any sign of the date of the Conference, to say nothing of the details to be discussed there. As soon as this idea was announced by His Excellency it was welcomed, and it had the excellent effect of bringing to co-operation those who had not co-operated with the Simon Commission. I think this was a very great achievement on behalf of the Government, to bring round certain influential political parties of India to the proposed Conference, and thus sever their connection with those who non-co-operated with the Commission during its investigation and who also expressed their idea not to co-operate in future with the proposed Conference. I think this was a very great achievement indeed, but the question is how far their patience is to be tried. It is a fact and it cannot be ignored and it should not be ignored by Government and everybody concerned, that a movement has been set on foot in India which might prove disastrous and be to the disadvantage of both the country and the Empire. The fact cannot be gainsaid that the hand of the British Government is long enough to suppress any such action on the part of the people who are out to break the law, and I hold the view myself that it is the foremost duty of the Government to preserve and keep law and order and peace in the country. It should be handled with firmness. But this fact cannot be denied for a moment that that movement is spreading and gaining ground step by step in the country. Now the question arises for those who have co-operated with the Government, who have stood loyally by the Government, who are for constitutional advance in the country, what arm they have to use against arresting the progress of that movement which they by conviction think would not prove fruitful to the country. Simply the idea that the Conference would be held does not help very much; unless we are in a position to say that this would be the future destiny of India, by this way we can approach the destiny, we cannot hope to arrest the progress of that movement. It was just this morning, Sir, that I was reading in the paper that the students of a college in Lahore, the Law College, greeted with shouts of "Long live revolution" His Excellency the Governor who had gone there to perform the opening ceremony of a hostel. Can we ignore these facts? The movement has caught the youth of the country even—those who are

[Sardar Bahadur Shivdev Singh Uberoi.]

preparing for the law degrees. It has been said that they were coerced to do it, compelled to do that, by some action of the police. I cannot vouchsafe how far that statement is correct, but this is alleged and printed in the *Hindustan Times* which came to my hands this morning. How can those who are responsible for the good government of the country ignore these facts, that this movement is gaining ground. Unless we are given definite information as to the date of the Conference, as to what is to happen there, we are helpless to arrest the progress of that movement. I find, Sir, in the statement which was issued by His Excellency the Viceroy on the 31st of October he hopes and trusts that the action of His Majesty's Government may evoke response from and enlist the concurrence of all sections of opinion in India, and I believe that all who wish India well will, wherever and whoever they are, desire to break through the mists of mistrust that have lately cropped up between India and Great Britain. Now, Sir, I believe this is full of sympathy and sincerity, sympathy for India and sincerity so far as His Excellency the Viceroy is concerned. But the question before us is this. Five months have passed and we are not in sight of the date of the Conference. October has been said to be the latest date by the Honourable Mover. It does not mean that it should not be held if it is not held in October, but now the idea which is embodied in the Resolution is fully and plainly conveyed in the first portion of his Resolution, that it should be held as soon as possible, and I do not think he will have any objection to accepting the amendment. I do not myself wish to press that the 31st October should be the last date for the holding of the Conference, but I wish to make one or two observations as regards this fact. If it is not held by October, the climatic conditions may not prompt Indians to take part in the work of the Round Table Conference. When I bear this in mind, I think October is the best time for the Conference. I wish to bring to the consideration of this Honourable House that they should pass this Resolution that the Conference should be held as early as possible. Unless the date of the Conference is announced very soon, perhaps those in whom His Excellency the Viceroy has placed trust may become impatient also and they might be led to think that the idea of the Conference is a hoax. I personally do not believe in that. When the representatives of India meet British representatives and have a heart to heart talk about the future constitution of India, that would be the best reply. But any further delay in the announcement of the date of the Conference may produce that result in the minds of some who are at present giving expression to their idea of co-operating and going and sitting in the Conference, which should be representative of every community and party.

THE HONOURABLE SIR EBRAHIM HAROON JAFFER (Bombay Presidency : Muhammadan) : Sir, I beg to support the amendment of my friend the Honourable Mr. Khaparde. I think I shall not be able to do that justice to the case that he has done in such a forcible manner, but I shall do so in my own humble way in a few words. When the Government's proposal to hold a Round Table Conference was announced by His Excellency the Viceroy, the existing political situation was completely changed and in spite of the many political differences between various interests, parties and communities, a remarkable unanimity became evident all over the country. Everyone must regret that this did not last beyond the 23rd December last when Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Motilal Nehru could not

agree with His Excellency the Viceroy and demanded from the Government an assurance which could not logically be given so long as the Government had to wait for the submission of the Simon Commission's Report. What followed at the Lahore session of the Congress made matters worse and the situation to-day is very saddening. I desire to say nothing about it which may aggravate it in the least. It must be the duty of everyone desirous of peaceful progress and the welfare of the country to do everything in his power to improve the situation, and I earnestly appeal to Government to do nothing that could in any way suggest repression, for that would certainly make matters worse for everybody concerned. I hope there is no truth in the suggestion of the *Sunday Times* of London that the Bombay Government is about to arrest Mahatma Gandhi and his band of volunteers. Surely it must be a very weak administration that can be paralysed by the resignation of a few village officers in a district or two. No man with any common sense can imagine that so strong a Government as this is afraid because it is determined not to arrest Mahatma Gandhi and his Satyagrahists, and desires to beat the apostle of non-violence at his own game. But a negative policy of non-repression is not enough. Government must continue its policy of conciliation by doing something positive also, and that without loss of a minute. Invitations must be issued to genuine representatives of all vital interests, political parties, and communities at once. No matter what other pre-occupations His Majesty's Government may have, they should not postpone the holding of the Round Table Conference which must commence its work this summer. India's representatives must be selected at once and they should be invited to leave in a month or two so that the Conference could commence its work before the end of June. No doubt it could not be reasonably expected to finish its work in a few weeks. If the Naval Conference has taken so long, and has yet achieved no result worth mentioning, a Conference that would settle the destinies of 320 millions of God's creatures, who constitute one-fifth of the whole of humanity, may well sit for a few months if it is expected to achieve fruitful results. Therefore, while expressing on my own behalf and on behalf of my community full appreciation of the proposal to hold a Round Table Conference, I would emphasise that it should be held without the least avoidable delay and not later than this summer.

I, therefore, heartily support the amendment.

THE HONOURABLE DEWAN BAHADUR T. R. RAMACHANDRA AYYAR (Madras : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I welcome the Resolution of the Honourable Mr. Mudaliar but I wish to point out at the same time that it proceeds on the assumption that the Round Table Conference is to be held and it is a settled fact. A promise has been made by His Excellency the Viceroy there is no doubt. But it stands to common sense that if a Round Table Conference which is to produce any tangible result is to be held, the atmosphere necessary for it must exist. A calm political atmosphere certainly is necessary if the Round Table Conference is to produce any result. But what is the state of things at present ? Mahatma Gandhi is on the warpath. Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel and numerous other leaders are in jail. Mr. Sen Gupta and a lot of others are on trial. The country is seething with discontent. The Rarda Act has created a deep feeling of discontent throughout the country. Thousands of marriages have taken place. The whole country is in a blaze. Now we say we must have a Conference, which means deliberations by a certain body. And the deliberations are to take place on behalf of whom ? On behalf of India. And India is in this condition. The people certainly are

[Dewan Bahadur T. R. Ramachandra Ayyar.]

Not now in a mood to hold a conference. Now, if it can be held it can be held only when the Government is able to allay public feeling. Unless and until you soothe public feeling, the majority of the public will not take part in this Conference. Now, are we in a position to ignore Mahatma Gandhi and his party—the most numerous party, the most influential party, the party that has the largest following in the country? And a sort of compromise must be arrived at between the parties, before we can confer. But if one party is going to non-co-operate, and that the most influential and the most numerous, the Round Table Conference will be a farce. I am not saying the Government is going to commit any blunder in holding a Conference at all. I say therefore I welcome the Resolution because if the Conference is to be held at an early date it means the greatest boon will be conferred on India by soothing public feeling. Mahatma Gandhi will be induced to take part in the Conference. He is not one individual. He represents thousands of persons all over the country. Now, this is a situation, I think, that the Government has realised—I must take it that the Government has realised it. What is the meaning of pressing the Government to come to a conclusion as to the exact date on which the Conference is to be held? At present it seems to me it is impossible to hold a Conference. A change in the circumstances must be brought about and whether the Government is in a position to do it or not is questionable. I therefore say if the Government will be able to bring about a settlement of this matter it will be the greatest boon. The difficulty is this. The Government is not prepared to support the Satyagrahis. They cannot be deported. They cannot be transported. All we can do with them under the law is to send them to prison or make them pay a fine. But the moment they come out of jail they will again violate the law. This will continue. And I do not think it will be possible to put the thing down. If it was a violent movement which involved fighting, it would have been easy to put it down. But that is not the state of things that we have. It seems to me the situation is a very difficult one and the Government will find it very difficult to face it. With these remarks I say there seems to me to be no necessity either for the Resolution or for the amendment.

THE HONOURABLE RAO BAHADUR D. LAXMINARAYAN (Central Provinces : General) : Sir, I rise to support the motion which my friend the Honourable Mr. A. Ramaswami Mudaliar has moved. On the 19th February last, this House passed a resolution expressing our satisfaction and gratitude to His Excellency the Viceroy and His Majesty's Government for the recent announcement placing India's cherished goal, namely, Dominion Status, beyond all manner of doubt, and the declaration promising the convening of a Round Table Conference. The Resolution that is now before the House would have come as a natural corollary to that, even if things and forces in India had not moved on, considerably to the left, since that Resolution was adopted. But, Sir, as we all know now, the clouds that we then thought had lifted, still darken the horizon to-day, and are getting thicker every day. It makes it all the more necessary and urgent, therefore, that we should lose no time in pointing out to His Majesty's Government that every day's delay will make the situation worse and worse. It seems to me, therefore, quite in the fitness of things that we should draw pointed attention to the dangers of delay. We all know the manifold pre-occupations of His Majesty's Government in England. While it may be granted that Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and his colleagues in the Cabinet are engaged in the consideration of momentous issues on which the peace and

prosperity of the whole world depend, here at home also we are confronted with a situation, daily getting more menacing and fraught with consequences, which it is very difficult for us to foresee. Faced with this situation, our desire—the desire of those who are anxious to find a peaceful solution for the present distempers of the Indian body politic, the existence and the keenness of which we want to be conveyed to His Majesty's Government—our desire is that the latter should expedite the convening of the proposed Conference as early as possible. The announcement about the meaning of the declaration of August, 1917, and the promise to convene a Round Table Conference, seemed for a time to have given some confidence, and put some heart into those who stand, and have always stood, for constitutional action. But since then, as I have already pointed out, direct actionists have taken the bit into their mouth, and are rushing headlong into courses of action, the results and repercussions of which it is hard to gauge at present. Young men everywhere are showing a tendency to rush into ways, which the elders disapprove, but are unable to check. Men like Pandit Motilal Nehru have to yield and make room for Nehru Junior. It is phenomena like these which make us all apprehensive, lest by delay we should precipitate the very things which we are all anxious to avoid. The atmosphere has once again been filled with mutual distrust and suspicion. One had only to listen to speeches after speeches made in the other place to notice how the whole atmosphere is again surcharged with bitterness of feeling and intense distrust of the policy of Government, both in matters civil and military. As regards this latter, Commander Kenworthy, who recently paid a visit to this country, writing in the *Daily Herald*, has said :

“The progress we make in giving training facilities to young Indians in India as officers in the Indian Forces of the future, will be one of the tests of our sincerity”.

This is not the only test. There are various other tests by which the policy of England towards India will be judged. But whatever the tests, unless we come to close grips with the realities of the situation, we will make no progress, and it is in order to make us grapple with actual realities, and not allow the atmosphere to be filled with the poisonous vapours of suspicion and distrust, that we are anxious that we should press upon His Majesty's Government the necessity of convening the Conference forthwith.

Before I close, Sir, I would like to pay a tribute of respect to the Honourable Sir Sankaran Nair, the Chairman of the Central Committee, for allowing no question of personal pique or prestige to come in the way of a hearty acceptance of the Round Table Conference idea. I know, Sir, how his Committee, constituted in the teeth of fierce opposition, was boycotted at Nagpur. But patriotism has triumphed over mere questions of prestige, and it was at his instance that this House adopted the Resolution, expressing its satisfaction with summoning the Conference. Events in India have made it necessary now for us to press on His Majesty's Government the necessity of proceeding to the actual business of the Conference forthwith. Incidents, very trivial in themselves, assume, in the present troubled political atmosphere, a magnitude and importance out of all proportion to their intrinsic merits. This atmosphere of mutual hostility and suspicion must be ended, and that can be done only by bringing us face to face with those who have at present the shaping of our destinies in their hands for the solution of questions at issue between us without loss of a moment. I will not enter into questions about how the personnel of the Conference should be constituted, what questions should be discussed, what measure of prior

[Rao Bahadur D. Laxminarayan.]

agreement amongst ourselves should be reached before we proceed to take part in the conference. I feel certain about one thing only, namely, that nothing that does not immediately place us on a level with the Dominions, with any safeguards that might be found necessary for the transitional period of course, will prove of any avail in allaying the present discontent.

Again, as Commander Kenworthy puts it :

“ There are still plenty of responsible and sober elements in India to co-operate with England ”

if they are convinced that England is in earnest, and eager to place India on a level with the other components of the British Commonwealth of Nations. One who has been through the mill himself says that

“ The British Bureaucracy has managed to transform inertia into a positive force ”,

and he adds Bureaucracy is one huge “ sit-tight ” Club. It is this very spirit of inertia that is most dangerous at the present moment in our affairs. It is to lift this question out of this rut of inertia, and the normal easy-going course of red tape and routine, that I accord my support to this Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS (Punjab : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I rise to support the original motion of my Honourable friend Mr. Mudaliar. I have heard the arguments put forward by the Mover of the amendment and by his supporters. The arguments put forward by Diwan Bahadur Ramachandra Ayyar appeal to me a great deal and I was going to put forward some of the arguments which he has put in support of the amending motion, but I think those arguments which he has put forward emphasise the holding of the Round Table Conference at an early date and not to make the announcement of the date indefinite. There are all sorts of disquieting rumours afloat and we wish that peace may ever rule in this country and that the discontent among the people might vanish. The reasons why the Round Table Conference are being delayed cannot be understood by the people. Some say that a change in the Home Government is one of the reasons. The fall of the Labour Government and the Conservative Government getting into power is being awaited. Others say that the present repressive policy of Government might eventually lead the country to a state in which certain political parties whose association and advice in this Round Table Conference was also sought for may not come forward. I think, Sir, it is in the interests of all of us that a definite date should be fixed. We are all constitutionalists. We are all law-abiding people. We all want peace and order, but at the same time we do not wish the present state of affairs to continue. I have no sympathy with those who break the law. But all the same I want peace in the country. I wish that in case some definite date be fixed, the progress of the hostile movements will be greatly checked. I wish, Sir, that in case October is considered too early, some other month or date in this year be definitely fixed by which all the storms and cyclones in the sea of politics be checked. People, there is no doubt, Sir, are getting nervous and discontented owing to the delay that is being made. Some of them do consider that an unfavourable atmosphere is being constantly created by certain parties who do not want the Round Table Conference to be a success. In case a time later than October is fixed, my Honourable friend Sardar Shivdev Singh Uberoi is quite in order in saying that for the Indians it will be too cold to go there and to join in the deliberations conveniently. As far as a hungry man is



concerned, until he actually gets food he will never be content. In case you give him an indefinite promise by the time that he gets food the poor man will die of hunger. When His Excellency the Viceroy made the great announcement in October, 1929, at that time the meaning of "responsible government" was not made clear to contain Dominion Status. And that omission added a great deal to the unrest in our country. Later on the meaning was cleared for which we are grateful; we thought that the good atmosphere which had been created by such an announcement would result in all parties co-operating in the Round Table Conference. Now the request I make is that the Government, in order to secure the fullest co-operation, might see its way to fix a definite date and not allow the decision to go on into the ocean of indefiniteness.

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. G. HAIG (Home Secretary): Sir, I hope that this Council will be able to-day to pass a Resolution on this very important question which will be unanimous. It seems to me very desirable that on a question of this kind we should not be made to appear to differ among ourselves when there is no real difference in substance. In listening to the very eloquent speech made by the Honourable Mr. Mudaliar in proposing this Resolution, it appeared to me that the main substance of what he pressed and explained so admirably would be entirely fulfilled by the earlier part of the Resolution, and that it was not really necessary to add the later words. I hope therefore that he will find himself in a position to accept the amendment that has been moved by my Honourable friend Mr. Khaparde. What matters after all in a question like this is the spirit, and it seems to me that it would be dangerous for any one to seek to tie themselves or to tie Government to particular dates. I am sure that this Council shares to the full the confidence expressed by the Honourable Mr. Khaparde in the wise guidance of His Excellency the Viceroy in this matter (Applause) and in his desire to see that the policy with which he has been himself so closely associated should be brought to a successful conclusion. I have been struck to-day by the tone of genuine support for the holding of this Conference which has been expressed by Members throughout the Council and the great expectations that I think we all place on its successful issue. We look with confidence and hope to the Conference bringing about in India that peace which the country so clearly needs. No reference I think to-day has been made to the address which His Excellency the Viceroy made to the Legislative Assembly on the 25th of January, in which he amplified the momentous announcement that he had made three months earlier about this Conference. His Excellency made it clear that he desired to have the views of the Members of the Legislature as to the date that would generally be considered most convenient and suitable, and the debate in this House to-day will from that point of view be most valuable. There has been I think an undercurrent of feeling, in the speeches of some Honourable Members at any rate, that the Government are not anxious that this Conference should be held at an early date. There is no foundation, I can assure the House, for any such feeling. The Government position can be stated very simply. The Resolution as amended represents precisely their view, namely, that the Conference should be convened as early as possible; subject, that is always to the practical necessities of the situation. We must not altogether lose sight of those practical necessities. For instance, as we all know, the Statutory Commission has not yet completed its report. According to a reported answer in Parliament, it is hoped that the report may be ready soon after Easter. Then, as His Excellency himself said, it will be necessary to give His

[Mr. H. G. Haig.]

Majesty's Government, the Government of India, Local Governments, the Princes and general public opinion reasonable time to study the complicated questions with which the report will deal. The matter is of such enormous importance to the future of India that we must be careful not to permit our natural impatience to arrive at a conclusion to affect the chances of our arriving at the right conclusion. Much hard practical thinking has to be done. We cannot solve these problems by phrases. The most earnest efforts must be made to reconcile divergent interests and aims, and it would be a pity if those efforts were in any way handicapped by trying to do things too quickly. But, Sir, when His Excellency said that reasonable time must be allowed, I am quite confident that he meant reasonable time, and there is no question of attempting to interpose anything like unreasonable delay. Another factor which will have to be adjusted in deciding the time of the Conference is that it is understood that the Imperial Conference will be held some time in the autumn of this year. His Majesty's Government of course are convening this Conference, the Round Table Conference, and they will have to consider how their time table can best be adjusted. But, as His Excellency explained in his statement on the 25th January, they will desire to hold the Indian Conference as early as possible and so far as they are concerned will interpose no avoidable delay. I trust, therefore, that if no unforeseen circumstances interpose, the wishes of this Council that the Conference should be held as early as possible will in practice be fulfilled. Copies of this debate will be forwarded to the Secretary of State so that he may be acquainted with the important and interesting views that have been expressed in this Council to-day.

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIAR: Sir, I must express my gratification at the almost unanimous support that my Resolution has received in this House. I may at once state that I am willing to respond to the very reasonable suggestion that has been made by the Honourable Mr. Haig that, with a view to having unanimous conclusions of this House, I should accept the amendment moved by my Honourable friend Mr. Khaparde. I wish, however, to state that I am not in entire agreement with the reasons which have been advanced by my Honourable friend Mr. Khaparde in support of his amendment. I trust, Sir, that this House will agree with me when I say that to call my Resolution a command to His Excellency or to the British Government to have the Conference by a certain date is entirely to misrepresent both the object and the scope of my Resolution. My Honourable friend spoke of wishes and prayers and he said he was not going farther than wishes and prayers. I remember the days when Mr. Khaparde was the lion of the Central Provinces when wishes and prayers were not the things that would have satisfied him and I still hope and trust that he is not one of those who would rest content with bare wishes and mere prayers. In any case, Sir, so far as Members of this House are concerned, we should have no place here and we should not have been called to meet by His Excellency the Viceroy if we were to content ourselves with wishes and prayers and not to give expression by words to our opinions in the matter. I am thankful to the Honourable the Home Secretary for reminding me that His Excellency the Viceroy himself invited the opinion of the Central Legislature as regards the time when this Conference should be held and I am therefore merely responding to the invitation of the head of the Government when I suggest through my Resolution that this House should convey its opinion that the Round Table Conference should be held as early as possible. Nor was I merely acting in a spirit of irresponsibility when I suggested that

this Conference should be held not later than October. The month of October was not one of those months which was merely picked out by me at random without any reference either to things that will go before or to things that would follow later. I had a very good reason for suggesting that the month of October should be the latest date by which this Conference must be held; nor was I of the opinion that if the Conference were not held before October there ought to be no Conference at all. That again, Sir, I venture to submit very humbly is a misrepresentation of my Resolution. The Honourable Mr. Haig has told this House that the Imperial Conference is convened to meet some time in the autumn. To the best of the information that is at my disposal, that Conference will probably meet in August and it is expected that the Session of the Imperial Conference will be over by the last week of September. There was some method in my madness, if madness it could be called, for my suggesting that October may be the month when this Conference, following in the wake of the Imperial Conference presided over by the Prime Minister of England, as both the Conferences will be—at any rate I hope the Round Table Conference will also be presided over by the Prime Minister—when this Conference will be held.

Sir, my Honourable friend, Sir Arthur Froom spoke of tub thumpers who inverted tubs and got on the top of them; some of them do not even care to invert the tubs before preaching a tirade against the Government and expressing their views. Others also invert their tubs, stand on them and say what they have to say in favour of the Government. If my Honourable friend had experience of Southern India, as the Leader of the House undoubtedly has, I venture to think that Sir Arthur Froom would not have made the suggestion. There was no one in this country, no organised party, no political group, which was not prepared to invert its tub and proclaim from the top of those tubs as wholeheartedly as possible its support to the Government whenever it felt that that support should be forthcoming. But, Sir, my trouble has always been that this call for co-operation, this call to support the Government comes over and over again and howsoever it may be responded to, nothing further happens. The position of the constitutionalist, of the man who believes in Parliamentary methods of agitation, as I have already said in my opening speech, is one of the most unenviable and one of the most unhappy. Government make demands time and again that he should be called upon to censure those of his countrymen who he feels are misled, to support the Government in their action, and then he is thrown to the wolves. That is exactly what is happening all over the country and when we suggest that our hands may be strengthened, that the clock of progress should not be retarded, that something might be done to show that we have backed the right horse and that our methods will lead sooner to the goal which the Government and the country both have at heart than those methods which have been advocated by people whom we call irresponsible, the response is weak. This morning I am in the happy position of seeing that that response is not the usual response to which we who have been fighting for constitutionalism have been accustomed. I am grateful therefore for the measure of support that has been given to my Resolution by the Government itself. Sir, in this matter it is not merely a question of October or November. I feel essentially that time is of the essence of this Round Table Conference. It is not as though the Round Table Conference will not be attended if it is held later than October that I tabled this Resolution. I feel, I do not want to express my reasons in greater detail, that if this Conference is not held in the course of this year, the Round Table Conference will be still-born. That is my feeling, my political faith; and it is because I feel that as a Member of this Honourable House it is

[Mr. A. Ramaswami Mudaliar.]

up to me, my imperative duty, to communicate this view to those high and responsible in office that I have ventured to bring forward this Resolution, not because I think of landing the navigator into some shoal in the nooks and corners of Berar, but because I feel it is my duty to tell him and those who are in the ship what I feel with reference to the way in which it is navigating. I am certain that the mariner himself will realise the spirit in which this Resolution has been moved, the spirit in which remarks have been made on this Resolution, a helpful spirit and not merely a cantankerous or destructive spirit.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. KHAPARDE: But it is an untimely interference.

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIAR: Sir, I turn now to my friend from Madras, my Honourable friend Mr. Ramachandra Ayyar. Many people want various things to be done before the Round Table Conference is convened. There are some who believe that all agitation in the country should lapse. There are some who think that an effort should be made with Mahatma Gandhi to come to a compromise, and my friend is among those who believe that the Sarda Act should be repealed before the Round Table Conference is convened. It is impossible for any person to agree to all these demands and have the Round Table Conference. The old old fable of the person who carried the ass will be repeated ten times over if all those remedies which are suggested for bringing about a peaceful atmosphere are to be pursued before the Round Table Conference is ushered in. In my part of the country there is a saying which I should like to relate to this House. A man who was not altogether sane wanted to have a marriage performed. Now, the bride's parents said he should not be married till his madness disappeared; the bridegroom's parents said that the madness would not disappear until the marriage took place; and between marriage and madness the man has always been a stale old bachelor. Now, it seems to me remarkable that my friend Mr. Ramachandra Ayyar should have suggested that the Round Table Conference should not be held till a peaceful, placid political atmosphere has been brought about, and a peaceful, placid political atmosphere will not be brought about till the Round Table Conference has been attended and the decisions of that Round Table Conference are placed before this country. I venture to think therefore, Sir, that there is not much argument in the thought that all political forces should stop, all those things which make for disturbance in this country should somehow or other be stopped before the Round Table Conference is convened. My idea in pressing for the early convening of the Round Table Conference is exactly the contrary. I believe that these political forces will not be allayed, that this political discontent will not be stopped, that there will be nothing which can bring about a little more placidity in the atmosphere than the early convening of the Round Table Conference, and the marking of a further stage of constitutional reforms. That is why, with exactly the object which my friend Mr. Ramachandra Ayyar has in view but for entirely the opposite reason, I have ventured to bring forward this Resolution.

Sir, as I have said already, I am at one with the Honourable Mr. Haig in desiring that there should be unanimity in this

1 P.M. Resolution. I therefore accept the amendment moved by my Honourable friend Mr. Khaparde and press the amended Resolution for the acceptance of this House.

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT :** The original question was :

“ That the following Resolution be adopted :

‘ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that he be pleased to convey to His Excellency the Viceroy and the Right Honourable the Secretary of State the opinion of this House that the Round Table Conference should be convened as early as possible and in no case later than in October, 1930 ’ ”.

Since which an amendment has been moved :

“ To omit the words ‘ and in no case later than in October, 1930 ’ . ”

The question I have to put is that those words be omitted.

The motion was adopted.

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT :** The question then is :

“ That the Resolution, as amended, be adopted. ”

The motion was adopted.

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#### STATEMENT OF BUSINESS.

**THE HONOURABLE SIR MUHAMMAD HABIBULLAH** (Leader of the House) : Sir, as there is no official business at the moment before the House and as there is no certainty as to when the Bills, which are pending before the other House, will be laid on the table of the Council of State, it is, unfortunately, impossible to predict the date of our next meeting.

The next items of Government business will be the consideration and passing of the Finance Bill, which, with your permission, Sir, will be laid on the table of the Council on the first available working day after it emerges from the other House. I would suggest that Honourable Members should keep themselves advised of the progress of the Bill in the other House in order that they may be aware of the date of our next sitting, which will, in addition, be communicated to them by circular letter.

**THE HONOURABLE SIR ARTHUR FROMM** (Bombay Chamber of Commerce) : Sir, I must admit that I listened to the statement of the Honourable the Leader of this House with considerable consternation, and I cannot help thinking that he must have been equally concerned at having to make it. This, Sir, I venture to remind the House—this state of affairs is becoming a hardy annual. We have objected, the Honourable Members of this House have objected on more occasions than one at being kept in Delhi away from their homes and away from their business, doing nothing, to wait for Bills which may or may not be passed by the other place. Sir, of course, I am not in a position to dictate or to show to Government how they should rearrange their business to avoid this unfortunate state of affairs existing in this House. But I do think that the wit of Government should devise some scheme or some arrangement of business so that we should not be requested to stay up in Delhi for a week, two weeks, how many do we know ? doing nothing but await Bills as I say which may or possibly may not be passed by the other place.

THE HONOURABLE SIR LANCELOT GRAHAM (Secretary, Legislative Department): Sir, I must say I feel slightly provoked by the remarks of the Honourable Sir Arthur Froom. I think that he might have coupled his contention with at least a conventional expression of gratitude with regard to the Government in bringing the Council of State up at as late a date as possible. The Council of State could not have been summoned later, for otherwise they would not have been able to participate in the presentation of the Railway Budget. As regards affairs in the other House, Sir, the Honourable Members of this House, if they have followed the dates there carefully, must be aware that we cannot present the General Budget in the other House earlier than the 1st of March—the 28th of February in fact—and consequently the programme there is absolutely settled. It is not capable of acceleration by Government action. All I wish to make clear at this stage is that the implication of my Honourable friend that the Government have been careless or stupid in arranging business in the other House is entirely unfounded.

THE HONOURABLE SIR ARTHUR FROOM: I did not suggest that, Sir. I said that something should be altered.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: It may be some consolation to the Honourable Sir Arthur Froom to know that a division is being taken in the other place at the present moment.

I am forced into the position of adjourning the House to an indefinite date, which will, as suggested by the Honourable the Leader of the House be the first working day after a Bill—any Bill—is disposed of in the other place, in order that it may be laid here.

The Council then adjourned *sine die*.

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