

Wednesday, 28th September, 1932

THE
COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES

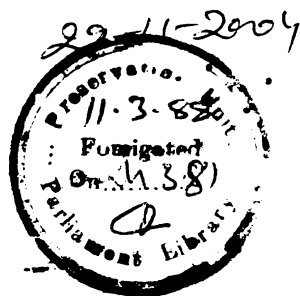
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COUNCIL OF STATE.

Wednesday, 28th September, 1932.

The Council met in the Council Chamber at Viceregal Lodge at Eleven of the Clock. the Honourable the President in the Chair.

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

SHARE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM IN INDIAN IMPORTS IN REGARD TO MACHINERY AND MILL-WORK, ETC.

121. THE HONOURABLE RAJA RAGHUNANDAN PRASAD SINGH : Will Government state the share of the United Kingdom in Indian imports with regard to (a) machinery and mill-work, and (b) earthenware and porcelain, paints and colours in the years 1929-30 and 1930-31 ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. J. C. B. DRAKE : The Honourable Member is referred to Volume I of the Accounts relating to the Sea-borne Trade and Navigation of British India for the fiscal year ending 31st March, 1931, copy of which is in the Library.

STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT EXPRESSING REGRET FOR A WRONG RULING AGAINST SIR PHIROZE SETHNA.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Before we proceed to business I wish to refer briefly to an incident which occurred in the House towards the end of our sitting the day before yesterday. I have been given to understand that the Honourable Member from Bombay who moved the last Resolution that was discussed on that day feels that I unnecessarily and unduly interfered with his exercise of his right of reply, and that I should not have called him to order in the manner in which I did. He tells me also that there are some non-official Members of the House who think with him, though of that I have no personal knowledge, since I have not discussed the matter with any of them, or indeed with any Member of the Council except our Honourable Leader. I am indeed sorry that it should be the Honourable Sir Phiroze Sethna whose feelings I should have hurt. I have always admired, as I know we all have, the Honourable Member's oratory, the fluency of his eloquence, the complete mastery he invariably displays of any subject on which he speaks, and the well-ordered arrangement of his arguments. It has been a matter of regret to me, and there are others who share that regret, that his other multifarious business pre-occupations have, during recent sessions, prevented his regular attendance at all our meetings, because his intervention in any discussion has always had the effect of raising the standard and level of the debate. I say this much,

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[Mr. President.]

and I do not think that I need say more, in an endeavour to convince the House and the Honourable Member that the last thing in my mind was any intention to curtail the Honourable Member's right of speech, and much less, to hurt his feelings.

During the period of eight years in which I have had the privilege of occupying this Chair I have from time to time put to myself the question whether I have been unnecessarily strict in enforcing the rules of practice and procedure in the discharge of my functions as President. I am free to admit that when I have considered the matter reflection has led me to believe that if I have erred, it has been on the side of over-strictness; but, at the same time, if that is so, I have felt no doubt whatever that has been a mistake on the right side. It is not easy for a President to strike the exact mean between over-strictness and over-lenience; and I am convinced that, in the case of a legislative body such as this Council, a tendency towards over-lenience may lead to laxity, possibly to an increasing disregard of the rules, and in the end to a loss of decorum and dignity, if not to something worse. We all know only too well how easy the downward path can be in this respect. From the outset, therefore, I set myself to try to maintain the high standard established by the late Sir Alexander Muddiman, the first President of this Council, whose methods, I, as Secretary of the Council, had the fullest opportunities for watching. What the result has been it is for you, Honourable Members, and for the world to judge; but for my part, I like to think that the Council is one of which any one might be proud to be a Member, and of which I for my part am intensely proud to have been President for so long a period.

I have taken the opportunity to mention these matters, because, as I said just now, they have often been in my mind. But when I do so, it is with no suggestion whatever that all of them, or even some of them, have a direct bearing on the particular incident with reference to which I began these remarks. In regard to that, on reflection I have felt that, in checking the Honourable Sir Phiroze Sethna when he was exercising his right of reply, I did not perhaps give sufficient consideration to the fact that I had permitted an Honourable Member from Calcutta just before to intervene and put a question to the speaker. It has been represented to me and I see some force in the representation that this necessarily had the result of diverting the attention of the Honourable Member for the moment from the strict lines of his reply and in the circumstances the Chair might have allowed him some latitude and was possibly unduly hasty in calling him to order. I hope the Honourable Member will be assured that I had no intention whatever of hurting his feelings. That I have done so I have been left in no doubt, and that is a matter that I much regret. (Applause.)

THE HONOURABLE SIR PHIROZE SETHNA (Bombay: Non-Muhammadan): Mr. President, on behalf not only of myself but I venture to submit on behalf of all the non-official Members of this House, I desire to thank (you, Sir, for the statement which you have been good enough to make. Applause.)

**POSTPONEMENT OF THE DATE OF MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
OF STATE FIXED FOR THE 29TH SEPTEMBER TO THE 30TH
SEPTEMBER, 1932.**

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : There is another matter that I should like to dispose of before we proceed to business. I was on the point of stating that representations have been made to me by several Members that it is not convenient that our last meeting should take place tomorrow inasmuch as it is the occasion of an important Hindu festival. I should not have initiated this matter myself, but it was because the Honourable the Leader of the largest party in this House was not in his place when I stood that I did so. It is desirable, of course, that the question of the date of the next meeting should be settled as early as possible. I have been asked by a considerable section of Members on the non-official side of this House to fix Friday as the date of our next meeting instead of tomorrow. In regard to that, it is not a matter entirely in the hands of the Chair ; as the day is intended for the disposal of official business, I should be glad—and the House will be glad—to hear what the Honourable the Leader of the House has to say on the subject.

THE HONOURABLE SIR FRANK NOYCE (Leader of the House) : Sir, I have no objection whatever to the meeting of the Council being postponed from tomorrow till Friday, though I could have wished that the House, both from the point of view of time and still more of expense, had accepted what was originally intended, that the Tea Districts Bill should be taken today. It was expressed to me that it was the wish of the House to have a whole day for it, namely, Thursday, and it was for that reason it was put down originally for tomorrow. As I have said, Sir, I have no objection whatever to sitting on Friday.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS (Punjab : Non-Muhammadian) : Sir, I thank you and the Honourable Leader of the House for so kindly meeting us in this matter.

With your permission, Sir, I should like to make a suggestion that you may be so kind as to appoint a Committee to look after accommodation and the housing of Members, at Simla and Delhi, as was suggested by the Honourable Rai Bahadur Lala Jagdish Prasad the other day.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : In regard to the first matter, I direct that the next meeting of the Council shall be on Friday instead of tomorrow. I do so on the understanding that the business that will be before the Council that day will not take very long and therefore it will in no way interfere with our Muhammadian Members and the performance of their religious duties on that day.

With regard to the second point, I assured the House the other day when the question of a Committee to deal with the accommodation of Honourable Members of this House both in Delhi and in Simla was raised that if I felt that there was a general feeling among the non-official Members that this Committee was desirable I should have no difficulty in meeting their wishes. I have now been given to understand—it has been mentioned to me outside the House by numerous Members—that there is such a general feeling and I shall therefore take steps to appoint a Committee. In that respect I shall consult the Leader,

[Mr. President.]

of Parties and I shall consult Government as to the constitution of the Committee and I hope they will let me have early replies ; but I would remind the House that the smaller a Committee is as a rule the more rapidly will its business be despatched. (Applause.)

RESOLUTION *RE* LAYING OF PAPERS OF THE SECOND ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE ON THE TABLE.

THE HONOURABLE MR. ABU ABDULLAH SYED HUSSAIN IMAM (Bihar and Orissa : Muhammadan) : Sir, on the last non-official day I moved the Resolution that :

“ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that the papers about the Second Round Table Conference and the Committees formed by the Premier thereunder be laid on the table.”

On account of want of time discussion of this Resolution was postponed till to-day. In initiating the discussion on this subject, I have neither the time nor the patience to deal with all the subjects dealt with by the Second Round Table Conference. I shall confine myself mostly to the doings of the Federal Finance and the Indian States Enquiry Committee (Financial) Reports. In the beginning I wish to state that when the Congress contingent was selected for the Second Round Table Conference, all of us Indians had high hopes of the work that they might perform there ; but our hopes were dashed to the ground, and we were sadly disappointed to find that they fared no better than the average First Round Tablers had done. Not only that, the Second Round Table Conference failed to achieve any material advance on what was done in the First Round Table Conference ; it failed to arrive at a settlement on the communal question. In the face of the practical hitch that had occurred in the First Round Table Conference it was expected that Indians would be more mindful of their affairs, and it is with shame that we have to admit that they were unable to come to a settlement and had to leave the matter to the Premier. In the Second Round Table Conference the only Committee which functioned properly was the Federal Structure Committee and they formed a Sub-Committee known as the Peel Committee, which went into financial propositions. Here, Sir, I am sorry to find that this Committee took it into its head, to regard itself as a benevolent society in whose hands the resources of British India were placed to be disposed of in largesse to indigent Princes of India. They were so unmindful of our interests that they recommended that the tributes paid by the Indian States amounting to Rs. 74 lakhs, should be given up without any *quid pro quo* for the decreased resources of the federal Government, and when it was succeeded by the Davidson Committee it went much further than what the Peel Committee had done. So that if their recommendations are accepted *in toto* the federal Government will have to bear a loss of Rs. 350 lakhs, and to that extent the resources of the federal Government will be reduced. Under the orders of the Premier three Committees were formed in India to give effect to the recommendations of the Second Round Table Conference ; they were the Lothian Committee to deal with franchise, the Percy Committee for

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dealing with federal finance, and the Davidson Committee to consider Indian States finances. I am not going to deal with the Lothian Committee's Report. As regards the Federal Finance Committee, I very much regret, Sir, that the Premier in his wisdom did not find it possible to include a single British Indian politician on the panel of that Committee. Even in the galaxy of the British Indian Round Table delegates he could not discern any man who had sufficient qualifications, though two gentlemen who were the representatives of the States were deemed fit to sit in judgment over the Federal Finance Committee. Indians of all shades of opinion resent this sort of discrimination, and if it shows which way the wind is blowing, and what will be the future place that we will get in the federation of India, in which our interests and our points of view will not be heeded; it is high time that we should take warning from now onwards. If they had not selected any representative from British Indians in the Federal Committee and had selected two representatives of the States on that Committee, we expected that in return when the affairs of the Indian States were being looked into we will have at least some British Indian politician on this Committee. No Indian politician was taken in.

There is a strange example of in-co-ordination between the Reports of the two Committees. The Percy Committee reported that the tribute paid by the Princes should be included in the federation and in the specimen budget that they have made, they have included a State contribution of Rs. 74 lakhs in the list of the revenues of the federal Government, while the Davidson Committee recommends an immediate giving up of Rs. 12 lakhs and ultimately of Rs. 63 lakhs of the States' contribution.

The Percy Committee recommended that there should be a co-operation tax levied throughout the federation, whether it be British India or the Indian States. The Davidson Committee has not a word to say about it, whether it is acceptable to the Indian States or not.

Sir, when I gave notice of my intention to move this Resolution I was not aware of the fact that the Government of India in the Finance Department had, to a certain extent, tried to advocate the cause of British Indians. They were so extraordinarily modest that they did not like to publish their memorandum on this subject in India. I would never have come across this had I not by chance found it in a Command Paper of the Parliament. Last evening simply by chance I came across this book which gives the memorandum of the Government of India in the Finance Department on this subject. That eases my task enormously. I find that I have to a certain extent the support, if not of the whole of the Government of India, at least of the Finance Department. I wish to recount some of the effects, if the Davidson Committee's recommendations are given effect to. In the first place, Sir, at the present moment the Indian States have certain rights and privileges and immunities. The Davidson Committee Report says that all these are to be maintained *in toto*, and in addition to that British India must, in order to induce the Indian States to come into the federation, give them additional rights and privileges. It seems that we are trying to induce them against their will to come into the federation, as if their coming into the federation is entirely and totally to the advantage of British Indians alone. This has arisen because of the anomalous

[Mr. Abu Abdullah Syed Hussain Imam.]

position taken up by the Government of India in the past, by which they have given them certain rights and privileges for which there can be no sanction in a democratic form of government. I would cite just two examples. In the Posts and Telegraphs Department in return for our establishment of post offices and communications, telegraph lines, in certain Indian States we have given them some privileges, a list of which is given in the Davidson Committee Report. We issue Rs. 3,37,000 worth of stamps free of charge to some Indian States and we carry the official correspondence of other Indian States, the loss to the post offices on which account, according to the Davidson Committee Report, comes to Rs. 7 lakhs. So that a total loss of Rs. 10·37 lakhs is placed on the head of the Posts and Telegraphs Department on account of certain concessions that have been allowed in the past to the Indian States. I do not advocate the policy that treaties are mere scraps of paper, but I say, Sir, that equity and justice and changed circumstances do demand revision, and it is not against the practice of the Government of India. They have revised treaties with the Indian States many times, and as recently as 1925. If it is mutual consent only that we can change what is the good of having the theory of paramountcy ?

The third item on which I have the support of the Finance Department is the anomalous right of the maritime States to maintain and utilise the custom incomes for their private and individual goods. The defence of India is a subject in which all Indians, irrespective of caste, creed or country they live in, ought to be interested in, and ought to pay for. As regards those States who have got no maritime customs income, they can say that the general income of the customs is, in a measure a contribution by the inhabitants of States to the general defence of the country, and I think they would be justified in this contention. But the position of the Kathiawar States and of Kashmir is anomalous, so much so that the Government of India in their memorandum, to which I referred formerly, have to say :

“ This fact arises out of the favourable position occupied by the maritime States and Kashmir in regard to the customs duties and also from varying degrees of immunity from salt tax, which States capable of producing salt in their territories enjoy under agreements concluded in the past with the Government of India.”

They have further, in paragraphs 32 and 33, elucidated this point and urged an equitable settlement of this issue. I have nothing more to say to what the Government of India have already said on this point, although I have to say something more on other things on which they have not touched. On the figures of 1930-31 from the Davidson Committee Report we find that we have to maintain, even in the future federation, amenities and privileges to the extent of Rs. 238·37 lakhs, composed of Rs. 10·37 lakhs in the Posts and Telegraphs Department, Rs. 46 lakhs of salt immunities and Rs. 182 lakhs in customs income of the Indian States. This was a heavy enough burden and against all principle of federation that among the people living in the federation there should be discrimination in the taxation of the different units. Federation, to be effective, must have all its taxes leviable in each and every part of the country. When British India was a separate entity and the Indian States were apart, it was quite in keeping with the spirit and with the circumstances that the Government of India should give them certain rights and privileges.

But when they are coming into the federation and they will also be a party to the scheme it is only sensible that they should also participate fully in the payment towards the expenditure of federation. Sir, as I observed before, the Peel Committee as well as the Davidson Committee have recommended that Rs. 74 lakhs of tribute should be abolished either at once or later.

But I take strong exception to a new demand set up by the Davidson Committee, that is, about the ceded territories. Here there is, Sir, a fundamental difference between us and the Committee. The Committee have repudiated tributes as somewhat feudal in nature and as having no place in a federation. But I challenge the Government to show a single instance in the whole world in which a federation pays anything for ceded territories. It may have been quite in keeping with the spirit of the times in 1820 and before that to regard people living in a country as a tangible asset belong to the Sovereign to be bartered or to be given in exchange for payment ; but, at the present moment, the democratic principles lay down that every penny paid by a tax-payer should be utilised to his good and for his benefit and his payment cannot be regarded as a vicarious sacrifice for the good of others. This amount of Rs. 37 lakhs that the Davidson Committee has included comes to this figure only because of the generosity and, I should say, the good sense of a great Indian Prince who could have demanded Rs. 71 lakhs as cash payment on the principles laid down by the Davidson Committee for his ceded territory. It is because his Government did not come forward with this insensible demand that this demand has come to the manageable figure of Rs. 37 lakhs. Otherwise we would have been called upon to pay Rs. 108 lakhs under this head. The total loss to the federation on account of the Davidson Committee's Report would amount to Rs. 3½ crores while they have, in their Report, only stated that the ultimate figure amounts approximately to Rs. 1 crore per annum as the additional burden on British India. If my reading is correct, at least they have admitted that they have placed on the people of India an additional burden of a crore of rupees for which there is no sanction.

There is another thing, Sir, to which a number of people in British India have taken strong exception and that is the method of representation of the States' people in the federal Legislature. This point is also of great importance inasmuch as uniformity in the method of choosing representatives should have been maintained, if not in both the Houses at least in the popular and Lower House. The fact that the representatives of the States will have no mandate from the people of the country would not only be a retrograde step as far as the States are concerned but it will tangibly change the tone of the Lower House. At the present moment, Sir, the nominated Members in the Legislative Assembly form about 27 per cent. but if the Davidson Committee's Report is accepted we will have 33 per cent. nominated Members in the Lower House. As far as this House is concerned, of course, its position, even with the Davidson Committee's Report, will not be worse than it is at the present moment. A number of our delegates urged that the representatives from the States at least to the Lower House should be by means of election although the States may not have as wide a franchise as we are going to have. And it would be in keeping with this idea if we for once decide that we are federating with the

[Mr. Abu Abdullah Syed Hussain Imam.]

people as well as with the Princes of the Indian States. The people of British India want to federate not only with the Princes, because they are not their peers, but with the people of the Indian States.

I am not going to say anything about the management of affairs or the ways of the Indian Princes because we are debarred from doing that but I wish to draw the attention of the Government of India to a specific recommendation of the Davidson Committee which the Government of India seems averse from following. While they have done everything they could to strengthen the case of the Princes, even they were compelled to admit that there are anomalies at the present moment which ought to be righted and they have specially recommended in this connection the conditions on the Viramgam line. In their Report, paragraphs 342-45, they have discussed the Viramgam line and the future customs arrangements in Kathiawar. They have recommended that this customs barrier of British India should be removed a little further so that it might act as a barrier between the maritime state of Kathiawar and the inland state. If that recommendation of the Davidson Committee had been accepted we would have gained something like Rs. 30 lakhs in additional customs income. In pursuance of that, I gave notice of a Resolution with regard to that line, which was, according to the rules, disallowed, as it had to do with the rights of the Indian States, and I think it is but right, that as a general rule we should abstain from discussing the affairs of Indian States and it is only on a special occasion like this when a Report is under discussion that we can digress and deal with these things.

In conclusion, Sir, I wish to say a few words on the basic principles which British India demands should be incorporated in any future federation. The first principle is that the right of the federal Legislature to impose its taxes should not be frittered and that it should have the right to legislate for the imposition of taxation in each and every part of the Indian federation. The second point which we regard as of paramount importance is that there should be no discrimination in the method of election of members to the federal Legislature. Thirdly, Sir, we advocate that the rights, privileges, immunities, enjoyed by the States should be abolished if they are repugnant to federal ideals. Fourthly, Sir, we wish that no unit of the federation or ruler thereof should have any right which is not enjoyed by other members of the federation. At the present moment there are any number of privileges, special rights and special immunities for the States. This has come about because up till now the Government of India have regarded defence and expenditure thereunder as of paramount importance to British India alone of which they had perfect control. In the new federation, whether it comes through or not, the expenditure on defence must be equitably distributed among all the inhabitants of India. The States maintain a number of armed forces about which the less said the better. They spend, according to the figures I have from non-official sources, about Rs. 8 crores on their armies and a particular State I know spends something like 75 lakhs on its local army. That also is a principle which is at variance with the federation. In a federation no one but the federal Government should have the right to maintain armed forces except for police duties. If that force is abolished and we have a really effective army under

the command of our Commander-in-Chief, even if it is smaller than the present numbers, it will be far more effective and better equipped and better able to deal with the situation than the rabble that we have got in most of the States.

Sir, I have nearly finished my time. My intention in initiating this debate is simply to strengthen the hands of the Government of India and to inform the British Government of the feelings of India about this federation. I, for one, am not opposed to the principle of federation. I think that every Indian who has got the good of India at heart is of the same opinion. India cannot prosper if she is divided amongst herself. But then there must be equality of sacrifice and we should not be made the scapegoat for others. That is all I have to say. I move my Resolution, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. A. NATESAN (Madras: Nominated Non-Official): Sir, if I rise to take advantage at a very early stage of the opportunity afforded by the Honourable Mr. Hussain Imam in bringing about this discussion, my chief object is to focus discussion upon certain points and conclusions arrived at at the last Round Table Conference and upon the outstanding questions on which we all look forward with a feeling of hope that we shall be able to arrive at a settlement. I should at the outset like to congratulate His Excellency Lord Willingdon and his colleagues for having made the Secretary of State for India realise the stupendous political folly of the attempt to scotch the Third Round Table Conference and for making him realise that the proper course to adopt in the interests of peace and good government in India was to restore the Round Table Conference method of framing a constitution by agreement. After hearing the statement made by His Excellency the Viceroy not long ago and after the scheme adumbrated for the Third Round Table Conference, I should like to say, speaking for myself and on behalf of the Members of a party though small in number but not less influential or not less capable of handling constitutional problems, that though the number of members to the Round Table Conference may be reduced, still, in so far as equality of status has been restored and the rights and privileges which the members of the last Round Table Conference enjoyed will be given still, it is a matter for satisfaction. I am aware that the number chosen is to be very limited—possibly to a very small number. I do not deplore that. But I only mention this to urge that the authorities for making the selection should try to make it as representative as possible—

THE HONOURABLE CHAUDHRI ZAFRULLA KHAN: On a point of order, Sir. Is the Honourable Member in order in discussing the method connected with a future conference on a Resolution which by its terms is specifically limited to the Second Round Table Conference and the Committees appointed in connection with it?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I think it will be a little difficult for the Chair to rule the Honourable Member out of order. The Resolution in the way it is framed naturally invites a very wide discussion and the various aspects of constitutional reforms will naturally come up for discussion. The Honourable Member is referring to something in the future whereas the Resolution deals with the past. I hope that he will not labour the point.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. A. NATESAN : Sir, my next question will be whether, in accordance with the statement made for proceeding with the discussion of constitutional reforms, for taking up the questions that were discussed at the last Round Table Conference, and if I may say so, for discussing the unfinished agenda of the questions that arose out of it, sufficient facilities will be given to the Members to frame a constitution which will be satisfactory and which will be in consonance with the spirit of the discussions that were pursued in London at the First and Second Round Table Conferences. I hope the attention of Government has been drawn to a meeting of the Council of National and Liberal Federation which met recently at Bombay where the desire was expressed to go on with the discussion of constitutional reforms and to co-operate with the Government on certain condition. At the same time, some sort of statement as to the intentions of Government was required with regard to one or two points. I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to ask the Honourable Member, who will speak for Government, to state (1) whether the members of the Round Table Conference will be allowed full voice in the determination of the Agenda ; (2) whether the members will have the right to tackle questions such as defence, financial safeguards, etc., which were discussed at the Second Round Table Conference and about which no definite decision has been arrived at ; and (3) whether, having regard to the discussion upon a scheme of federation and the difficulties that were experienced, if for some reason or other federation does not materialise, or even if the task of framing a federal constitution may be promised in the constitution, and it may be suggested that it will be put into force in a few years, whether a definite attempt will be made to introduce responsibility in the central Government ? Sir, I make this request not only to the Members of Government in charge of this subject but I would also like to ask my non-official European friends what exactly will be the attitude which they will adopt in regard to these questions, because a great deal depends upon the spirit of co-operation and good-will which not only the Government but the non-official Europeans who will be asked to tackle these questions will adopt in regard to these matters. The situation in India as it is, is bad. Everybody deplures it. We have had instances of doings which no one would like to see repeated, and it is high time that something was done to put an end to it. It may be said that the Government at Home has its own difficulties, that it has to deal with die-hards ; but I would point out that such a responsible person as the Under Secretary of State for India, Lord Lothian, only the other day told a British audience :

“ You have handed over to Indian nationalism all the instruments for the formation of opinion, the universities, the press, the legislatures and the platform, and Mr. Churchill wants us to concentrate our attention on strengthening the instruments for repressing the incredible consequences. That is lighting the fire under the boiler, and screwing down the safety valves. The only sane course is to create an outlet for the steam which has been generated by one hundred years of contact with British ideas and political progress, and that outlet can only be responsible government. For the very essence of responsible government is that people should be able to change governments of which they disapprove by constitutional means, that all sections of the community should have some representation in the legislatures and that they should learn how to govern themselves by the ancient process of profiting, as we have profited, by their own mistakes.”

I am quite aware that for effecting a speedy solution of constitutional reforms, the co-operation of all parties in this country is essential, and I deplore as much

as anybody else that one great political party, for some reason or other, has not given its support to the task of constitution making.

But, within the last few days, Sir, a very great and stupendous effort has been made to solve one great problem which we thought will be insoluble and likely to threaten the future constitution and the peace of the country. I am glad that the convenience and the facilities given by the Government to Mahatma Gandhi and the opportunity afforded to several leaders of parties to co-operate with him, to discuss with him and arrive at a peaceful solution has made it possible for an important matter which was almost impossible of solution to be successfully solved. May I therefore venture to hope that with this dawn the Government of India will take equally effective and speedy steps for bringing about a peaceful termination of this difficult problem to which I have referred, and will endeavour to find all possible means, to explore all avenues, of effecting a sort of friendly arrangement. It has been done in the past with success and may I venture to hope that the attempt in this direction will be made and that something will be done to promote peace and achieve orderly constitutional government, a goal which is the ambition, the aspiration, of not only Indians and Europeans in this country but I take it of the Government as well in accordance with their past promises and pledges.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR (Madras : Muhammadan) : Sir, though I disagree with most of the observations made by my Honourable friend Mr. Hussain Imam, I am in agreement with one observation which he made regarding the status of the different units in the federated India. Sir, much as my community welcomes the entry of the Princes into the all-India federation it is not prepared to submit itself to any undue sacrifice to induce the Princes to come in. Sir, we object to the principle of nomination and this nomination would not be less odious only because it is made by autocrats in India and not by the bureaucratic Government of India. The representatives of the Princes should come in by the open door of election and not by nomination. It may not be possible, Sir, to observe the same rule in regard to the senate. Even in this connection I would observe that some method similar to that of election might be employed and the election held with the help of the advisory councils about which there was a suggestion at the Second Round Table Conference.

Now, Sir, my main object in standing here and intervening in this debate is to refute some of the allegations which were made by my Honourable friend Mr. Hussain Imam. Sir, my Honourable friend in his speech strove hard to lay the blame at the door of the Second Round Table Conference for having failed to find a proper solution of the communal question. May I remind my Honourable friend that it was not only this Round Table Conference which had failed to find a ready solution to this vexed question but lots of other attempts which were made in this direction proved equally a failure. Sir, the Unity Conferences that were held in 1927 and 1928, the All-Parties' Conferences that were held from time to time, all proved unsuccessful in the attempt to produce a satisfactory solution of this communal question. But, Sir, I maintain that though the Round Table Conference had failed directly to produce a settlement of this communal question, I maintain that it has indirectly been responsible for the Communal Award which has been given by His Majesty's

[Saiyed Mohamed Padshah Sahib Bahadur.]

Government recently. I say this because of this fact, Sir, the discussions at the Second Round Table Conference were of a more practical nature. They tackled the constitutional issues in a somewhat more detailed manner than it was possible for the First Round Table Conference to do. Now, since the attempt was made to tackle with the practical side of the question, several aspects of the constitutional problem which were but vaguely visualised in the First Round Table Conference which had to deal only with generalities, those aspects of the constitutional problem which were very vaguely visualised in the first session became more defined in the second session of the Round Table Conference, and it was because the second session had to deal with practical questions, to deal with stern facts and stubborn realities and not indulge in generalities, that the difficulty was felt in finding a solution for the communal problem. But, Sir, the very fact that the Second Round Table Conference which had proved its capacity to solve many other different and difficult questions, that this very Conference had failed to find a solution to this problem, made the authorities recognise the imperative necessity of finding an immediate solution to this question. Therefore, Sir, when the Consultative Committee in its attempt to find a solution to this question failed to do so and requested the British Government to make the communal settlement, the Government, in spite of its reluctance to interfere in a matter of this nature—which was purely of a domestic nature—came forward to do the needful.

Now, Sir, as regards what this second session of the Round Table Conference has succeeded in doing, I would refer, in the first place, to the grant of the reforms to the North-West Frontier Province. I regard this, Sir, as one of the most important achievements of this Conference. Sir, until this second session of the Conference had made out a strong case for the redress of the injustice in this matter, it was not realised that the denial of the benefit of the Montford Reforms to the people of the North-West Frontier Province resulted not only in imposing an inferiority complex on the people of that province, but also in constituting a blot on the fair name of India and her people, because, Sir, it appeared that in spite of our civilisation, in spite of the progress that we had made and in spite of our high and legitimate ambitions and aspirations, there was a section of the people among us who were not considered fit to be entrusted even with the responsibilities of diarchy.

But, Sir, it was given to the Second Round Table Conference to remove this blot. While I am on this aspect I would, with your permission, Sir, say a few words more about the North-West Frontier Province. To my mind, Sir, it is a wonder how in the Montford Reforms the people of the North-West Frontier Province came to be differently treated. Sir, it is these people who have an important part to play in the defence of the country and nothing could be a greater blunder than to allow these people to have a grudge against the rest of India. In fact, Sir, it is the people of the North-West Frontier Province who, in my opinion, are more fitted for the duties of responsible government than their compatriots in other parts of India. The *jirga* system which they have in their midst and the various other institutions which have helped these people to settle their internal affairs without extraneous help have fitted them best to take upon themselves the responsibilities of self-government.

Now, Sir, these Committees—the Consultative Committee, the Indian Franchise Committee, the States Committee—all these Committees, what were they but the outcome of the labours of the second session of the Round Table Conference. And it was because at this session the Conference had to deal with the practical side of the constitutional issue and it was found that for some of the questions solutions were found, there still remained several other questions, which could not be solved at the session of the Conference but which required further investigation.

Now, Sir, just one word more and I have done. In my opinion, the greatest and grandest achievement of the Round Table Conference has been the success which it has achieved in trying to educate the opinion of the British public. Sir, the policy which the Premier declared last year was the policy which he declared as head of a Labour Government. But since then much water had passed under the bridge. The result was that the Labour Government was turned out of office and at the polls the Conservatives scored an overwhelming majority. The House of Commons was packed in a manner that it was never packed before. But, Sir, the success of the second session of the Round Table Conference was so effective that even this Parliament which was so much packed with the Conservative element had to admit the right of India to responsible government. This, in my opinion, is the greatest of its achievements. Now, I will conclude my remarks with a passage from the excellent speech of His Excellency the Viceroy delivered at the opening of the session of the other House on the 5th September :

“ The Second Round Table Conference gave us in broad outline the framework of the future federation, and I would remind Honourable Members that on the conclusion of the Conference the White Paper of His Majesty’s Government, comprising the scheme evolved in the Conference discussions, was placed before Parliament and received its approval. Do not let us lose sight of the importance attaching to the approval then given. What in effect did it mean ? The policy of His Majesty’s Government expressed in the Prime Minister’s speech at the conclusion of the First Round Table Conference was the policy of the Labour Government then in power. The contribution of the Second Round Table Conference was that the same policy was first accepted by the National Government and then approved by Parliament. Once that step was taken, the introduction of constitutional reform in India on the basis of an all-India federation, coupled with the widest practicable measure of responsible government at the centre and in the provinces, could no longer be described even by its critics as a party decision. It is now the approved policy of the British Government, of the British Parliament, and of the British people. ”

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. KHAPARDE (Berar Representative) :
Sir, it appears to me that this matter has been viewed from a wrong point of view. It is not a question at present before us as to what the First Round Table Conference, or the Second Round Table Conference, or a Third Round Table Conference, if there is one, would do. The question really is to consider that as the circumstances of India are very unique in their own nature and there is no other historical parallel with which it can be compared, we have to decide these questions not upon maxims derived from history, not from propositions imagined in political economy, or what they wrongly call political philosophy. These things are to be done by careful experiments. What has been done up to this time in the first case of calling a certain number of people there to consult and then another number, is all a proposition for what is to be done hereafter. In history it never happens that you take a maxim from a

[Mr. G. S. Khaparde.]

book and apply it in practice. If that was so it would be like telling a soldier to study his text books and put it into practice. That does not happen so. What the Government has hitherto been doing, from my point of view, is collecting materials, not of these maxims but of the principles underlying these maxims. Those maxims have to be taken into consideration and the facts that have been evolved have to be considered and the formula be suited to the altered circumstances. Anybody that takes a formula and goes to apply it will always find that it has been mistaken and that he is wrong. India is not a country, it is a continent, with civilisations from the people whom we see in the hills here to the town people of Benares, or the higher Aligarh College, as you may call it. With these variations of civilisation, with these variations of customs, variations of religions, variance of ideas, you cannot have one rule that will govern them all. If you imagine that you will find such a rule or that the Round Table Conference will lay down a magical formula which will cover all the 350 millions of India, you will find that such a thing is an impossibility. What is being done now is to collect materials. Collect parallels and see how things can be done. My Honourable friend who moved this proposition brought out a proposition that this is not consistent with federation and this is not consistent with philosophy and other things. I simply say that never in previous history has there been an instance of India invading a country and imposing its own constitution on it. The fact is that we have to have compromises and a large number of compromises in various directions and those compromises have to be made and this Round Table Conference is intended to bring people together to find out the common denominator from which you can take those common factors and this is being done and I think being properly done in England and any amount of trouble is being taken about it. But to criticise here what somebody said there or to criticise what that particular Committee decided seems a work of supererogation, if I may be pardoned for using that word. They are collecting materials now. The thing is not ready yet. It will take a long time for federation to come to us. I shall consider it very early if it comes within the next 15 or 16 years if at all. I look at it from a plain man's point of view. There are these legal rights. There are these rights derived by *sanads*. All the rights have not come by conquest. Some have come by conquest, some by understanding. A third set by contracts. A fourth set in order that there may be peace all round and so on. And all these considerations have to be put together and they have to be welded into one whole and that welded thing is to be the Indian federation, the like of which there has never been before in the world and the like of which there never will be at least in my imagination. The reigning Princes have to come into this federation. It is not only like the United States of America where a few colonies came together. The Princes' rights, hereditary rights, different customs, different rules, have all to be considered. In order that we may leave these people to arrive at the best solution the best thing that this Council could do is to let the matter alone and let us watch and see how things are forming themselves, to possibly only make suggestions but no criticisms. This is my submission.

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. C. BENTHALL (Bengal Chamber of Commerce):
Sir, the Honourable Mr. Natesan has asked for an indication of the European non-official attitude towards these Reports which it is sought to lay upon the

table and has appealed for co-operation. The European non-officials have always held that co-operation must determine the rate of advance towards self-government and for this reason we are convinced that the policy of settlement by agreement is the only practical one. For this reason, too, we are particularly pleased to see that the Liberals are in the main willing to accept the alternative procedure proposed by the Secretary of State for further discussing these Reports. Now, Sir, we cannot hope to reach full agreement over these questions. Probably no two men think alike and very often the same man does not think the same thing for very long. But I am quite convinced and our community is convinced that it is only by agreement and by careful co-operative study of these Reports that we shall be able to arrive at a satisfactory constitution for this country.

There is, of course, no unanimity among Europeans any more than among other sections of the people. On the one hand there are those who believe that democracy as a whole is a failure. Looking around the western world and judging by what they see there, these people honestly and conscientiously do not wish to see democracy repeated in India. People of that point of view are people who conscientiously believe that a benevolent autocracy or an oligarchy is the best form of government not only in India but elsewhere. Then, again, there are those who, having studied these problems deeply and all the literature connected with it, are ready to take risks, as they see them, in matters of finance, commerce, education and so forth, but who feel that if the strong hand of the present Government is withdrawn in matters of law and order, the results may be disastrous, and they hesitate, not selfishly but conscientiously, to commit the people of India to a very advanced measure of reform. There are a few again whose hearts—all credit to them—are perhaps larger than their minds, who think that we have only got to create a pure, undiluted and undisciplined democracy for all to be as merry as a wedding bell. But what the great majority of Europeans in this country are steadily in favour of is ordered progress. If I might try and put what I understand to be the majority opinion into one sentence it is this, that they believe that the only satisfactory constitutional solution for a future self-governing India lies in a federation of states and provinces for which the most comprehensive scheme yet produced is that provided in outline and provisionally agreed to by the British and Indian delegates at the Round Table Conference and subsequently set forth in the White Paper of December 1st, 1931. I would add to that, in particular reference to these Reports, that we believe that a satisfactory adjustment of the financial relations between the centre and the provinces and between the centre and the federating states must precede any further transfer of authority from the agents of Parliament to responsible Indian ministers either in the centre or in the provinces. We are not satisfied with either the Davidson or the Percy Reports in this respect—or for that matter with the Franchise Committee's Report, but I will not go into details.

Between the present state of affairs and that foreshadowed in the future there are innumerable obstacles. It is our policy to endeavour to the best of our ability to remove those obstacles. It will not help to pretend that there are no obstacles or to give up with a faint heart when we run into these obstacles. It is correct to say that we Europeans in India are prepared to tackle

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these obstacles as we have tried to tackle them before. We shall be conservative and I am sure this House will agree that there are merits in conservatism.

THE HONOURABLE MR. ABU ABDULLAH SYED HUSSAIN IMAM : Especially at the moment.

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. C. BENTHALL : We shall insist upon every device that will strengthen the constitution, every guarantee for the maintenance of law and order, every insurance for financial stability, and every safeguard possible for the minorities and ourselves. We shall reserve, like every one else, the right to express a final opinion when we see the whole picture and the conditions prevailing, but we shall co-operate whole-heartedly in the endeavour to find a solution of these problems and if we are met by construction, we shall not be destructive.

THE HONOURABLE MR. SATYENDRA CHANDRA GHOSH MAULIK (West Bengal : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I had sent in a notice of a similar Resolution but unfortunately it has lapsed. I would rather confine myself to this Resolution and avail myself of the present opportunity to discuss it.

The Second Round Table Conference, I presume, was widely represented in as far as the Congress took part in its deliberations. But what has been the outcome of that is the subject of scrutiny. The matter is of great interest and vital importance to a nation which is trying to take its legitimate place in the commonwealth of nations. How far the recommendations of the various Committees and the assurances of the Premier have been able to satisfy the public of India is to be thoroughly investigated. The constitutional issues raised in these Committees and the solution sought therein are, I may be pardoned for saying, not acceptable to any section of the people. It has failed to satisfy the demands of even constitutional agitators not to speak of the men holding more advanced views. Two Round Table Conferences have been held and several Committees have sat and have deliberated but are we anywhere near the goal to which we all aspire—I mean responsible self-government. We have read, assimilated, and tried to scan the message of the Prime Minister and not a word do we find there that is nothing except reassurances of the fact that His Majesty's Government's belief in an all-India federation. The Premier has asked for co-operation but what the meaning of that word is I fail to understand. To have co-operation we must have good-will and trust. Trust begets trust. If we have to mobilise the good-will of India and England as the Premier pointed out, we must have an atmosphere in the country which is quite suitable to it. I hope the politicians of India as well as of Great Britain will not cloud the issues ahead by their petty-mindedness but get on with this stupendous work of finding out a solution of the problem before us.

The British Government firmly adhere to their promise to give India a democratic constitution with safeguards. But what these safeguards are and whether they are for the good of India or not remain to be seen. The explicit assertion of the Premier that :

“ In all Governors' provinces the power entrusted to the Governor to safeguard the safety and tranquillity of the province shall be real and effective.”

would no doubt give rise to a good deal of positive misapprehension in many minds. Safeguards we do require for the transitional period, but not the safeguards which are :

“merely beneficial to India and prejudicial to the real interests of Great Britain.”

as has been rightly pointed out by Mahatmaji :

“The fancied interests of India will have to be sacrificed, the fancied interests of Great Britain will have to be sacrificed and only safeguards which may be demonstrated to be in the interests of India are to be there.”

The safeguards suggested are not in the interests of India. But the authoritative declaration from the British Premier is barren from the standpoint of the Indian nationalists. It will in fact require for the Indians nothing short of supreme faith in the honesty and good intentions of the British people, to feel re-assured at the promise.

Turning now our attention to the Report of the Federal Finance Committee, we find it equally alarming. We find the empty pocket bogey as has been put forward by an Anglo-Indian press. But the bogey need not dishearten us. The Percy Committee in their concluding remarks pointed out that they have worked from the data supplied to them by the Government of India. That means that they start with the assumption that the self-governing India will have the existing machinery of administration with the highly paid staff of officials. But the fact is, need we stick to this costly system of government even under the new regime ? If we Indianise the public services, both in the matter of personnel and the scale of salaries, as also in the judicious reduction of their number, we can escape the danger of an empty pocket, and the need for fresh taxation will not arise. We shall have to cut our coat according to our cloth. Piling up taxes on the already over-taxed poor Indians will not be a sound principle. The inelastic resources of revenue of the provincial Governments naturally made the Committee realise that a deficit would arise in all but the two agricultural provinces, *viz.*, the Punjab and the United Provinces. Bengal will be the worst sufferer. She will be faced with a deficit of Rs. 2 crores. Bihar and Orissa has to face a deficit of Rs. 70 lakhs and Bombay with a deficit of Rs. 65 lakhs. Madras and the Central Provinces are no exceptions and they have to face a deficit of Rs. 20 and Rs. 12 lakhs, respectively. Without severe retrenchment even the distribution of income-tax yield amongst the provinces will not enable them to make any appreciable headway in the nation-building departments. As far as Bengal is concerned, she has been most unjustly treated. Bengal has about 90 per cent. monopoly of jute and the revenue received from the export of jute should, to a great extent, be given to Bengal. (*The Honourable Mr. E. C. Benthall* : “Hear, hear.”) I am thankful to the European Members for giving us support in this. This aspect has not been given sufficient consideration by the Committee. They have brushed aside the claim of Bengal to a share of the jute duty by simply remarking that it raises highly controversial questions of principle.

Then the question of taxing of agricultural incomes has been left to the provincial Governments. As far as Bengal is concerned, with the permanent settlement, it would be an act of gross breach of faith on the part of Government to subject the agricultural income to any tax. There can be no tax on a thing on which Government revenue has been collected. You cannot

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tax an income twice. All through the Report we find nothing but an attempt to pile up new taxes both by the federal as well as by the provincial Governments. The only silver lining to the cloud is the initial surplus, if the present fiscal policy of protective duties be continued. Terminal taxes are not rightly to be approved of as a normal source of revenue except for Assam. Tobacco, excise and succession duties are to be collected by the federal Government for the benefit of the provinces. The forecast of the federation revenue is not at all hopeful, the excise on matches being the only immediately feasible proposition.

Coming now, Sir, to another important item—I mean the Report of the Lothian Committee—what do we find there? We find that the members were not all agreed on some of the conclusions reached. This has resulted in as many as eight dissenting notes. The Report of the Committee shows that the findings and recommendations are not calculated to please many among those who are anxious to work for the political advance of the country through co-operation with Government, not to speak of the advanced section of the politically-minded people in this country. On the question of franchise, the demand in this country has been one, for a system of adult franchise. Leaders both of the Congress group and outside it had made this demand. But, Sir, we are told that the introduction of universal adult suffrage as it is generally understood was not practicable. But then why not introduce some modifications in it? I mean the system of indirect voting by the group system which is in vogue in Egypt, Turkey, Iraq and Syria. A system like this, according to those who advocate it, would minimise administrative difficulties. Under this system every adult population will have a vote at least in the primary election of the secondary electors who are to form the constituencies. This suggestion does not find favour with the Committee. Neither has the introduction of adult suffrage within certain age limits nor a system of franchise based on the combination of the direct and indirect system have any sympathy from the Committee. But, however, the Committee decided that the existing basis of franchise is unsatisfactory and inadequate. They agree that

“ no important section of the community lacks the means of expressing its needs and opinions ”

and that there should be

“ a proper distribution of voting power between the different classes and sections of the people,”

and that the electorate should be so widened as that it will be

“ representative of the general mass of the population.”

The Franchise Sub-Committee had recommended

“ the immediate increase of the electorate so as to enfranchise not less than 10 per cent. of the total population and indeed a larger number—but not more than 25 per cent. of the population, if that should, on full investigation, be found desirable.”

The Committee tells us that in coming to its conclusions it has been more concerned to secure the best practicable distribution of voting power than the enfranchisement of any pre-conceived percentage of the population. The effect of the proposals made will however be to enfranchise about 14·1 per cent. of the total population and indeed it is a big jump from the 3 per cent. under

the present system. But I fail to see how it will satisfy the liberals as also the other co-operating politicians. In spite of the proposals for special constituencies for labour and special franchise qualifications for women and minority communities, millions of the adult population of the country will have no vote. The Committee holds that illiteracy is no impediment. What impediment there is in making the illiterate understand the issue of an election may be removed by broadcasting.

“ The effectiveness of broadcasting is not lessened by illiteracy,”

admits the Committee. Another objection against adult suffrage is
“ the absence of political organisations ”

and the difficulties that political organisations will feel in reaching so large an electorate. The political parties themselves are asking for adult suffrage. The main objection we find is the administrative difficulties. The total adult population, as stated by the Committee, is thirteen crores. In one single day, the Committee opines, two-and-a-half crores of electors could be polled under the present administrative machinery. According to the Committee two-and-a-half crores electors can be polled in one day, four times the number can be polled in four days and thirteen crores can be polled if one more day is allotted. But, in practical politics, so great a number of people will not be on the electoral rolls. In the first place, every person who considers himself qualified as a voter will have to apply for registration of his or her name or somebody will have to do it on his or her behalf. This will automatically exclude at least a good number of the adult population. Then, again, many of those who are registered will not come to the polls ; so that it boils down to this, that not more than five crores of electors will have to be dealt with on the calculation of the Franchise Committee. So, where is the difficulty in polling ? The Franchise Sub-Committee says :

“ We recommend that in any given area the franchise qualifications should be the same for all communities ; but we desire that the Franchise Commission in making their proposals should bear in mind that the ideal system would be as nearly as possible to give each community a voting strength proportionate to its numbers and that the Commission should so continue their franchise system as to secure this result in so far as it is practicable.”

The Lothian Committee have, however, stated :

“ Though we have kept this question in view, when framing our proposals, it is impossible at this stage to state how clearly the ratio between electors and population will correspond, because many of the figures we give as to the effect of property qualifications, specially in the case of women are estimates, or based on estimation.”

The Committee therefore proposes :

“ if it is found that the ratio of voters to the population is markedly discrepant in the case of any community, it will be necessary to consider what action, if any, is required in order to rectify the disparity.”

The question of the representation of special interests, like women, commerce, labour, landlords, has not been satisfactorily solved. As regards the representation of women I cannot do better than quote a few lines from the minute of dissent of Mrs. P. Subbarayan. She holds :

“ I would express my regret that it was not found possible to increase the number of women electors still more.”

Then again she points out :

“ Women representatives on the legislatures should be there not as members of particular communities but as representatives of women of all castes and creeds.”

[Mr. Satyendra Chandra Ghosh Maulik.]

Similarly the representation of landlords both in the federal as also in the provincial Councils has not been solved satisfactorily. While all other representation has gone up, the landlords representation has been kept to the old number. Labour has not also received its fair share of representation. As regards the so-called depressed classes, thanks to the intervention of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar, a satisfactory solution has been found possible. On the whole, Sir, we find that neither the statement of the Premier nor the recommendations of the various Sub-Committees have brought us any nearer our goal, the ultimate goal of all nationalist and right-thinking Indians, I mean, full responsible government run on national ideas. The day is yet distant when we shall be a part of the great commonwealth of nations. * " Hanuz Delhi dur ast " .

THE HONOURABLE CHAUDHRI ZAFRULLA KHAN (Education, Health and Lands Member) : Sir, I do not think that on this Resolution it is really necessary for me on behalf of Government to make any pronouncement whatsoever. The object of the Honourable the mover of the Resolution was to raise a discussion with regard to the Second Round Table Conference and its Committees and that object has been well served by the number of Honourable Members who have taken part in the discussion. Government will no doubt note the wishes of the Honourable Members with regard to the various matters which they have discussed. Nevertheless, one or two observations on what fell from the Honourable mover and the Honourable Mr. Natesan may appear to be called for. The Honourable mover in summing up his speech submitted four principles which he desired should be followed in setting up an all-India federation. He, of course, realises that the whole question is in the melting pot and therefore Government cannot make any pronouncement on those questions with regard to which he has expressed his anxiety. He must, however, remember this, that however theoretically perfect the maxims may be which he has put forward those who have been engaged and may on the next occasion be engaged in discussing these questions in London have to face the hard realities of the situation. No doubt under an ideal system of federation each unit of the federation would contribute equally to the federal purse. No doubt under that kind of federation all representatives who are to sit in the different chambers of the federal Legislature would be elected or selected under a more or less uniform system and so on. On the other hand, those who are engaged on this task have before them the object of bringing about a federation between British Indian provinces on the one hand and Indian States or groups of states on the other and there is the greatest diversity between the conditions and circumstances of these various units. One broad fact with which we are faced is that no federation can be brought about without the full and free consent of the Indian States who desire to participate in the federation, and those Indian States have rights and privileges and immunities, to some of which the Honourable mover has referred, guaranteed to them under their treaties and it is not merely at the desire, either of the Government of India or of the delegates from British India who take part in these Conferences, that the Princes are likely to forego the privileges and the immunities which they enjoy under their treaties, so that the situation is that to a very large extent compromises have to be

*Delhi is yet far off.

arrived at which do not fit in exactly with any pre-conceived theories of federation.

The Honourable Mr. Natesan put certain questions as to whether those delegates who take part in the next Conference in London will have a voice in framing the agenda of that Conference. whether certain questions relating to financial safeguards, the reservation of defence, etc., will appear on that agenda, and whether in case an all-India federation does not materialise as the result of their deliberations the question of responsibility at the British Indian centre would be open to discussion or not? With regard to the first two questions, he himself furnished an answer when he stated that there are several matters which have not hitherto been discussed in the two Round Table Conferences or discussion with regard to which has not yet been completed. That being so, the answer naturally is that essential matters which have not so far been discussed or with regard to which discussion has not yet been completed, will be discussed in the future Conference. With regard to the last question it is a hypothesis which Government are not willing to contemplate. Both the Conferences have so far proceeded on the assumption that the object to be attained was federation of an all-India character, and it is not possible either for Government or even for His Majesty's Government to say at this moment what would happen if most unfortunately that ideal could not be realised. Let us all hope that those who participate in the next Conference will all work for that ideal and that such adjustments and compromises as may be necessary will be arrived at which might bring to fruition the labours of those who have been engaged upon this task in the past and those who may be engaged on this task in the future.

There is only one other observation I will make with regard to what fell from the Honourable Mr. Ghosh Maulik in connection with the recommendations of the Indian Franchise Committee. With regard to the recommendations of all these Committees, Government stands committed to nothing. The recommendations of these Committees are under the consideration of Government and also under the consideration of His Majesty's Government and they will come up for discussion in the next Conference. Nevertheless, I think the Honourable Member, when he was dealing with the percentages mentioned in the Report of this Committee, did not take one factor into consideration and it is this. Take, for instance, one figure that he quoted, 14 per cent. of the total population. Although stated in that way it strikes one as being rather a small percentage, yet if he had allowed for the fact that the adult population of the country is not more than 50 per cent. of the total population, if he had applied that test he would have found that 14 out of 50 is double the number of 14 out of 100, and if he further went on to analyse the figures he would see that the Franchise Committee contemplate that on the figures given by them only about one-fifth of the electorate which they contemplate would be constituted by women, so that, on a rough and ready calculation, out of the 14 three per cent. would be women and 11 per cent. would be men. Eleven per cent. men out of a total population of which only one-half are adults and where out of the adult population men will be only one-half again works out at 44 per cent. of the adult men of India. That might, to a certain extent, modify his views on the recommendations of the Committee. The anxiety should be on the other side as to whether the recommended electorate would be manageable.

[Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan.]

Sir, with regard to the Resolution itself, copies of the printed Reports available have already been supplied to Honourable Members and such as are available will be laid on the table of the House.

THE HONOURABLE MR. ABU ABDULLAH SYED HUSSAIN IMAM :
Sir, I am thankful to those Honourable Members of this House who have participated in this debate for giving their valuable opinions, and I am obliged to the Government Member who has dealt with the subject.

The point that was raised by the Honourable Mr. Natesan about the failure of the federation materialising is a very important one, and I would request the Government not to be too sure of the success of the talks that are going to be held in England. They should have some scheme prepared for submission to His Majesty's Government, if this federation does not materialise. We would all welcome the federation but we cannot fight against circumstances. So far the federation scheme has not prospered materially, and advances made glaringly show what still remains to be done, it does not show what has been achieved but it brings into relief our inability to come to terms. For these reasons, Sir, it was contemplated by His Majesty's Government that provincial autonomy should be given for the mere asking at the end of the Second Round Table Conference. It was only because the federal scheme could not be pieced together that provincial autonomy did not materialise. And, therefore, if it is found that the federation scheme is not going to be settled quickly I would recommend to the consideration of Government the possibility of an alternative scheme. Sir, in view of the fact that the Government Member has assured us of the general desire to safeguard the interests of British India I do not think it necessary to press my Resolution and beg leave of the House to withdraw it.

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

RESOLUTION RE FORMATION OF A COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS TO RECOMMEND A SCHEME FOR THE REDUCTION OF THE PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT OF THE DEFENCE FORCES.

THE HONOURABLE MR. ABU ABDULLAH SYED HUSSAIN IMAM (Bihar and Orissa : Muhammadan) : Sir, I rise to move that :

" This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to form a Committee of Experts to recommend a scheme for the reduction in the personnel and equipment of the Defence Forces compatible with the requirements and resources of India."

In the ordinary course of events, Sir, after the announcement made in the Assembly by Mr. Tottenham about the Expert Committee and the information which our Gallant colleague His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief gave us in this House, I would not have moved this Resolution. At the time when I gave notice of my intention to move this Resolution, we did not know that an Expert Committee had been formed by His Excellency, and that it had already reported. The secret was so well kept that no one knew about it until it was officially announced in the other House. The reason why I wish to press this

*" This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that the papers about the Second Round Table Conference and the Committees formed by the Premier thereunder be laid on the table."

Resolution even after that announcement is that we are not satisfied with the terms of the reference given in this House that everything possible has been done in regard to reducing our expenditure on defence. If I am satisfied by His Excellency's reply that all avenues have been explored and what little remains to be done will be done by executive orders, then it will not be necessary for me to press this Resolution.

Sir, there is a convention which is known as the Fiscal Convention, whereby, when the Government of India and the Central Legislature are in agreement, the Secretary of State does not intervene. I would wish, Sir, that a similar convention may be established in the military forces, that where His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief and the Government of India are in agreement the Army Council and the War Office should not intervene, because His Excellency being on the spot knows more about, and is more competent to deal with, the defence of India than an outside body living 6,000 miles away. We Indians wish not only for self-government but for reducing, as far as possible, of subordination in every department to the British Government. We feel, Sir, that the Commander-in-Chief being a Member of our Government ought to have his Swaraj or self-government.

The Seventh Sub-Committee, known as the Defence Committee of the Round Table Conference, among its recommendations wanted two Expert Committees. One was known as the Indian Sandhurst Committee, about which we all know, and the second was that to which His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief referred in reply to my questions. I, for one, Sir, would not ask for any material reduction in the British garrison in India if the Army Council and the War Office were human and not callous as they have been up till now. It is only because of the rapacious demand of the War Office for the capitation charges, health insurance, unemployment insurance, sea transport charges and the extraordinary charges arising out of the Great War that we want to have a reduction in the personnel of the British Army. That is not an end in itself. It is simply a means to an end. It is because we feel that the burden is crushing and that we cannot bear it, that we want to tap that source as the easiest one, because of the fact that the War Office is not reasonable enough to consider our case. I am also of the opinion, Sir, that as long as full self-government is not introduced in India the responsibility for defence should be a joint responsibility of the Government of India and His Majesty's Government. And for the stability of India it is essential that we must have co-operation from a power of the calibre of Great Britain. But this statement of mine should not be taken as in opposition to the scheme of Indianisation. Indianisation of the Indian Army proper and the ancillary services are the dreams of every nationalist Indian, and I am sorry that the Government of India, even after an expert Report submitted so far back as 1922, did not give effect to the recommendations of that Committee. If they had given effect to them, by now there would have been something like 1,000 officers in the Indian Army instead of the 200 that there are at the present moment.

This Committee which I contemplate, Sir, would report not only on the personnel but also on the equipment of the defence forces. I bring in that phrase simply to co-ordinate the land forces and the air forces. At the time of the Inchcape Committee our air forces were not so big and their commitments

[Mr. Abu Abdullah Syed Hussain Imam.]

so immense as they are at the present moment. And it was for this reason that I brought in this word, so that a co-ordinated picture of the whole defence of India should be taken in which all arms of offence and defence should be incorporated.

I also wanted, Sir, that the pay and emoluments of the future entrants into the Army as a whole, British as well as Indian, should be revised. I do not recommend any particular pay. I leave that to the expert committee to bring forward. The scheme of Indianisation contemplates that increasing numbers of Indians will be coming in in the officers' ranks of the Army and as English officers in England receive less allowances than they do in India it is only reasonable that Indians in India should receive a different scale of pay than that which was necessary to attract cadets from England.

I would also, Sir, ask the expert committee to go into the whole question of our frontier policy. That is the main problem, and it is the frontier that lays down practically the whole of our defence policy. In the course of the Retrenchment Committee's Report we came across remarks that the Army is maintained on two different bases in India—one which is across the Indus is maintained on a different footing and on a different scale of preparedness for war, while the Army on this side of the Indus is maintained on a peace basis. I think it goes without saying that the maintenance of any Army on a peace basis and even on a partial field basis is very different and the expenses are enormously increased if that basis is to be maintained. We are not competent, Sir, to deal with this question but an expert committee would not complete its work if it leaves this immense question undecided.

I was surprised to learn in reply to one of my questions that the Howell Committee on Tribal Control had recommended changes which involve a saving of Rs. 15 lakhs from those of the recommendations only which had already been accepted by the Government. It came as an agreeable surprise to me. That Committee had been formed and consisted mostly of laymen who had not much military experience and therefore if a committee of experts is formed we have great hopes that, if the whole policy is revised in the light of the present circumstances there might be a good deal of saving. In this connection, Sir, I wish to remind the House of a military opinion, I might almost say of the greatest military genius that England has so far produced—I refer to the Duke of Wellington. In the course of his remarks and observations on the Treaty of Bassein he said that :

“The most expensive article in India is an army in the field, and the most useless is one destined to act on the defensive.”

In the course of the same book I came across a remark by the Right Honourable Henry Durdas, who was the President of the Board of Directors of the East India Company, in which he said :

“That the criterion by which that question (that is, the increase in the personnel of the army) ought to be decided is rather by the relative power of our supposed enemies than our own extent of territories.”

In view of the changed circumstances and the stability that prevails on the frontier on account of the programme of mechanisation and the aeroplanes and

the roads that have been opened, it may be possible to materially change our forces of defence.

I would also draw the attention of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief to the fact that the picture of the defence of India is not

I P. M. complete if only the forces of British India are taken into account.

We know that many of the States maintain their own armed forces and there is no doubt that some of them do maintain an efficient army. But can His Excellency assure us that the whole of the forces of the Indian States are maintained on the same scale as the British Indian forces? If they are not, then I think it is his duty to bring them up to a very high standard and take them into account in computing the forces necessary for India or he should recommend that they should be abolished, or do anything that the Government of India may like to do about them. They should not leave them out of account and maintain their own army. Our contention is that the defence of India as a whole should be the concern of the Commander-in-Chief of the future federation and it should not be divided as at present. For this reason, Sir, I have brought forward this Resolution, and if I am assured that the points I have raised have been met or will be met in the future, I would not press this Resolution to the vote of the House. Sir, I move.

THE HONOURABLE MAJOR NAWAB SIR MAHOMED AKBAR KHAN (North-West Frontier Province: Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I very much regret that I cannot persuade myself to agree with the Resolution brought forward by my Honourable friend Mr. Hussain Imam. Honourable Members of this House are well aware that there have been several Retrenchment Committees last year and amongst these was also a Committee of Retrenchment on the Army. The Report of this Committee was presented to the Government of India in the early months of this year. I myself had the honour of being a member of that Committee and as such I am in a position to say that this Committee tried their level best to reduce the expenditure of the Army to the lowest possible level compatible with the requirements of the defence of this country. It has recommended all possible reduction in nearly every branch of military expenditure, and I am sure that a perusal of this Report will convince the Honourable the mover of the Resolution that there can be no scope for any further reduction in military expenditure besides those suggested by the said Committee.

As to the question of reduction of personnel and equipment of the Army, I am afraid that the present is not the proper moment to ask for the same. There are internal disorders in the country owing to the Congress agitation and the Red Shirt movement which is a branch of the Congress movement in the Frontier. There are frequent reports of unrest even beyond the frontier. Conditions in Afghanistan are not very satisfactory and Bolshevik agents are said to be always on the alert to do their propaganda close to the borders of Afghanistan as well as across the settled districts —

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS (Punjab : Non-Muhammadan): Do you want the forces to be increased?

THE HONOURABLE MAJOR NAWAB SIR MAHOMED AKBAR KHAN: Well, I do not want the Bolshevik to be increased. To keep them in check you must have a strong army. My dear friend Lala Ram Saran Das would

[Major Nawab Sir Mahomed Akbar Khan.]

not be earning so much money if he was not properly protected. (Laughter.) In these circumstances I do not think that any reduction in the personnel of the Army will be justified at the present moment. The present strength of the Army is hardly sufficient to meet with the existing emergencies. Rather is the necessity being felt to increase its present strength. For instance, the Honourable Member might know that the Government of India have felt the necessity of posting some extra battalions in Bengal on account of the present unrest to cope with the terrorist movement there. The smallest reduction therefore in the existing strength of the Army might prove disadvantageous to the Frontier as well as to the internal provinces of India. The only possible sphere of reduction, to my mind, lies in the Indianisation of the Army.

THE HONOURABLE MR. ABU ABDULLAH SYED HUSSAIN IMAM :
Yes.

THE HONOURABLE MAJOR NAWAB SIR MAHOMED AKBAR KHAN :
There I agree with you, as I spoke to you. The gradual replacement of British troops by Indian troops will automatically reduce the expenditure and will relieve the tax-payer to some extent. But this cannot be effected all of a sudden, and especially not at the present moment.

THE HONOURABLE MR. ABU ABDULLAH SYED HUSSAIN IMAM :
For how long can it not be deferred ?

THE HONOURABLE MAJOR NAWAB SIR MAHOMED AKBAR KHAN :
Well, it is for the authorities to decide for how long, not for me. I am not a prophet. I cannot say about the future. I cannot prophesy. I wish I had the power. I am not in a position to do that. Perhaps Mahatma Gandhi might be in a position. He can perform miracles, but I cannot. It is beyond me. What will be the future of India, I cannot say at the present juncture. Anyhow reduction in military expenditure is sure to come in due course of time for which we ought not to be anxious at the present moment.

As regards equipment, it ought to be borne in mind that all over the world there has been modification in the equipment of all the nations. The Great War proved beyond doubt that the equipment of the previous period was decidedly inadequate to cope with the requirements of a modern army. The science of equipment has very much improved as compared with a period of two decades back and it is therefore absolutely essential that our army should also be provided with up-to-date equipment. It ought not to be deficient in any way, for deficiency in this respect is sure to prove very injurious. For instance, the use of gas in war was quite unknown before ; aeroplanes and airships were things unheard of. The use of machine guns was very limited before the war. Tanks and armoured cars and other mechanical transport are new inventions. Quick-firing guns and long range howitzers have to replace old armaments. Hence, the question of cutting down the expenditure under this head is impossible at the present moment.

I took some notes of the observations of my Honourable friend. He has been advocating difference in pay between an Indian officer and a British officer, although both hold the King's Commission. In practice he will find it a

very difficult thing to accomplish and it is an impracticable idea. Indian Members have been appointed to the Executive Council. Has their appointment brought any reduction? No. Their pay has been the same as those of the British Members.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: Do you want the salaries of Indian Executive Councillors to be reduced?

THE HONOURABLE MAJOR NAWAB SIR MAHOMED AKBAR KHAN: Charity begins at home. What you have suggested for the Army you should suggest for every branch. Why the army man should be the special target I cannot see?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member will please address the Chair.

THE HONOURABLE MAJOR NAWAB SIR MAHOMED AKBAR KHAN: In the army in the same unit the Indian and the Britisher work together and it will be very difficult to make a distinction, because their expenses on their kit, their mess, and everything else will very nearly be the same. If my friend wants to make a difference in pay, he will find that the Indian officer holding the King's Commission will not agree that his scale of pay should be on a lower level than that of the British officer. It cannot be done.

Then my friend said something about the army across the Indus and cis-Indus. That is very impracticable, because a regiment to-day may be stationed on this side of the Indus and tomorrow that very regiment might have to go across the Indus. So I do not know how he can establish two scales of pay. Of course, he can establish something; he has the right to say and it will be practicable if he suggests difference in kit, difference in some other respect, but when he suggests that there should be a difference of pay I call that proposition an impracticable one.

THE HONOURABLE MR. ABU ABDULLAH SYED HUSSAIN IMAM: I did not suggest that.

THE HONOURABLE MAJOR NAWAB SIR MAHOMED AKBAR KHAN: Sir, with these remarks, I think the present is the most inopportune moment to suggest reduction in the Army and I am sorry to say that I shall have no other alternative but to oppose the Resolution brought forward by my Honourable friend.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: I think I can satisfy the fears of the Honourable mover in a very few words. When I first saw the Resolution I was horrified, not because I object to his proposal that a committee should inquire into the strength of the Army in India and its expense but because of the word "expert." If the mover knew how I and my officers have suffered from the so-called experts in the last two years, he would have pity on me. I feel inclined to quote the remarks of a famous judge who said with reference to the witnesses he had to have before him, that there were three kinds, the liar, the damned liar and the expert witness! (Laughter.)

With regard to this Committee that the Honourable mover mentioned, the so-called expert committee on the strength of the Army in India, I think it would interest the House if I explained what that sort of thing means. It

[H. E. the Commander-in-Chief.]

was ordered by the Secretary of State in pursuance of a Resolution of Sub-Committee No. 7 on Defence at the Second Round Table Conference. When we get an order of that sort, we proceed in the following manner. The civilian does not enter into the matter when it is first taken up. We first of all define the responsibilities of the Army in India, what it has to do, watch and ward on the frontier, exterior defence, internal security, and so on. We then decide on the minimum forces which are necessary in our opinion to carry out those tasks and to implement the policy of the Government in connection with them. We then report to the Government of India. The Government of India ask the various departments concerned, Home with regard to internal security, the Foreign and Political with regard to the Frontier and, finally, the Finance Department with regard to the expense, to give their opinion. It is then brought before the Governor General in Council. It is discussed; the opinion of the Government of India is given on it and it is transmitted Home for the consideration of His Majesty's Government. This is what happened in this case. His Majesty's Government before they discuss it—and they have not yet discussed it—refer it to the Committee of Imperial Defence who are their expert advisers on defence matters all over the world.

Now, may I nail one lie to the counter once for all (I do not say that the Honourable Member initiated it); but it is a very common statement made in India that the War Office and the Army Council dictate military policy out here. They do nothing whatever of the sort, Sir. I have been out here for four years and I have been in constant communication, by private letter, demi-official letter, and so on, with the Chief of the Imperial General Staff. In not one of those letters has anything been said, either by me or by him, with regard to the military policy of India. They have nothing whatever to do with it. We discuss matters between ourselves and the War Office only with regard to training matters, equipment, new weapons and so on. I am not even allowed by Convention to communicate officially with the War Office on anything to do with the defence of India. But that is a very different thing to the Imperial Defence Committee. May I read what the opinion of the Sub-Committee No. 7 of the Second Round Table Conference says on that subject, and that, I would remind you, had a considerable number of Indian gentlemen on it:

“The Sub-Committee also recognise that in dealing with questions of defence it was not possible to overlook that a factor that must govern all considerations on the subject was the responsibility of the Crown through the Committee of Imperial Defence, which body was ultimately responsible for examining all these problems. It was realised that the responsibility of the Committee of Imperial Defence was not something that was special to India but was common to the Empire as a whole.”

It is the Cabinet in England who finally decide, with the advice of the Committee of Imperial Defence, the policy which I carry out here, and the War Office has nothing whatever to do with it.

Now, Sir, with regard to the expenses of the Army, which I admit have been the cause of great anxiety to Indians. May I say in justification of myself and of my Army advisers that it is not fair that the budget which I control should be called the “Army budget.” It is not, it is the defence budget. I think perhaps Members of this House are not quite aware of what is included in

that budget. In addition to being Secretary of State for War, I am a Jack of many other trades out here. I command the Indian Marine, which has a budget of 65 or 66 lakhs, which budget includes one hundred thousand pounds a year sterling which we contribute to the Admiralty for the naval defence of India. In addition to that the Air Force is under me. That has a large budget also. There are many matters which are added to the Indian defence budget which no defence budget in the world except the Indian one is burdened with. I will give you two examples. There is not a country in the world that I know of who is not proud to pay the pensions and for the upkeep of those who have been wounded in the War in her defence, and the families of those who died. You are the only people in the world who do not do it. Here it is on my defence vote and it amounts to no less than 113 lakhs in the year, which is a very large sum. I have no choice, I have no voice in how to spend it. It is a complete non-effective deadweight. I am also asked to pay a proportion of the upkeep of roads on the Frontier, and for telephones and telegraphs which I have nothing to do with. My soldiers are there in accordance with the policy of the Government, not my policy, not the Army policy, and yet I have to pay a proportion of the cost of those communications because they don't pay. I often hear that I should contribute towards the strategic railways out of my budget. By that I think is meant railways on the far side of the Indus. Those railways were built in pursuance of the Government of India policy, not in pursuance of Army policy. I contend that they are not only for defence but for the civilisation of the Frontier. If you like I will take over those railways, but if I do I will use them for military purposes only. I will have perhaps only one train a week and then we shall soon see what the inhabitants of Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu and elsewhere think of that policy.

There is another thing which I should like to mention. The Honourable mover suggested that the money which India found towards the expenses of the Great War was a terrible burden and should never have been forced upon her. That is one of the most extraordinary arguments that Indian politicians use. You paid one hundred million towards the cost of the War. That represents only the cost of 13 days of the Great War at the rate at which we were spending latterly, and what did you get for that? I am told that you spent that money in order to prevent Great Britain and the Allies being beaten. What would have happened if Great Britain had been beaten? How long would it have been before Germany, the victor, would have seized upon India as the greatest and fattest plum that had ever fallen to a victorious army in the history of the world? Was it expensive to pay one hundred millions to avoid that? If the Germans had won you would have been under the military jack-boot at this moment. There would have been no thought of Swaraj, there would have been no civil disobedience or red shirt nonsense and that sort of thing. You would have been ground down under the jack-boot of the German. What do you get for this money you spent on the Army here? I do not say that it is not too much. I can assure you I am constantly trying to reduce it. You get a safe Frontier, 500 miles, inhabited by warlike tribes, who can produce five hundred thousand men mostly armed with modern rifles; we keep that gate closed for you. And we defend you against the ever present menace of what lies beyond that Frontier, and which never in your history have you been able to defend yourselves from. We give you security over the whole of a con-

[H. E. the Commander-in-Chief.]

minent. What does that mean? That means that your commerce prospers and if you have security, your credit is good. What would happen if the Army was abolished or even greatly reduced in this country? How long would your credit last? I do not think very long.

There is one last thing I would draw your attention to, Sir. I have here some figures for a year ago, 1931-32, which I will leave in the Library of the House. They show the cost in rupees per head of the population of various armies. I will only quote one or two.

United Kingdom—population 46,179,000, revenue £851,000,000, defence expenditure £107,000,000, cost per head in rupees Rs. 30·93 per annum.

India—population 351,450,000, defence budget 51 crores (it is now much less), cost in rupees per head of the population Rs. 1·45 per annum. The lowest cost per head of any army in the world !!

Is it a heavy cost, Sir, for what I have told you you get from our Army, to pay only a charge of Rs. 1·45 per head of the population? It does not seem to me very heavy for what you get.

It is past luncheon time now, Sir, and I do not wish to detain the House any longer, but I hope I have been able to satisfy the Honourable mover that not only is the matter of the expert inquiry into the strength of the Army in India under active consideration both at Home and here, but that I do not think anyone can say that we are not making every effort to reduce the cost of the Army and when you consider what you get for India from your Army it is not a heavy cost. (Applause.)

THE HONOURABLE MR. ABU ABDULLAH SYED HUSSAIN IMAM: Sir, in view of the satisfactory announcement by His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief I do not wish to press my Resolution, but I wish to make just a personal explanation. I did not attack the gift that was given by the Government of India to His Majesty's Government. My contention was about the extraordinary charges arising out of the War, about which a definite settlement was reached between the Government of India and the British Government, that the extraordinary charges would be paid by the British Government. It was to that I referred. However, I wish to withdraw my Resolution.

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

RESOLUTION *RE* COMMUNAL COMPOSITION OF THE ELECTORATE OF THE SPECIAL CONSTITUENCIES GIVEN IN THE COMMUNAL AWARD.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Whether it is the wish of the Council to try and finish its business now or to adjourn for Lunch, I am not aware. It will depend naturally on how long the Resolution standing in the

*This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to form a Committee of Experts to recommend a scheme for the reduction in the personnel and equipment of the Defence Forces compatible with the requirements and resources of India."

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GIVEN IN THE COMMUNAL AWARD.

Honourable Member's name will take. I do not know whether he intends to make a long speech or whether he anticipates a long discussion ?

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS (Punjab : Non-Muhammadan) : I will make a very short speech, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE MR. ABU ABDULLAH SYED HUSSAIN IMAM (Bihar and Orissa : Muhammadan) : We may finish the work in a few minutes, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : Sir, I rise to move the Resolution which stand in my name :

“ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to make an early announcement regarding communal composition of the electorate of the special constituencies and the precise method Government proposes to adopt for ascertaining the assent of the communities affected before undertaking revision of the electoral arrangement given in the Communal Decision.”

I discern many signs in the provinces of Bengal and the Punjab of a desire on the part of the communities to come to an agreement. Whilst speaking on Resolution No. 2 on the 26th of September, I condemned the system of separate electorates in strong terms. That condemnation was not confined to this objectionable system of electorates as applied to the Punjab and Bengal alone, my condemnation was universal. But I hold that these two provinces are the pivot on which the system of electorate rests. If removed from these provinces, I am sure that the minorities in other provinces will not ask for them but will ask for their abolition. But there are difficulties in the way of agreement, and in my Resolution which I have moved, I have laid stress on two important points. If the formula, which I understand, had been put forward by some of our representatives at the Round Table Conference, namely, that the special constituencies should be credited to the community which has a majority of its voters in its separate electorate, had been adopted, there would have been no difficulty. But this has not been done. As explained by me before, voting in special constituencies will proceed on communal lines, as long as separate electorates exist for general territorial constituencies. It is, therefore, necessary to let each minority community know where it stands, and how far the special constituencies will help it. I ask for an early announcement on this point with a view to facilitate and expedite mutual agreement and not with a view to help my own or any other community. The second point which is necessary to settle is, how are the wishes of the communities as to change in the electoral system to be ascertained. A plebiscite is impossible and will, I hope, not be recommended as the proper method of ascertaining popular opinion. Referendum is resorted to in very few advanced countries, where democratic institutions have worked for generations, and where the standard of literacy is very high owing to free and compulsory education having been in force for very many years. Who are supposed to be the accredited representatives ? Between whom is agreement needed ? I hope, that if mutual agreement between accredited representatives, after the source of their authority has been defined, is made as the condition, no such obstacle will be placed on the enforcement of the agreement reached, as was proposed by the Simon Commission.

As the House is well aware, the Commission proposed that the agreement reached between representatives of the communities in the Council will not be enforced, unless the provincial Governor is of opinion, that those representatives

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have correctly interpreted the views of their communities on the subject. I would also point out that as opinion in favour of joint electorates is gaining strength in all communities, the limit of ten years put in the Award should be revoked. If people wish to do away with separate electorates, why should Government impose adventitious conditions.

Allow me to assure you, Sir, that the Award has created grave suspicions against the good intentions of the Government in the minds of the people. The sooner the agreement is reached, the sooner will be removed that suspicion to the good of all concerned.

THE HONOURABLE SIR FRANK NOYCE (Leader of the House) : Sir, when I received notice of this Resolution, it was not very clear as to what exactly it meant and I cannot say that the speech of the Honourable the Leader of the Progressive Party has altogether enlightened me. It seems to me that in this Resolution he has dealt with two absolutely distinct subjects. In the first part he recommends to the Governor General in Council to make an early announcement regarding the communal composition of the electorate of the special constituencies, and in the second part he wants to know what precise method Government proposes to adopt to ascertain the assent of the communities affected before undertaking the revision of the electoral arrangement given in the Communal Decision. The second part of that Resolution, Sir, can be dealt with very briefly. Government have no intention whatever of adopting any precise method for ascertaining the assent of the communities affected before undertaking the revision of the electoral arrangement given in the Communal Decision. I can only refer the Honourable Member once more to paragraph 4 of the Communal Decision in which His Majesty's Government said most emphatically that it must be clearly understood that they can be no party to any negotiations which may be initiated with a view to a revision of their decision. I should like to be clear whether that is the point to which the Honourable Member is now referring or whether he wishes to know what changes will be made in the electoral arrangements after the introduction of the new constitution ?

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : Yes, Sir, I mean the second point.

THE HONOURABLE SIR FRANK NOYCE : Well, that, Sir, is a matter for the future. Provision is to be made in the constitution. It is not a point on which the Government can make any pronouncement now.

Then, coming to his first point, I think a little reflection will show that it is obviously impossible for Government to comply with the Honourable Member's request at the present moment.

Special seats are obviously non-communal seats. What he wishes Government to do is to state what the composition of the various parties is going to be when all these special seats are filled. We obviously cannot tell him anything about that now. He is inviting me to undertake the very dangerous task of prophesying, and I have no intention of accepting his invitation.

I would refer the House for a moment to what these special seats are. In the first category we have the seats allotted to commerce and industry, and

mining and planting. It is laid down in paragraph 15 of the Communal Award that these seats will be filled by election through the Chambers of Commerce and various associations and that the details of the electoral arrangements for these seats must await further investigation. I do not know whether the Honourable Member has studied note (a) to the statement at the end of the Communal Award. He will find it stated there :

“The composition of the bodies through which election to these seats will be conducted, though in most cases either predominantly European or predominantly Indian, will not be statutorily fixed. It is, accordingly, not possible in each province to state with certainty how many Europeans and Indians, respectively, will be returned. It is, however, expected that, initially, the numbers will be approximately as follows : Madras, four Europeans, two Indians.....”

I need not go on. What I would point out is that if it is not possible to say how many Europeans and how many Indians will be returned, still less is it possible to say how the various seats will be distributed amongst the different Indian communities.

Next, Sir, I come to the landholders' seats. There is only one of these seats about which any certain statement can be made and that is the tumandar's seat in the Punjab. The Honourable Member himself comes from the Punjab and he probably knows better than I do from what community that seat is likely to be filled. As regards the other landholders constituencies, it is obviously quite impossible to say from what communities the representatives will come until the constituencies have been delimited and the franchise determined.

Again, Sir, take the case of the Universities. There we know what the constituency is. It is definitely the University. But we cannot tell how the seat is going to be filled until we know whether the election is going to be made by the whole body of registered graduates or by a smaller body such as the Court or the Senate. That may make a great deal of difference to the representation and it is a point which has still to be determined.

In exactly the same way nothing can be said now with regard to labour. Paragraph 14 of the Communal Award says that :

“The seats allotted to labour will be filled from non-communal—I draw special attention to the word ‘non-communal’—constituencies. The electoral arrangements have still to be determined but it is likely that in most provinces the labour constituencies will be partly trade union and partly special constituencies as recommended by the Franchise Committee.”

That, Sir, is the position. It is impossible for Government at this stage to make any announcement with regard to the communal composition of the electorates of the special constituencies. The whole of the Franchise Committee's Report will be considered by the Conference in London and the question of delimiting constituencies and the whole question of franchise itself, of which this is an off-shoot, will then be considered. Representatives of British India will, of course, have every opportunity of pressing their views on this point. There is just one thing that I would add, and that is, that the Government of India are fully aware that the question of delimiting constituencies is one which it is desirable should be taken up at a very early date. They have under consideration the arrangements to be made for dealing with it as soon as the question of

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the franchise has been settled, so that it will be possible to come to a decision in regard to them as soon as we know what the franchise is going to be. (Applause.)

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : Sir, the object of my moving the Resolution was mainly to ascertain what will be the constituencies and how the constituencies, particularly of labour, will be composed. As regard the tumandar's constituency to which the Honourable the Leader of the House has drawn attention, I might mention that although special constituencies are meant to be non-communal, that constituency is purely communal. It consists of seven voters, if I am not wrong and these seven voters are all Muslims—

THE HONOURABLE CHAUDHRI ZAFRULLA KHAN : The Honourable Member is wrong in saying it is seven. It is nine.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : Sir, that is immaterial. Take it to be nine. I take the figure from the Honourable the Education Member. That is perhaps the smallest special constituency all over the world which consists purely of Muslims, a part of a family constituency. However, I do not want to prolong this debate. As the Honourable the Leader of the House says that every effort will be made to expedite matters and that matters cannot be expedited unless and until matters are settled in London, I beg leave to withdraw the Resolution.

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

ELECTION OF TWO NON-OFFICIAL MEMBERS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIES AND LABOUR.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I have to inform the Council that the Honourable Khan Bahadur Syed Abdul Hafeez has withdrawn his nomination for the Standing Committee in the Department of Industries and Labour. An election is therefore no longer necessitated in that case and I may declare at once that the Honourable Mr. Mahmood Suhrawardy and the Honourable Sardar Buta Singh have been duly elected to that Standing Committee. In the other case, the Standing Committee for Roads, there are still three candidates for one vacancy. In that case the election will take place at the next meeting.

The Council then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, the 30th September, 1932.

* This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to make an early announcement regarding communal composition of the electorate of the special constituencies and the precise method Government proposes to adopt for ascertaining the assent of the communities affected before undertaking revision of the electoral arrangement given in the Communal Decision."

ERRATUM.

In Council of State Debates, 1932, Volume II,
No. 3, page 113, line 9, *between* the words
“be” and “prejudice” insert the word
“no”.