

Wednesday, 16th March, 1927

**THE  
COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES**

**VOLUME I, 1927**

*(8th February 1927 to 29th March 1927)*

**THIRD SESSION  
OF THE  
SECOND COUNCIL OF STATE, 1927**



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# COUNCIL OF STATE.

*Wednesday, 16th March, 1927.*

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

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

### EXTENSION OF THE LEE COMMISSION'S CONCESSIONS TO INDIAN MEMBERS OF THE INDIAN MEDICAL SERVICE.

161. THE HONOURABLE RAO SAHIB DR. U. RAMA RAU: (a) Is it a fact that the concessions recommended by the Lee Commission, regarding sterling overseas pay and free passages for European members of the service, have also been extended to such members of the Indian Civil Service of Asiatic domicile as were recruited on or before 31st December, 1919?

(b) Is it a fact that the concessions, referred to above, have not been extended to members of the superior Medical services in India? If so, will the Government be pleased to state the reason for this distinction?

(c) Is it a fact that European members of the superior Medical services can proceed to Europe, enjoying the benefit of free passage, etc., recommended by the Lee Commission and also enjoy the benefits of study leave allowances at the same time?

(d) Is it a fact that Indian members of the superior Medical services, while proceeding on study leave to Europe, have to pay the passages to and back?

(e) Will the Government be pleased to state whether applications from members of the superior Medical services of Asiatic domicile, recruited under similar conditions to their European colleagues, praying that the Lee Commission's concessions be extended to them in terms of their service, have been received by the Government through the proper channel, and, if so, what action has been taken thereon?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: (a) Such officers have received the concessions of overseas pay and free passages. They do not, however, draw overseas pay in sterling except for such periods as they may have either a wife or child resident outside Asia.

(b) Rupee rates of overseas pay are admissible to Indian Medical Service officers of Asiatic domicile, who held permanent commissions in the service on the 1st December 1918, except during such period as they may have either a wife or a child resident outside Asia, when they can draw overseas pay in sterling. As regards passages, the reply is in the negative. In the latter respect, they are in the same position as officers of Asiatic domicile of all other services. The only officers of Asiatic domicile who are eligible for Lee passage concessions are those Indian members of the Indian Civil

Service who draw overseas pay. They were granted the concession on the special recommendation of the Lee Commission.

(c) The reply is in the affirmative.

(d) The reply is in the affirmative.

(e) The memorials were received by the Government of India. As a result of the consideration of those memorials, the Government of India have decided, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to grant passage facilities to Indian Medical Service officers of Asiatic domicile proceeding to the United Kingdom on study leave. The details of the scheme are now being worked out.

#### ABOLITION OF INTERMEDIATE ACCOMMODATION ON RAILWAYS.

162. THE HONOURABLE RAO SAHIB DR. U. RAMA RAU: (a) Is it a fact that the Railway Board has recently issued a circular to all railway administrations, asking for their opinion as to whether intermediate class accommodation cannot be done away with?

(b) If so, will the Government kindly lay the circular on the table of the House?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. L. CORBETT: (a) The answer is in the negative.

(b) Does not arise.

#### PAY OF THE CLERICAL STAFF OF THE OFFICE OF THE ACCOUNTANT-GENERAL, BURMA.

163. THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. DESIKA CHARI: (a) Will the Government please state whether the clerical staff of the Accountant General's office, Burma, submitted two memorials to His Majesty's Secretary of State for India, one in September 1924, and another in November, 1925, and whether the memorials were strongly recommended by the Accountant General? If so, how were they disposed of?

(b) If the memorials have been withheld, will the Government please state whether the grievances contained in them were remedied? If not, will the Government please state what amount of relief was secured to each clerk as the result of the two revisions, dated 1st March 1924, and 1st December, 1924?

(c) Will the Government please state whether the difference between the old minimum, Rs. 55, and the new minimum, Rs. 70, was allowed in fixing the initial pay of clerks of the above office? Whether it is a fact that such concession was allowed in the case of revision of pay of the Postal Department of Rangoon?

(d) Is it a fact that the new maximum, Rs. 240, can be reached by the new entrants in 25 years? If so, will the Government please state in how many years the initial pay in the time-scale of men already in the service enables them to reach the same maximum?

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. F. L. BRAYNE: (a) and (b). Yes; two memorials addressed to the Secretary of State for India were received from the clerks in the office of the Accountant General, Burma, during 1924 and 1925, respectively. As a result of the first memorial a consolidated



scale of pay in lieu of the then existing scale of pay *plus* local allowances was sanctioned for the clerks with effect from the 1st December 1924. The Government have no information regarding the measure of relief granted to each clerk and are not prepared to call for these figures.

The prayers in the second memorial asking for further revision of their time scale of pay and certain other concessions were not accepted and this memorial was also withheld by the Government of India under the discretionary power vested in them.

(c) The difference between the old minimum of Rs. 50 and the new minimum of Rs. 70 was not allowed in fixing the initial pay of the clerks in the Accountant General's Office, the initial pay of each clerk in the new scale being fixed at a stage next above his total emoluments consisting of his substantive pay and local allowance in the old scale. A concession of the nature referred to was, however, allowed in respect of the revision of the time scale of pay of postal clerks serving in Rangoon sanctioned with effect from the 1st March 1924, the existing incumbents being allowed an increase of Rs. 10 per mensem from that date. No such concession has been granted in connection with subsequent revisions.

(d) Yes. In no case of revision of pay can it be guaranteed that every one already in service shall reach the maximum of the new scale, as the period required for attaining this maximum depends on the stage of the revised scale at which the initial pay is fixed.

PAY OF THE CLERICAL STAFF OF THE OFFICE OF THE ACCOUNTANT-GENERAL, BURMA.

164. THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. DESIKA CHARI: (a) Will the Government please state whether it is a fact that the Auditor General replied to Resolution No. 2 of the All-India Civil and Postal Accounts Offices Conference of 1926 that the scale of pay of the Accountant General's Office, Burma, was fixed with reference to the scale of pay of the local Secretariat?

(b) Is it a fact that the scale of pay of the Accountant General's Office, Madras, and that of the Madras Secretariat are the same?

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. F. L. BRAYNE: (a) The reply is in the affirmative.

(b) The rates paid to the clerks of the Accountant General's Office in Madras are based on, but are not identical with, those given to clerks in the Madras Secretariat. The same is largely true of the Burma Office, though in that case the maximum of the Accountant General's Office scale has not been carried so high as that of the local Secretariat.

ANNUAL INCREMENTS OF THE CLERICAL STAFF OF THE OFFICE OF THE ACCOUNTANT-GENERAL, BURMA.

165. THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. DESIKA CHARI: (a) Will the Government please state whether the increment in the revised scale of pay of the Accountant General's Office, Burma, is Rs. 8 for the first ten years and Rs. 6 for the next fifteen years?

(b) Is it a fact that the increment from the 11th year onwards was fixed at a lesser rate, in view of the assumption that Indians, by their

social customs, marry early and their children are in a position to earn and help their parents and that this augments the family budget?

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. F. L. BRAYNE: (a) Yes.

(b) Owing to the custom of early marriage and the assistance generally rendered to parents by sons reaching wage-earning age, it was decided to allow larger increments in the earlier years of service.

PROVISION OF QUARTERS FOR SUBORDINATE EMPLOYEES OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IN BURMA.

166. THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. DESIKA CHARI: Is it a fact that the Burma Government is building quarters for all its servants in view of the high cost of house rent? Does the Central Government contemplate helping its subordinates in a similar way?

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. C. MCWATTERS: Government have no information in regard to the first part of the question. The Government of India have not under contemplation any scheme for providing quarters for all its servants in Burma, but in certain circumstances in which it is considered necessary, quarters are provided.

PAY, OVERSEAS ALLOWANCE, LEAVE RULES, ETC., OF COVENANTED INDIAN OFFICERS ENGAGED IN DIFFERENT COMPANY RAILWAYS.

167. THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. DESIKA CHARI: (a) Will the Government please state how many covenanted Indian officers are engaged in different Company Railways in India and in what departments?

(b) How many of them were recruited in England and how many in India?

(c) Do those Indian officers, who were recruited in England, enjoy the same privileges as European officers regarding pay, overseas allowance, leave rules, and return passage on termination of service and otherwise?

(d) Does clause 76 of the East Indian Railway Company Leave Rules say that Indian officers appointed in England may be admitted to the benefits of the Company Leave Rules for Europeans, and is the position the same on all the State Railways? Do other Company Railways also extend this privilege to Indian officers recruited in England; if not, why not?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. L. CORBETT: (a) and (b). The information is not available, and it would take a great deal of time and labour to collect it.

(c) and (d). Indian officers recruited in England by the late East Indian Railway Company and the late Great Indian Peninsula Railway Company receive leave under the same rules as European Officers recruited in England by those Companies. Indian officers recruited for service on State-managed Railways and appointed to positions on the East Indian and Great Indian Peninsula Railways since they were taken over for management by the State, receive leave under the ordinary leave rules of the Fundamental Rules.

On State-managed Railways, other than the East Indian and Great Indian Peninsula Railways, Indian officers appointed in England prior to 24th July 1928, are admitted to the special leave rules of the Fundamental Rules, those appointed subsequently coming under the ordinary leave rules.

The practice on Company-managed Railways varies, in some Railways Indian officers are granted the same leave benefits as European officers, while in others they come under a different set of leave rules.

#### DIVISIONAL SUPERINTENDENTS ON STATE RAILWAYS.

168. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: Is it a fact that Divisional Superintendents on State Railways will only hold that post for three years and will then revert to their substantive appointment? If this is so, what has led Government to arrive at this decision?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. L. CORBETT: For administrative reasons it has been decided that the posts of Divisional Superintendents should be held on a three-years' tenure, but the period can be extended in any individual case at the discretion of Government.

#### HEADS OF STORES DEPARTMENTS IN STATE RAILWAYS.

169. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: Is it a fact that in future the Head of the Stores Department in State Railways will be an Engineer Officer, and not as at present a Stores Officer, who has risen to this post after long service in that Department?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. L. CORBETT: All that Government have said on the subject is that it is their intention that vacancies in the Stores Department will in future be filled by selection from the Indian Railway Service of Engineers and the Mechanical Engineers branch of the Superior revenue establishment.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: A supplementary question, Sir. May I ask what is the reason which has led to this decision?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. L. CORBETT: Recently, Sir, we had an election to the Central Advisory Railway Council, and I think the Honourable Member came out second on the poll. May I suggest that this indicated the desire of this House that these conundrums should be propounded elsewhere?

#### RAVEN COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING WORKSHOPS ON STATE RAILWAYS.

170. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: Will the Government kindly state what recommendations of the Raven Committee on State Railways' workshops have so far been accepted, and what action is being taken to bring them into effect?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. L. CORBETT: A statement giving the information required is being prepared and will be forwarded to the Honourable Member when it is ready.

#### SUPPLY OF DEFECTIVE UNDERFRAMES FOR THE NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAY.

171. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: Will the Government kindly state the number and value of the underframes ordered recently for the North-Western Railway, which, when supplied,

were subsequently rejected owing to defective design? Was the design checked before the order was placed? If so, by whom? Who have been found responsible in the matter?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. L. CORBETT: No underframes have been ordered recently for the North-Western Railway which it has been found necessary to reject owing to defective design. If the Honourable Member will give me details of the case to which he refers, I will see what information I can obtain for him.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: Does the Honourable Member mean that there was more than one design which was rejected?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. L. CORBETT: If the Honourable Member will give me details of the case to which he refers, I shall see what information I can obtain for him. Without the details, it is very difficult for me to give the information.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: These underframes, as far as I can understand, were ordered from some Indian firm and after they were received were rejected.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member is giving information; he is not asking for it.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: May I ask whether that design was checked by the Consulting Engineers?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. L. CORBETT: I can only repeat that, if the Honourable Member will put down full details of the matter on which he requires information, I shall be very happy to supply it.

#### APPOINTMENT OF INDIANS AS AGENTS OF STATE RAILWAYS.

172. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: Will the Government kindly state whether they intend to try suitable Indians ("Indians" includes "Anglo-Indians") as Agents of State Railways whenever there is any vacancy?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. L. CORBETT: When a vacancy occurs the claims of all officers of suitable standing will of course be considered.

#### OPENING OF THE RAILWAY STATION NEAR AJMERE GATE, DELHI.

173. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: Will the Government kindly state when the railway station near Ajmere Gate, Dehi, or Raisina, on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, is likely to be opened?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. L. CORBETT: It is hoped that the new station near Ajmere Gate, which is now being constructed by the North-Western Railway, will be ready for opening about the beginning of May next.

#### KUMBH MELA RAILWAY TRAFFIC.

174. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: Will the Government kindly state in detail what steps they intend taking to

cope with the coming Kumbh Mela railway traffic at Hardwar? Will the Railways issue return tickets for third class passengers to Hardwar on double ordinary fares available for return journey within two weeks?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. L. CORBETT: Necessary measures are being taken by Railway Administrations, in conjunction with the civil authorities, to prevent overcrowding and to secure the convenience of passengers by the provision of special trains, appointment of additional supervising and other staff, medical and sanitary arrangements, drinking water and other measures generally. It is not proposed to issue return tickets.

#### CHEMICAL COMPOSITION OF ARTIFICIAL GHEE.

175. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: Will the Government kindly state the result of the inquiries referred to in the Honourable Sir Muhammad Habibullah's answer to my question No. 45, asked in the Council of State on the 23rd August 1926?

THE HONOURABLE KHAN BAHADUR SIR MUHAMMAD HABIBULLAH SAHIB BAHADUR: The results of investigations regarding the chemical contents of vegetable compounds of the kind mentioned by the Honourable Member so far as available to Government are being placed in the Library of the House. A general inquiry into the nutritive value of foodstuffs is now being made under the direction of the Indian Research Fund Association. Artificial ghee has not so far been specially tested, but Government will draw the attention of the Association to this matter if the Honourable Member so desires.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: I do desire it, Sir.

#### STATEMENT LAID ON THE TABLE.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. L. CORBETT (Commerce Secretary): Sir, I lay on the table the Agreement\* between the United Kingdom and Greece, respecting the Measurement of Tonnage of Merchant Ships, and Notes exchanged, which affect India.

#### RESOLUTION *RE* ABOLITION OF COMMUNAL ELECTORATES AS A CONDITION PRECEDENT TO FURTHER POLITICAL PROGRESS IN INDIA.

THE HONOURABLE SIR SANKARAN NAIR (Madras: Non-Muhamadan): Sir, I move:

"That this Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that the number of Members in the Legislative Councils in India be not increased, that their constitution be in no way modified, that no additional powers be conferred on them expressly or by implication, and that no further step towards responsible government be taken until the Hindus and the Muhammadans agree to dispense with election of Members to those Councils by separate electorates composed only of Hindus or Muhammadans."

Sir, the Royal Commission will be here in a year or two to consider what steps should be taken now in the interests of Indian political progress. The last time that question was considered in India by Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford they decided most of the questions themselves, but on one

\*Not printed.

[Sir Sankaran Nair.]

outstanding question—that is the relations of Hindus and Muhammadans—after expressing their own opinion as to what should be done for the electorates they proceeded to act not upon their conviction but upon an agreement, the Lucknow Pact, which was arrived at between the Hindus and Muhammadans. For reasons to which I shall refer presently it is desirable now also that the Hindus and Muhammadans should come to a certain agreement as to the relations which should subsist between them if we are to have any further political progress in India. It is in order to assist Hindu and Muhammadan leaders, in order to arrive at such a conclusion, that I put forward this Resolution. Our Moslem brethren have already recognised the necessity of it. The question was considered by the All-India Moslem League on three occasions, and what they said was this. They declared—I am reading their own words—“that the speedy attainment of full responsible government is one of the declared objects of the League”. They also say “that the conception of Swaraj should be translated in the realm of practical politics”. With this aim I believe India is in sympathy and all classes of politicians, Hindu and Muhammadan, will I have no doubt do all in their power to bring about this consummation. Then they also ask for the early appointment of a Royal Commission to formulate a scheme to place the Indian constitution on a sound and permanent basis with provisions for automatic progress to establish full responsible government in India to secure stability in the Government and willing co-operation of the people. It is here that I ask your special attention to what they say. They say that any scheme must be based on the following basic and fundamental principles:

(1) All the Legislatures of the country and all elected bodies be constituted on the definite principle of adequate and effective representation of minorities in every province without reducing a majority in any province to a minority or even to an equality.

(2) The representation of communal groups shall continue to be by means of separate electorates as at present, provided that it shall be open to any community to abandon a separate for a joint electorate.

(3) No Bill or Resolution or any part thereof be passed in any Legislature or in any other elected body if three-fourths of the members of any community in that particular body oppose such Bill or Resolution or part thereof on the ground that it would be injurious to the interests of that community or in the alternative such other method is devised as may be found feasible and practicable to deal with such cases.

Sir, I entertain the view that these principles are not sound; I entertain the view that no scheme can be placed on a permanent basis if these are the conditions precedent. I also entertain the view that there will be no willing co-operation between Hindus and Muhammadans under a scheme like that, nor any willing co-operation with the Government. Those are the reasons, Sir, why I move this Resolution.

This question of communal electorates was considered in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report and the views therein advanced form the basis of my Resolution. I shall take therefore the liberty of summarising their views to the House. The authors of that Report say that the history of self-government among the nations who develop it and spread it throughout the world is decisively opposed to communal electorate as it leads to divided allegiance and to encouraging the citizens to regard themselves as citizens

of a smaller unit than the State. They also show that communal electorates mean the creation of political camps organised against each other and that it teaches men to think as partizans and not as citizens. They further point out that these communal electorates stereotype existing relations. They say therefore finally that it is a very serious hindrance to the self-governing principle, and if the British Government divide the people by these communal electorates, it will be difficult to meet the charge of being hypocritical or short-sighted. Having given their opinion in those terms they however proceeded to recommend separate electorates for this reason. Their reason was that they found it already existing. They also found that Hindus and Muhammadans had agreed upon separate electorates according to what is called the Lucknow Pact. Now as there was that agreement they accepted it, although they give their reasons for thinking that is not right. Now these were perhaps good reasons for not upsetting the system as it existed at that time; but, Sir, the reasons given in the Report are against any scheme of responsible self-government based on it; and the experience we have gained during the last 6 or 7 years confirms that view. Well, if it confirms that view the question might be reasonably asked, why do the Moslem League now claim separate electorates? The reason why it is now alleged by the Moslem League that Home Rule must be accompanied by communal electorates for all elected bodies up to village unions is this—it is the absolute distrust of the Hindus. There is no use shutting our eyes to that. The Moslem League recognise the bitterness of the feelings that exist now. In their own words:

“The All-India Moslem League views with great alarm the deplorable bitterness of feelings at present existing between Hindus and Mussulmans in different parts of the country.”

They go on further to say:

“No political progress is possible in this country unless it is based on a solid substratum of Hindu Moslem unity.”

I agree with both those sentiments. The reasons for this increasing bitterness are also stated. I give them in the words of the President of the Moslem League:

“Their respective attitudes towards life, their distinctive culture, civilisation and habits, their traditions and history no less than their religion, divide them so completely that the fact they have lived in the same country for nearly a thousand years has contributed hardly anything to their fusion as a nation.”

I express no opinion on that. But it is there. Then the President added:

“An Indian Mussalman would at once be made at home in Afghanistan, Persia, Central Asia or by Chinese Muslims, Turks, Arabs, etc., while he would feel himself a total alien in his own town in the quarter in which Hindus live.”

On that also I express no opinion, but that is their view. And with reference to certain Hindu movements, he said they form “the most serious challenge to the Muhammadan religion which they ever had to meet, not even excepting the Christian Crusades.” On that too I am not an authority and so I cannot express an opinion, but there is the fact that the Mussalmans entertain that feeling and the Muslim League endorses that view and they ask all public bodies to discontinue their efforts in such directions; and they add “riots after riots are the consequences of this feeling.” Now, as a non-Muslim, a Hindu is not

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entitled in these circumstances to complain of any steps which the Muslims may feel bound to take for the protection of their own interests. It is not for us to argue whether they are right or wrong; it is for them to decide the question as to what is necessary for their own future, and I am not proposing to argue the question as to whether my Muslim friends are right or wrong. But I say this, I believe every non-Muslim is entitled to say, "If that is your feeling and if you propose these steps as conditions precedent for any further political progress, then we are entitled to say that these steps will not conduce to any further political progress, that these steps will be detrimental to the best interests of the country, and if they are necessary in your opinion for any further political progress, then we are entitled to say there should be no further political progress. Let us stay here until we can come to a certain agreement amongst ourselves as to what is to be done in future. With that agreement we will go to the British Government and then it is not likely to refuse to take such further steps as we want it to take. But in the absence of such an agreement the best thing for us to-day would be to stand where we are."

Now, Sir, there is no doubt about it that the evils predicted by Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford if separate electorates were granted, have come to pass. Already racial feeling has been intensified; and if separate electorates are introduced, as the Muslim League wants, for election in all elected bodies, not only in the Central Legislature, not only in the Provincial Legislatures, but in all municipalities, district boards, local boards, unions, universities and colleges when they are governed by elected bodies as claimed by the Muslim League, then we know what experience has shown us; that strife will spread everywhere, in far-off villages in the mufassal, in cities, in bodies like Senates and Syndicates and College Councils where racial feeling should be unknown. Not only will good government be impossible, but I am afraid there will be disloyalty and a spirit of lawlessness and a defiance of authority that leads to assaults on district magistrates and police superintendents as experience has already demonstrated: that will be the result. If India has Home Rule or Dominion Status I do not think there can be any doubt that the more powerful community will get rid of separate electorates and devise a constitution to ensure its supremacy. There will therefore be no chance of permanence. (*An Honourable Member*: "What about separate representation?"). I am speaking about separate electorates. If we continue under the actual supervision of the British Government, that Government would be justified in disregarding the vote of the Council as the opinion of a racial majority not arrived at in the interests of the country. We have already had examples. It will not therefore be a step towards responsible government. Separate Hindu and Muhammadan electorates, when the feelings are strained, will place the minority at the mercy of the majority. To provide against this last evil according to the League Resolution, three-fourths of a minority is empowered to defeat any measure which it may consider injurious to it. The result of it would be that one community is shut out from rendering any service to the other. Reform within the community also would not be possible or discussion even of any questions that may apply only to any community. Any reform of the caste system including the position of the untouchables would be rendered practically impossible for the Hindus. For both Hindus and Muhammadans, such



reforms as Kemal Pasha has carried out in Turkey, such as the abolition of the purdah and polygamy, equality in the law as between men and women as regards property and marriage would be impossible. Muhammadan objection to a Bill to enforce monogamy for Hindus on the ground that it will interfere with conversions to Muhammadanism may be borne in mind. This happened in Bombay. Religious reform, religious propaganda, Christian, Hindu or Muhammadan, will be perilous. The Hindu Suddhi movement, the Moslem Tanzeem and Tabligh movements will have to go. Private rights, like the right to take out processions and to slaughter animals for food will have to be given up. Similarly also there will be difficulties as regards freedom of speech even in matters not connected with religion. A drama relating to the love of a Muhammadan maiden for a non-Muhammadan youth, a play concerning the fanaticism of Aurangzeb have already been denounced with successful results. Municipal institutions will be paralysed; many important sanitary measures may be successfully objected to by a minority. Educational progress will be impossible as it may be said to be inconsistent with a minority religion. Look at the objection already taken in America to the teaching of the doctrine of evolution. Science, when in the opinion of a minority it is opposed to their religion, cannot be taught, not only to the followers of that religion but to anybody. I say deliberately, licence under Bolshevism would be preferable to the mental and moral atrophy under a Home Rule Government so constituted. Yet, without this or a similar provision, communal electorates would place a minority absolutely under the control of the majority. Even under foreign control, communal electorates have been responsible for infinite mischief. With the gradual removal of such control the evil will grow. It follows, therefore, that no additional powers, no further responsibility should be entrusted to bodies whose members are elected by communal electorates. The fact that we Hindus or Muhammadans do not dispense with them is proof that we are not fit for further advance.

I am aware, Sir, that there are some persons who believe that this English administration is so rotten that anything would be preferable to it. I am not one of them. I am also aware that there are some Muhammadans and Hindus who think that once the British Government is out of the way the question can be settled to their satisfaction, though after frightful bloodshed. Here I may just refer the House to a book which has just been distributed to us by the office. You find this:

"Mr. Gandhi says: 'I have admitted my incompetence' (that is, to bring the Hindus and Muhammadans together.) If it is to be our lot that before we can come together we must shed one another's blood, then I say the sooner we do so the better it is for us."

That is not my view:

"If we propose to break one another's heads, let us do so in a manly way; let us not then shed crocodile tears."

I am not for breaking heads. I do not belong to that class. The only course then left for me is to propose that no further step should be taken towards responsible government based on communal electorates. Perhaps the question will be asked whether any discussion of this matter is necessary at this stage. I think so. The Muslim League have formulated their demands. The Hindu public opinion is against it; the leaders on both sides have not approached each other to come to a settlement. The

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Royal Commission might come soon. Each party will put forward its own scheme which will be denounced by the other. Our opponents will thus be furnished with a pretext to deny us any substantial reform. There is a feeling in England that the reforms already granted are too radical, that we have not played the game by shouldering the burden of reforms; that in fact we have shown ourselves unequal to it. The differences between Hindus and Muhammadans themselves may be used to deny us any reform. If in addition to it the acceptance of these unsound principle which will lead to constant friction, restlessness, riots, is made a condition precedent the great probability is that there will be no further advance; whereas if both Hindu and Muhammadan leaders realise the situation, it is possible that they may have some agreed scheme to place before the Royal Commission when it comes. I do not deny that the Muslim League may get non-Muslim recruits, but those who will join them from conviction will be very few. There may be some who may join them for tactical reasons. Others may join them out of hatred to a foreign Government, and it is also possible that these and a few English politicians may succeed in forcing the hands of Government and extending the scope of Reforms on the basis of separate electorates. But it will be a disaster to the country.

For these reasons I move this Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE SIR ALEXANDER MUDDIMAN (Home Member): Sir, before I proceed to discuss the subject-matter of the Resolution that has been moved by my Honourable friend, I would ask your indulgence and the indulgence of the House to say a few words to explain why I am rising so early in this debate. But for the circumstances which I think are known to the House, and which exist in another place, I would have greatly preferred to have waited till the discussion had advanced a little further, at any rate till the amendments had been moved; but I am under the coercion of a whip which may require me to leave this Chamber at any moment. In these circumstances the House will pardon me if I take the earliest opportunity of making a speech which I hope to be allowed to complete. (Laughter).

I would like to say one word as to why I have come here to-day. It has been a great source of dissatisfaction to me that I have not been able to attend the debates of this House more frequently, but the necessity for my presence in another place has been very insistent. But I did feel to-day that I ought to come down, even under circumstances of difficulty, to deal with a Resolution of so remarkable a character,—remarkable in the manner in which it has been presented,—remarkable for the tone in which it has been moved—and remarkable on account of the personality of its Mover. Sir, this is not a Resolution that has been moved by a Back-Bencher. It has been moved by a gentleman who has held the highest judicial and executive offices under the Crown, who has been a Member of the Executive Council of the Supreme Government. In those circumstances courtesy prompted me to attend at this debate. I have said that this is a remarkable Resolution. It has been brought forward with that courage and frankness which has always distinguished my Honourable friend in his public utterances, in circumstances, which seem to be inconvenient to some, but which in his opinion render the moving of his Resolution necessary. If the Government accepted it, it

would involve, at any rate in the opinion of some, the postponement of any further reforms. Therefore, the House would do well to examine the Resolution with care and discuss it in the fullest manner possible.

Now I should like, at the risk of boring the House, to trouble them with a short history of this question of separate electorates. My Honourable friend in his speech said that the Montagu-Chelmsford Report stated that the British Government is often accused of dividing men in order to govern them. Well, Sir, separate electorates did not arise because of the British Government. They arose owing to the insistent demands that have been made over a long period of years. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report, to which my Honourable friend referred, observes as follows. They were justifying re-examination of the subject, and they said :

"We may be told that this is a closed question, because the Muhammadans will never agree to any revision of the arrangement promised them by Lord Minto in 1906, and secured to them by the reforms of 1909."

However, for the reasons which they gave they did undertake that re-examination, although they said—and their words are worth the attention of the House—before they proceeded to examine the arguments :

"Thus we have had to reckon not only with the settled existence of the system, but with a large volume of weighty opinion that no other method is feasible."

They then proceeded to set out the arguments against separate electorates. Briefly, they are that they were opposed to the teachings of history, that they perpetuated class divisions and stereotyped existing relations. Those arguments were set out with all the ability of the very eloquent pen which drafted that Report. But their final conclusion, and it is a conclusion to which I must invite the attention of this House, was as follows :

"Much as we regret the necessity, we are convinced that so far as the Muhammadans, at all events, are concerned, the present system must be maintained until conditions alter, even at the price of slower progress towards the realization of a common citizenship."

Now, Sir, they did not take the view that separate electorates were anything but a hindrance, but they deliberately face the consequences of those electorates and said they were so essential that although they mean slow progress they had to be allowed in order that any progress might be made. I think that is a fair statement of their argument.

So much for the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, which in fact accepted the Lucknow Pact. Those recommendations came again under the review of a body of importance, the Franchise Committee, presided over by Lord Southborough in 1919. They made the same recommendations with changes which are immaterial for the purposes of my argument, and again these conclusions were adopted by another body, a body probably the most important tribunal that can deal with Indian affairs, before which sooner or later the present constitution will come under review. I refer to the Joint Committee of the two Houses on the Government of India Bill in 1919. They also accepted the recommendations of Lord Southborough's Committee. They did not merely accept communal representation of the Muslims, which has been the main theme of my Honourable friend's speech, but they advocated communal representation in the case of other communities. It might be interesting at this stage to give the House a very short:

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statement of what exactly are the devices existing in the present constitution for the representation of minorities, whether by way of communal representation or otherwise. If the House will have patience with me for a very few minutes I will read a very brief summary of the present position.

Communal representation is at present provided for for Muhammadans in all Provincial Councils, in the Assembly and the Council of State, for Sikhs in the Punjab Legislative Council, in the Assembly and in the Council of State; for Europeans in the Madras, Bombay, Bengal, United Provinces and Bihar Legislative Councils and in the Assembly for Anglo-Indians in the Madras and Bengal Legislative Councils; for Indian Christians in the Madras Legislative Council. Seats for non-Brahmins are reserved in the Madras Legislative Council and for Mahrattas in the Bombay Legislative Council. There is no similar reservation in the Indian Legislature.

Before I pass on, I should just like to invite the attention of the House to the difference between the system of communal representation and the reservation of seats. It is this, that in the former case the electorate is separate and in the latter case, though the electorate is in a minority, seats are secured to the community in question. It is another device for securing representation of minorities. It is a device which to my mind is less theoretically objectionable possibly than that of the separate electorate, but the House must face the issue that it is another device for effecting the object in a different way. In this connection I should like to invite the attention of the Honourable Mover of the Resolution to his own evidence before the Joint Committee. Sir Sankaran Nair then said in answer to the questions of the Joint Committee:

"Q. With your great knowledge of Madras and Southern India, are you in favour of giving communal representation which the non-Brahmins are demanding in such large numbers?

A. Yes, I am.

Q. You know the Brahmo-Samaj and its members wish, as far as possible, the abolition of class distinctions?

A. Yes.

Q. Is it not rather remarkable that members of the Brahmo-Samaj should advocate communal representation, because we have been told that communal representation would increase the caste differences and perpetuate them?

A. I cannot say anything about that. My reason for giving communal representation to non-Brahmins in Madras is that a state of things has been brought about which compels us to give it. I recognise all the disadvantages and all the difficulties attending that but now I would give communal representation to non-Brahmins simply because we cannot help it."

Perhaps my Honourable friend, when he replies, will say whether he adheres to that view. I may say that his later evidence shows that he prefers the method of reservation and not that of the communal electorate. The position in regard to minorities and majorities in India is, I venture to think, different to that which prevails in Western countries. If the House will permit me, I will read a line or two on that because it puts the matter so clearly. A distinguished writer on representative government observes:

"Perhaps it may be a good thing to consider what we mean in Western countries by the word 'majority'. There a majority is not a permanent body which can always be relied upon to support certain individuals or interests from year to year. In those countries a majority is a loosely knit and constantly fluctuating body, at one time losing members to the minority and at other times gaining members therefrom. In order to

maintain their majority the leaders of the latter have constantly to alter their programme and suit their notions and actions to what they consider to be the general public opinion. Similarly the leaders of the minority are constantly striving to change their minority into a majority and they are always ready for this purpose to take advantage of changes in public opinion and national circumstances, etc."

That, Sir, is the Western conception of a majority and a minority, and when that Western conception is the universal conception of the relations between majority and minority communities in India, then the time will have come undoubtedly when communal electorates can be wiped out. But can anybody who knows India say that that position has been reached, or has even nearly been reached? Now, the tyranny of majorities in representative institutions, even with the Western conception, is a very serious matter. I myself, Sir, have suffered under the tyranny of a majority for some three years and I can speak as the toad beneath the harrow. Apart from those sufferings which must always fall to the lot of one who leads in a House where he has no majority, there are more substantial ones even when complete representative government is attained. This is what Viscount Bryce says on the subject in his well-known book on "Modern Democracy":

"If . . . the group constitute a majority in the Chamber it is omnipotent. The hall is at its feet; it can count on passing all its measures and need not trouble to expound or defend proposals in debate except for the purpose of saving appearances and putting its case before the country. It has only to go on voting steadily what has been previously determined on in secret, uninstructed and unmoved by arguments from any other part of the Chamber, because there is no need for listening to words which cannot effect its pre-determined action. The Chamber having ceased to be deliberative has become a mere voting machine, the passive organ of an unseen despotism."

If these words could be written by a statesman of great authority in regard to the Western conception of the relations between a majority and a minority, I cannot help feeling that there might be ground for even greater apprehension in a country where that conception has certainly not yet been fully attained.

Now, Sir, my Honourable friend suggested, and I only hope he was right, that much has been learned since this new constitution has been in force. Undoubtedly great and useful experience has been derived, but on this particular subject, in so far as I am acquainted with the pronouncements of public men and public bodies, I can find no great hope for believing that any such change as he suggests has taken place. This matter, Sir, was considered in 1923 when we heard of the Bengal Pact and the Swaraj Party had certain proposals which, so far as I know, never came to fruition. Then again we have had statements by the All-India Muslim League on the subject on various occasions, and the latest word of the All-India Muslim League in 1926 is not to my mind very helpful in supporting the view that there has been a change of Muslim feeling. The matter was considered at the inquiry over which I had the honour to preside, and both the majority report and the minority report have certain observations on the subject to which I would invite the attention of the House. The majority said, in paragraph 69 of their report:

"It must be admitted that in principle these provisions are open to constitutional objection, and most of us look upon them as an obstacle to political advance, but we consider that the abolition of any special communal electorates, and in this we include reserved seats, is quite impracticable at the present time. The objections of the communities concerned are, in our opinion, far too deep-rooted to enable us to justify any recommendation in this respect. We are not prepared either to recommend even the substitution, in whole or in part, of reserved seats for separate electorates."

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That part of the Committee had a very firm opinion on the subject. I must however give a word of caution in putting forward the words of that Committee. I give them for what they are as the pronouncement of the Committee and not as in any way committing the Government of India to the conclusion at which the majority arrived. On the other hand, the minority report also has some instructive observations. They said:

"While, therefore, we think that in the present conditions it is unavoidable that due regard must be paid to communal interests and that they should be adequately safeguarded by provisions in the Constitution, we do affirm that by the mere postponement of the solution of questions connected with Constitutional advance not only will no useful purpose be served but that it may make the task more difficult in the future."

Now I am not quite sure if I quite understand what they mean, but in so far as I gather any meaning from it it is in exact opposition to my Honourable friend's Resolution. That is, they say in spite of the fact that these communal electorates are a hindrance there is, in their judgment, no ground for postponing further consideration of constitutional progress. I think I have established that far from there being any change from the first opinion I cited in 1906 up to now in 1927, there has been a continual and pertinacious demand for the continuance of these separate electorates and other devices for the representation of minorities. With what my Honourable friend said as to the canker of communal difference which is eating into the heart of India I am in full and entire agreement. I know of no greater obstacle to the progress of this country than these unfortunate differences that have arisen in so great a degree during the last few years. But, Sir, I am not one of those who can accept the opinion that these differences are in any great degree due to the creation of separate electorates. (Hear, hear). Leaving aside that school of criticism which finds in everything that Government undertakes some suspicion, some Machiavellian device, to prevent the people of this country coming into their rights, it is fairly clear that these electorates have not had that effect. They may have had some influence, I do not deny; but they are not the main cause. Moreover, this House must clearly have seen from what I have said that it was not the Government that invented these communal electorates but the people themselves, and that it would have been impossible to arrive at any electorate without a much more deep-seated quarrel than these electorates have caused, unless something of the kind had been devised. Now it is perhaps pertinent to the question, since I have denied that communal electorates are the main cause of the present feeling, to express my own views on the subject; and I will say this, that I regard the Reforms as in some degree responsible for it, and indeed it must be so. It is the favourite argument of those who attack the present constitution that nothing has been given to the people, that the Reforms themselves are a sham and that no power has been parted with. Now that, Sir, brings its own refutation. It is the fact that power has been parted with that has done so much to cause these communal feelings to break out with acerbity. Power has begun to be exercised by the representatives of the people; power has begun to be exercised by the representatives of the individual communities concerned, and it is the exercise of those powers by those individual communities that has given the edge to the present tension that exists. Among the educated it is possible—though when I read some of the speeches in the papers I find it difficult to believe that the differences between educated are in these matters confined to what I might call parliamentary feelings; but I

will assume for the purposes of my argument that among the more highly educated it is the struggle for political power that has begun which concerns the differences. The minority community—whichever it may be—is determined to see that it does not get lost in the general struggle. I will assume that for the purposes of my argument, but as I have said I have some doubt whether in some cases even among the educated classes the strife does not go deeper than that. However, when I turn from the educated to the uneducated, it is quite clear that other feelings are at work. The feeling that spreads down spreads down in a different form. It takes this form, the feeling that the other community—to use a colloquial expression—is doing them in the eye. That causes unrest and discontent to your uneducated classes, and when you have, as you have in the Hindu and Muhammadan communities, causes of quarrel at hand where anybody wishes to quarrel, you have not far to seek for the causes of communal strife. To put the blame on separate electorates alone is to take a small issue for the real cause which is, that power has been handed over to the representatives of the people and that the exercise of that power has become a source of strife between the two great communities of this country.

What does Mr. Jinnah say? He is a leading Muhammadan and has been or perhaps now is President of the All-India Moslem League. He was speaking no later than last December and he said:

“There is no escaping from the fact that communalism did exist in the country. By mere talk and sentiment it could not be removed. Nationalism could not be created by having a mixed electorate.”

If that means anything it means that Mr. Jinnah was not willing to have nationalism at the price of mixed electorates. Now my Honourable friend Sir Sankaran Nair takes the line that it is not possible to have nationalism with a separate electorate. Those are the protagonists whose cases are under consideration. Now what is the line of Government towards that? Surely the line we have pursued from the very commencement of this quarrel is that we do not minimise, we do not seek to minimise, the importance of these conditions; we do not seek to shut our eyes to them, for that would be foolish, and that is why I welcome a discussion such as that initiated by my Honourable friend to-day. But it is by telling the truth, not by putting our heads in a bag, that we can arrive at any clear understanding of the situation. What then is the attitude of Government? It is the attitude which they have persistently followed since 1906. We recognise that these separate electorates have been a difficulty, are a difficulty and will continue to be a difficulty in connection with the further advance of this country; but we recognise also that without them there can be no possibility of getting a large body of the community to come in. Therefore, there are two ways of dealing with a position of that kind. One is the way of my Honourable friend. The other is to recognise the difficulty and work the constitution though recognizing that this particular form of electorate will be a handicap. And here I will invite the House's attention to a speech which unfortunately did not attract as much attention as I could have wished; and that is His Excellency the Viceroy's speech at Poona in answer to the Moslem Deputation. His Excellency there said:

“The question of communal representation about which you have expressed anxiety is of great complexity. I have said elsewhere its only justification is that it should be the means through which every community should feel free to what it can to the common cause of the service of India. But if this ultimate purpose is obscured and if communal representation comes to be regarded as an end in itself then it has the effect of narrowing the horizon of our loyalty. What was designed to promote the cause of unity may quickly become the seedbed of divisions when different communities have to

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live together. It is incumbent upon each to recognise that the cause of peace demands a wide measure of mutual toleration and restraint. That which we claim for ourselves we must be ready to accord to our neighbours. This spirit if it may but grow will be found to be a better and more lasting solvent of the present discords than any artificial methods of representation. But until we can reach this state communal representation in some form is likely to be necessary and it is probable that a substantial modification of it must largely depend upon the general consent of all communities."

Now, Sir, if I may without presumption say, those were very wise words, words very well worth the attention of this House. Another statesman speaking in another place, the present Secretary of State for India, Lord Birkenhead, pointed out that had Parliament in 1919 in the teeth

12 noon. of violent opposition planned the Reforms without this feature of separate representation, it cannot be doubted that Hindu-Muslim relations would have become more inamicable than they have been. On the other hand it is almost certain that they would have been much more violent and embittered. Had we attempted to force a reform on the people of India at that time in 1919 without some form of communal representation I have not the faintest doubt that the feelings of the communities *inter se* would be far more bitter than they are at present; and speaking for myself, with the restraint which I feel I must exercise in this matter, I do not think that when the Statutory Commission comes to examine the question they will arrive at a conclusion other than the one I have suggested.

Now, Sir, in conclusion, I do consider that this debate, if conducted as I am sure in this House it will be conducted, with the object of securing a solution and not with the object of emphasising differences, may have a very valuable effect in attracting the attention of the leaders to this problem. I agree entirely on that point with the observations of my Honourable friend, Sir Sankaran Nair. I agree also with him in his very sound and reasonable conclusion that this is not a matter that will ever be satisfactorily determined by breaking heads. I would add that, as long as the present Government continues, we shall take measures to prevent the different communities from resorting to that method of settling their differences, and the House may have complete confidence in that.

The real question before the House is: "Are we to take the line that all consideration of Reforms is to be stopped in the hope that these quarrels will cease?" To that I have no doubt what the correct answer is. I have no doubt the House on that point desires no guidance from me. On the other hand to my mind it is a most reasonable and important proviso that minorities should be satisfied that their interests will be protected. That is a matter which requires the most careful consideration of every civilised Government in every part of the world. But in no part of the world does it require more careful consideration and more careful examination than in this country. I have already indicated to the House how in my opinion the Western conception of majority has not yet been reached in this country, and therefore the question of minorities becomes even of greater importance. There was a very old Latin writer who laid down this principle—and I dare say the actual words are within the recollection of those whose knowledge of classics is more recent than mine—that "this alone can be regarded properly as a commonwealth where the interests of the whole people are connected and the Government is conducted with the sole view of promoting the common good." That aim will never be reached if minorities are left at the mercy of a majority.



Now, Sir, although I have said it is well that a question of this kind should be raised and discussed in this House, it is very often well to discuss a matter and not press that discussion to extremes. I advise the House, if I may venture to do so, to hear all parties to this great question; but when the time comes for them to express their opinion I trust that they will be careful to express it in such a way that it will leave some room open for the possibility of further progress in the direction which the Government of India have in view.

THE HONOURABLE MR. MAHMOOD SUHRAWARDY (West Bengal: Muhammadan): Sir, I beg to move the following amendment which stands in my name:

"That for the original Resolution the following be substituted, namely:

'This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that in any scheme for the future constitution of India or for the amendment of the provisions of the Government of India Act (1919), the following basic and fundamental principle be secured and guaranteed, i.e., all Legislatures of the country and other elected bodies shall be constituted on the definite principle of adequate effective representation of minorities in every province by means of separate electorates, provided that such representation shall not reduce the majority in any province to a minority or even to an equality.'

Sir, the Resolution before the House comes upon me as a surprise. That Sir Sankaran Nair with more than a quarter of a century of public life to his credit should have thought fit to bring in a Resolution of this kind especially at this juncture of our political advancement is to me really startling. It is quite extraordinary for its quaint bluntness and unsurpassed for its ingenuity and originality.

Sir, my Honourable friend frankly asks that no further progress in our constitution should be made until the Hindus and Muhammadans agree to exercise their franchise in a common electorate; or in other words, "abolish the separate electorates or no more fresh Reforms". Now, Sir, the Honourable Mover is not unaware of the circumstances under which we Mussalmans secured this privilege of separate electorates. It was after several years of patient agitation and wrangling with the Government and the non-Muhammadan communities that this concession was obtained. Why was it recognised as necessary and inevitable? It was freely admitted by the representative leaders of both the communities that in the present position of our community in its political, economic, and educational aspects, we Muslims cannot secure proper representation through the common electorates. This is borne out by the conditions prevailing at present in the Calcutta Corporation, the Calcutta University and the District Board of Midnapore of which I have still the honour to be a member. Similar is our situation in the case of the Dacca and Delhi Universities. The more recent and glaring eye-opener to the enthusiastic and doctrinaire advocates of joint electorates is that of Mr. Asaf Ali, who till recently was a loyal member and supporter of the Congress Party. Sir, the House will bear with me for having entered into the above details, for they illustrate my case. Being in a minority, Sir, and our educational and economic progress being not so advanced as that of the Hindus, our voice would be drowned amidst the Hindus who form the majority in every place.

Sir, I confess that I am unaware of any remarkable events in our mutual communal relations that have happened since 1919 when the Government of India Act was passed and 1927 that should have encouraged a practical politician and sagacious statement like my Honourable friend

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to bring in a proposal for the abolition of separate electorates. My Honourable friend is sadly mistaken that because for the last two or three years the Hindus and Muslims all over the country are actively hostile and have not been living in peace and mutual harmony, the Muslims would be anxious to oppose the further advance towards responsible government.

Sir, perhaps, my Honourable friend, pathetic as it may seem, appears to have torn a leaf out of Sir M. O'Dwyer's recent researches as to the causes of present communal tension. But the grant of political reforms is, in my opinion, not the real cause of the present political distempers but the unseemly fight for political leadership that exploits the gullible and the credulous folk into displaying communal antagonism as evidenced by the activities of Nationalists and a section of the Swarajists.

Sir, I wish to make it very clear on behalf of the Muhammadans of Bengal that we do want the British Parliament to grant further Reforms and to remedy the admitted defects in the present constitution, but at the same time we also insist that our present representation in the Legislatures and elected bodies being incompatible with our requirements, should be made more *adequate and effective*. It is not adequate because our present number of representatives in the legislative bodies is too small for our community and we feel that more members should represent the purely Mussalman constituencies than at present.

Sir, I along with Sir Sankaran Nair do recognise that joint electorates will be the best but that is the *ideal* we have to reach. I am convinced, Sir, that for some more years, my community should continue to be represented by means of a separate electorate so as to secure effective representation. The time for its abolition has not yet come. The present is the most inopportune moment for making a serious suggestion of this kind. At a time when the public peace of the whole country is torn by communal dissensions and outbursts, when the happening of some communal tragedy in one place has a sympathetic effect on the feelings of the rest of the community in another, often leading to a repetition of the same tragedy, such proposals, however innocent and well intentioned, serve only to deepen the distrust. Sir, after all we cannot get communal love made to order; mass psychology has to change considerably before we can have perfect communal concord. Sir, I speak with some personal experience of these elected public bodies for the last ten years. The recent proceedings of the District Board and the Municipality of Midnapore, which is one of the most important and biggest districts of Bengal, will reveal the shadowy and unreal nature of the joint electorate. Sir, not long ago, I happened to be the Vice-President of the District Board of Midnapore and I know this from personal experience.

Now, Sir, coming direct to my amendment I should say that so long as we do not feel secure in throwing our lot with joint electorates, so long as we feel that we are not sufficiently strong to hold our own against our Hindu brethren, it is but just that we should continue to be represented through our own electorate. It is possible, Sir, that some of my Hindu colleagues would like to reserve a certain number of seats for the Mussalman from the separate electorates and also throw open the general electorate for us. Sir, I do not hesitate to say that this suggestion is something like a bitter pill coated over with sugar; it is positively injurious and mischievous in effect at any rate at the present condition of communal

affairs. Sir, if my Honourable friend Sir Sankaran Nair and others are really keen and anxious for the early abolition of the separate electorates, they should lose no time to devise means and methods to put an end to the root causes of the present friction and strained communal relations. They can do a great deal, Sir, by virtue of their education and influence upon their co-religionists, to bring about great harmony by a just recognition of our mutual rights and duties. The name of my Honourable friend Sir Sankaran Nair is so well known throughout India, the wealth of his experience is so large and varied, his earnestness and sincerity for the progress of our constitution so real and so great, that instead of asking us to give up what little advantage we have secured, he would do well to impress upon his own Hindu brethren that the first law of all human progress is "live and let live" and that the Hindu community cannot and should not be an exception to it, if Swaraj in its true and legitimate sense is our common goal.

Sir, for God's sake let us not forget for a moment that the future of our mother country depends entirely upon the joint co-operation of both the communities broad based upon the principle of fraternity, justice and sincerity, and not upon communal jealousy or hatred generated and fostered between the Hindus and Muhammadans. And, Sir, with these observations, I commend my amendment for acceptance by the House.

**THE HONOURABLE SARDAR SHIVDEV SINGH OBEROI** (Punjab: Sikh): Sir, though the Honourable Mover of the Resolution has not mentioned the name of the Sikhs, who enjoy the same privileges of separate representation as the Muslims enjoy, yet I feel that I will not be fair to my constituents whose solitary representative I have the honour to be in this Honourable House, if I do not voice my own opinion and the considered opinion of my community, as this debate is meant to make a change in the future constitution of India.

What I have been able to find in the mind of my Honourable and revered friend, Sir Sankaran Nair, who has brought this Resolution, and who has been here from the time when the constitution was first in force in India, I mean in the Government of India and also in the India Council, is that he is distressed and pained at the present communal strife between the two main communities of India. He feels as well that in these circumstances when we are at loggerheads with each other there is no possibility of any further progress in the political field for India, and he feels also that private attempts have failed to achieve that noble object of unity between the two communities. He has just quoted what Mahatma Gandhi has said of his disappointment in all his efforts to bring forth unity amongst the two communities. He has thought fit to apply some indirect means of bringing that unity about by bringing forward this Resolution. At the bottom of his heart, as far as I have been able to read it, he does not desire to retard the further progress of India. He wishes India to progress and to attain to the full-fledged privileges of self-government. But he has tried to utilize these indirect means of bringing about unity between the two communities. So I think the Resolution deserves the deep consideration of the House, as it comes from the Front Benches and from a revered and respected Honourable friend like Sir Sankaran Nair. But I find that while the framers of this constitution have realised that any representation in the constitution by communal

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electorates will be really an impediment to the further progress of self-government, yet they have seen fit, on account of the persistent demands made by different communities, to give separate representation through separate electorates. As I have said above, my community enjoys the same privileges, though in a very inadequate form I should say, which have been enjoyed by the Muhammadans. I find that the framers of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report have put in these words:

"At the same time we feel that there is one community from whom it is inexpedient to withhold the concession. The Sikhs in the Punjab are a distinct and important people. To the Sikhs therefore, to them alone, we propose to extend the system already adopted in the case of Muhammadans."

I find that I will not be doing justice to other minority communities if I do not express my opinion that India, composed as it is of different communities, some major and some minor, cannot go forward without affording suitable and effective representation to minority communities, although this has been considered to be an impediment: If it is an evil, it is a necessary evil and it cannot be done away with.

I should like to suggest an amendment to the amendment of my friend, with your permission, which consists in adding only two words, because I feel that that might make common ground and a *via media* between the two extreme views so that Hindus and Muhammadans may come to a compromise. I feel it may serve the purpose and may be acceptable to my friend Mr. Suhrawardy. With your permission, Sir, I wish to suggest that in the amendment proposed by my friend the word "important" be added before the word "minorities" in line 7 and the word "joint" be substituted for the word "separate" in the same line. I feel the necessity for these two words in the amendment put forward by my friend. Being a member of a minority community, and a very important minority community, I am bound to sympathise with the spirit of the amendment; but at the same time I feel that if the safeguard of the word "important" is not put before minorities, it might make the whole thing complicated and unworkable, and it may be impracticable to frame a constitution. There are in many provinces at present very small minorities and if they get these privileges the communities may be split up into many sects. I find in the community of my friend the Honourable Mr. Suhrawardy there are Shias and Sunnis and Ahmadias who very recently had waited upon His Excellency the Viceroy and had put forward their claim for representation. So in every community there are sub-communities and they are sub-divided, and there is a risk of having more sub-divisions if the word minority is left alone in the amendment. So I think the word "important" should be added to the amendment. As regards the substitution of the word "joint" for "separate" I would like to say, as the Honourable the Home Member said, that the system of separate electorates has increased the acuteness of the feeling between the two communities, though it has led to an awakening of the communities. I quite agree with the Honourable the Home Member that it has been the wrong application of these privileges which has brought about this unhappy state of feelings between the two communities. I quite agree that the root of this is the separate representation by separate electorates. It is human nature that if I am sent here by only the Sikhs of the Punjab it will be my sincere and real desire to bring forward only such

measures as may please and satisfy only the Sikhs of the Province; but if I am elected by a joint electorate of Sikhs, Hindus and Muhammadans I would certainly be very careful in my conduct as a Member of the Council not to bring forward measures which may be detrimental to the interests of my brother communities, Hindus and Muhammadans. I think a joint electorate will serve the purpose of bridging the gulf to a great extent which is at present being widened every minute between the two major communities of India. I do not think there need be any fears such as were brought forward by my Honourable friend Mr. Suhrawardy that a joint electorate would be harmful to any minority community. As far as I can see for myself and my minority community, I would certainly have no objection if the sufficient number of the Sikhs of the Punjab are elected by a joint electorate of Sikhs, Hindus and Muhammadans. Then the representatives in the Council will have the interests of all the communities in mind and will not lend their support to measures which will not foster and promote the interests of all the communities, but only of one community. Of course this is a very unhappy position in which to find ourselves in these days, and every sincere well-wisher of the country is very keenly searching in his brain to find a solution to it. It is only one solution which I have thought fit to put before the House though it may not be the only one. But to my mind it is not only the separate electorates or separate representation which is the cause of all these bitter feelings which prevail in the country now-a-days. I find that the Press and the platform are being used for purposes which are more suited to self-interest—either to the preacher himself, or in support of some cause like Sangathan or Tanzin which goes a long way to offend the feelings of other communities. So that separate electorates are not the only reason for bringing about this state of feelings between the different communities. The leaders of each community must think it a noble duty which falls upon them to try to checkmate all these bad influences in the country. This must be taken as a truism that we cannot have progress or any future prospect in the country unless both the communities and the Government work hand in hand to bring about happy relations between the majority communities and the minority communities, both inside the Council Chamber and outside the Council Chamber. It must be taken upon the leaders of each community to try as far as lies in their power to checkmate all the evil influences which create this bad feeling and widen the gulf between the communities. With these few remarks, Sir, I beg to propose my amendment to the amendment, if you permit it, for the acceptance of the House.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Further amendment moved:

"That in the Resolution as amended by the Honourable Mr. Suhrawardy for the word 'minorities' the words 'important minorities' be substituted and for the word 'separate' the word 'joint' be substituted."

I see no reason so far why the discussion on the Resolution *plus* the amendments already moved should not proceed on general lines. I have noticed Mr. Khaparde attempting to catch my eye several times. I think he will realise that if he desires to move his amendment he should postpone his remarks until the amendments already before the House have been disposed of; and I shall put the amendments that are before the House to the House as soon as it appears to me that no further Honourable Member desires to speak on them.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYID ALAY NABI (United Provinces West: Muhammadan): Sir, I stand here to support the amendment that has been moved by my Honourable friend Mr. Suhrawardy. After the lucid, able and masterly survey of the whole field of communal representation and separate electorates by the Honourable the Home Member, I think I would be only inflicting my speech on the House by repeating all what he has said on this subject and I do not think I can improve on that. But all that I say is this, Sir, that separate electorates and communal representation are a part of the constitution now; and they have been made a part of the constitution for a long time past. The history of that has been given by the Home Member from 1906 up to the present day. From time to time they have been the subject of public declarations by statesmen not here only in this country but also in England, and I think it is rather late in the day to go back upon them. Of course they are entitled to go back on them I quite admit, but they are only entitled to go back on them when things have changed and there too I am only repeating the Home Member. But the question is whether things have changed? We should be the last persons to say that we want separate electorates or communal representation if things are brighter or better. We recognise it is an evil but we also recognise that it is a necessary evil. We have under the circumstances to possess our souls in patience and wait for better times. Each of us in our turn should try to produce better feeling between the two communities. That ought to be our whole idea. When we have achieved our object, when we have succeeded in that direction, then it will be time for us to say "No more communal representation, no more separate electorates." But I say the question is: Have these things changed? Nobody can say in all earnestness and sincerity, nobody here can rise and say things have changed for the better. Of course everybody knows, it is a matter of common knowledge, that things have gone from bad to worse, whatever may be the reason for this. One reason was that given by the Honourable the Home Member. Another reason was also hinted at by the last speaker, namely, that it may be due to platform speeches or it may be due to the Press, or it may be due to religious propaganda, Sangathan, Suddhi and other things. But I do not think it can be said that separate electorates alone are responsible for creating bad feelings. It cannot possibly be said that separate electorate in itself has created bad blood between the communities; and I am afraid from what I have seen from 1913 down to the present day and what I remember of the year 1913 that things certainly would have been much worse, very much worse than they are now under the influence of separate representation, if there had been joined electorates. There was the cry in 1913 and prior to that that minorities cannot possibly live under the rule of the majority because the feeling was bad enough at the time, and it was to create better feelings and to remove those disabilities of the minorities and to remove their grievances, that the Hindus and Muhammadans put their heads together in the year 1916 and came to a certain agreement which has been referred to by my friend the Honourable Mover himself. That agreement that was come to between the two communities, Hindus and Muhammadans. I think has worked well so far; but things are changing. Perhaps people are getting more and more power, and, as the Honourable the Home Member stated in his speech, they want more and more power; they want to know their exact position in the future government of the country, and as to what will be their status, and that is the reason that trouble politically has

been going on to some extent. But it is more, I say, due to religious propaganda and not so much to the political activities of the people. In my humble judgment, it is the religious propaganda which is more responsible for creating bad blood between Hindus and Muhammadans at present. The long and short of it is that we must try to create better feeling between the communities and a better atmosphere, and then I think things will adjust themselves. It ought to be the effort of every one, it ought to be the goal of every one to come to a settlement with the other community, and if that is done I am quite sure the time will come when this communal representation and separate electorates will be no more necessary.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. RAMADAS PANTULU (Madras: Non-Muhammadan): I think, Sir, that when the Honourable Sir Sankaran Nair worded his Resolution in the most extreme form, he did it merely with a view to draw the pointed attention of the country to the grave and manifest dangers of communalism, and that he could not have expected either community to agree to his proposal to stop all further advance even in the contingency contemplated by him. If I am right in my surmise, I also share the view of the Honourable the Home Member that this debate will not add to the existing tension but will serve as a useful opportunity for the frank and friendly expression of views of all sections of this House with a view to helping forward the amicable settlement of the communal problem. In this hope, Sir, I wish to state as clearly as I can the position of the Congress Members of this House. The Congress stands for national unity, on the footing of inter-communal harmony. Its scheme of responsible government is broad-based on what may comprehensively be described as "national" as opposed to "sectional" or "communal", ideals. We believe, Sir, that our salvation lies in the clear conception and practical realisation of a united Indian nation. The Congress never accepted the political heresy that the co-existence in India of communities, cultures, castes and languages is a real impediment to the attainment of full nationhood and freedom by the people of this country. But at the same time we are alive to the fact that nationhood and freedom cannot be attained without our developing a full and practical sense of justice to all communities and creeds which is in no way inconsistent with Nationalism and which is calculated to safeguard the legitimate rights of the minorities. In any scheme of political reconstruction of India, it is an inevitable feature at present. This position was made perfectly clear in the national demand placed before the Central Legislature in September, 1925, wherein we insisted upon the Government taking steps to "constitute a suitable agency adequately representative of all Indian, European, and Anglo-Indian interests to frame with due regard to the interests of minorities a detailed scheme" of self-government based on the principle enumerated in that demand. The representation of the communities in India in just and adequate proportions in the various spheres of national life and activity, with due safeguards to automatically ensure in time full nationalism and complete obliteration of communalism, is but a corollary to the practical application of these principles to the solution of communal problems. The Congress undoubtedly stands for securing such just representation through the medium of joint electorates and joint action on the part of all communities. Undoubtedly all patriotic and intelligent Hindus and Muhammadans recognise the value of joint electorates as the great unifying factors in national upbuilding. They are also alive to the disrupting and

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disintegrating tendencies of separate electorates, and are conscious of their being serious obstacles to the attainment of self-government, as the Honourable the Home Member partially conceded. There is therefore a desire on their part to arrive at an honourable understanding in the matter which will be for the lasting benefit of their common motherland. It is true that in the attempt to effect a satisfactory settlement, some Moslems and Hindus advocate the retention of separate electorates for sometime longer. But they confess they do so merely with a view to help to obliterate all traces of mutual distrust which unfortunately mars the relations of the two communities at present. They concede that separate electorates are a necessary evil and are temporary expedients to tide over the difficulties of the present situation which is hoped to be a passing phase of our national struggle for freedom. This sentiment in itself is an ample vindication of the policy and programme of the Indian National Congress. The Congress is doing all it can to remove the distrust and to bring the two communities together. The question is now engaging the serious attention of all right-thinking Hindu and Moslem leaders, and no avenue likely to lead to a settlement will be left unexplored. The working committee of the Congress is seriously tackling the problem and is preparing its report to be placed before a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee very soon.

While we cannot agree to the Resolution put forward by the Honourable Sir Sankaran Nair, we believe the matter is essentially one for negotiation and settlement between the two communities. It is therefore impossible for Congressmen to agree to any commitments in anticipation of such settlement. While we hold fast to our ideals of nationalism and have an abiding faith in their ultimate realisation, we recognise that there are no short cuts to that goal such as the one suggested in the Resolution. That way lies un wisdom, for we shall play thereby into the hands of vested interests whose one aim is to delay progress and perpetuate their domination.

The Honourable the Home Member conceded that separate electorates were a real obstacle to progress but he said they ought to be there. May I know why they should be there? Could not the Government do some thing to wipe them out and increase communal harmony? I believe and all Congressmen believe that it is within the power of the Government to do so if they wish. Until they do so progress will be difficult. Let me cite, Sir, to this House a small passage from Lord Durham's Report on Canada where conditions were more or less similar, with regard to the racial conflict. That report says about Governments responsibility:

"The alternate concessions to the contending races have only irritated both, impaired the authority of Government, and, by keeping alive the hopes of a French Canadian nationality, counteracted the influences which might, ere this, have brought the quarrel to its natural and necessary termination. It is impossible to determine precisely the respective effects of the social and political causes. The struggle between the Government and the Assembly has aggravated the animosities of race; and the animosities of race have rendered the political difference irreconcilable. No remedy can be efficient that does not operate upon both evils. At the root of the disorders of Lower Canada, lies the conflict of the two races, which compose its population; until this is settled, no good government is practicable; for whether the political institutions be reformed or left unchanged, whether the powers of the Government be entrusted to the majority



or the minority, we may rest assured, that while the hostility of the races continues, whichever of them is entrusted with power, will use it for partial purposes."

The conditions in India are more or less analogous and it is only the Government that can really and effectively interfere, if they sincerely desire to do so.

There is also another reason, Sir, for our inability to support the Resolution. Sir Sankaran Nair overlooked an important consideration in seeking to apply his deterrent remedy to the whole of India. In many provinces the Hindu-Moslem problem does not exist for all practical purposes. If simultaneous and uniform progress is not practicable or attainable in all the provinces in India owing to communal disharmony in some provinces, there is no conceivable reason for denying further advance to provinces in which Hindus and Muhammadans are able to co-operate in putting their shoulders to the wheel of progress. Such provinces may perhaps serve as object lessons and demonstrate to other provinces the benefits of mutual trust and communal harmony as leading to speedier progress.

The Honourable Mr. Suhrawardy's amendment which seeks to instal separate communal electorates as the basic and fundamental principle of the Indian constitution is undoubtedly a most retrograde proposal. I beg of the advocates of separate electorates, be they Hindus or Moslems—there are such advocates in both the communities—to pause and give a calm thought to the implications of their demand. If the aim of my Honourable friend who moved the amendment is to secure the return of strong Moslem representatives through the separate electorates, is it not likely that the Hindus who are in a majority in many provinces will also return aggressively communal Hindus to the elected bodies? How will this process help the Moslem minorities to secure their rights? If representatives of both communities come through the same electorates, are there not more chances for the manifestation of good feeling and co-operation among them? Again my Honourable friend speaks of "effective representation". May I know how a minority can ever be effectively represented even on a communal basis in India? In a province like Madras, where the Moslems form about 7 per cent. of the population, if they are given 15 per cent. of the elected seats, can they have effective representation? How can 15 Moslems enforce their views against 85 non-Moslems? No minority can become *effective* unless it is converted into a majority or an equality. It is through the compelling forces of nationalism and patriotism that the good sense of the majority is developed not to override the rights of minorities. It is this conviction that led the Indian Christian and Parsi communities to favour all along joint electorates.

If, however, extraneous safeguards are desired for preventing majorities from treading upon the corns of minorities, then we shall have to resort to one of two expedients. We must either invest the Executive with large residuary powers of interference to protect minorities or secure statutory safeguards by enacting suitable provisions in the fundamental laws of the constitution against the infringement by majority communities of religious and social rights of minorities. My Moslem brethren will not stand to gain anything by vesting in the Executive large residuary powers. If the Executive Government functions as a responsible Government, it must necessarily yield to the popular will which is synonymous with the will of the non-Moslem majority and will be impotent to protect the interests of Moslem minorities. If the Executive on the other hand continues to be irresponsible to the Legislatures, neither Moslems nor

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Hindus will ever get self-government, therefore, that way the solution does not lie. The alternative which is the proper course, therefore, for all minorities is to ask for enacting safeguards in the fundamental laws of the constitution. This was already recognised and expressly provided for in the national demand in which representatives of all parties in the Central Legislature have joined. Let us not therefore commit political suicide by perpetuating communal electorates.

I do not wish to enter into details or controversy because my purpose is merely to make the position of the Congress clear. I hope in conclusion that it will bring home to the minds of the people the truth that if India is privileged to have even a distant vision of the Promised Land, it should see with both its eyes and if India is to breathe the air of freedom eventually it should also do so with both its lungs, the Hindu and Moslem communities. With these words I wish to say that we can neither support the Resolution of the Honourable Sir Sankaran Nair nor the amendments of the Honourable Mr. Suhrawardy, and the Honourable Sardar Shivdev Singh Oberoi.

THE HONOURABLE COLONEL NAWAB SIR UMAR HAYAT KHAN (Punjab: Nominated Non-Official): Sir, when I first saw the Resolution of my friend, whom I have known for a very long time, I thought it was a challenge to Muhammadans and I came here to speak something plain, but as lots of my friends have said that we should try and restrain ourselves from doing so, I will be speaking under restraint.

Sir, our eminent friend has had a very great name no doubt, but just as when the sun has risen to the meridian, he is near setting in the same way one's strength of argument and clearness of vision also fade with years, and I think that such a Resolution of his naturally will not be accepted, as we all know that the Government Benches have expressed themselves against it, and there will be no Muslim who has the welfare of his own community at heart who will accept his Resolution. Another point is that we want to avoid distrust between the two communities, and our Hindu friends will be well advised also not to support this Resolution, because how has our distrust first arisen? Sir, three-fourths of the Indians were untouchables. I mean one-quarter Muhammadans and two-thirds of other untouchables, so we were in the majority; but later on these two-thirds of the community have been reclaimed by our brethren and thus they are one-quarter of Muslims left. Thus the Muslims are afraid naturally that any Raj which will be of the majority will be really a Hindu Raj. That, I think, has been very much responsible for lots of the trouble which is now prevailing in the country. When the Muslims are made to become Shudh and all these things, which in a way also go to the same end, i.e., diminishing our numbers and increasing the numbers on the other side it brings about distrust, and I think that the basic cause of most of the troubles that have happened, has been this, so that anyone out of our Hindu brethren who is supporting this Resolution will be bringing a sort of distrust into the Muslim minds, and I do hope that the House unanimously will reject such a Resolution.

Now as to the amendment, Sir, if I would have brought it, being a Muslim I would say that we do not want any progress in the direction of Reforms until we are assured of our own separate electorate, because we find that is our only salvation. In my own country our situation is

like this that most of the Muslim voters are indebted to their Hindu money-lenders and if a Hindu was to compete with a non-Hindu he could simply dictate to all his Muslim voters that they must vote for him or he will sue them in the Court for his debts. So no Muslims will be able to come into the Councils from rural parts at all. That is to say that the whole Council has to be more or less of one community and no one has to come from the other communities.

**THE HONOURABLE SIR SANKARAN NAIR:** The moneylenders are being replaced by Co-operative bankers.

**THE HONOURABLE COLONEL NAWAB SIR UMAR HAYAT KHAN:** I am glad that my friend has said so, but I have also said in this very House that they are coming at such a slow speed that they will not replace them in this century. But the Royal Commission on the Reforms is coming perhaps in 1929 and thus these banks will not be able to help us much in the matter. I will say now, Sir, that most of the trouble is amongst the educated people or town people, who are not accustomed very much to fighting but are more accustomed to talking. If this trouble gets into the rural parts, and especially into the rural parts of the Punjab, where the people are not talking people but people of action, I think it will be a very great calamity, and for this reason I very strongly oppose this Resolution. And at the same time I think that the amendment which is equally objectionable on the other side may just as well be withdrawn.

Then I come next to the amendment of my Honourable friend from the Punjab. Well the feelings of the two communities unfortunately have been so strained that in some electorates where one man is chosen by Hindus, Sikhs and Muhammadans, especially in the case of the University seat where all the graduates, whether they be Hindus, Sikhs or Muhammadans have got a vote, I know for certain when these feelings were high some of our Muhammadan friends, when they were choosing a Hindu Member, tried to give their votes to an inferior man simply for the purpose that he would be less harmful. So if you have an electorate like this in which every community will vote, I do not think they will be voting in the right way. . . .

**THE HONOURABLE SARDAR SHIVDEV SINGH OBEROI:** The present representative of the landholders in the Assembly is not of the type you have mentioned.

**THE HONOURABLE COLONEL NAWAB SIR UMAR HAYAT KHAN:** I have been their representative for the last five years and if they had thought of me like that, they would not have sent me. I have their confidence. It will be seen what happens in regard to the Honourable Member next term. Of course this is our friendly talk; we challenge each other . . .

**THE HONOURABLE SARDAR SHIVDEV SINGH OBEROI:** It is a long way off.

**THE HONOURABLE COLONEL NAWAB SIR UMAR HAYAT KHAN:** As things stand, and as I have tried to argue, I think the best thing would be for the House to reject the Resolution and the amendments.

**THE HONOURABLE SIR SANKARAN NAIR:** Sir . . .

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT:** Does the Honourable Member desire to speak on the amendment?

THE HONOURABLE SIR SANKARAN NAIR: Yes, Sir, a few words on the amendment. My friend says that all Legislatures in the country and other elected bodies should be constituted with adequate and effective representation for minorities. I was not quite clear, even when the Honourable the Home Member spoke, as to what he meant by minorities. I wanted to confine the question to Hindus and Muhammadans. In Bengal, so far as I know, the Muhammadans do not form a minority; they are in the majority; therefore the amendment will not apply to them. In the Punjab the Muhammadans do not form the minority, they form the majority. And in Southern India where there is communal representation of Brahmins and non-Brahmins, the non-Brahmins who claim representation do not form a minority, they form a majority. So it is the majorities that are now asking for representation in all the troublesome provinces, in the Punjab, in Bengal and in Madras; so that the amendment will not touch the main question. Then again when my friend speaks of minorities, does he remember how few some of them are? In the Madras Presidency there is a minority of one, he is an atheist; and there is another minority of one or two. And there are other minorities in the Madras Presidency which number four or five. Is there any limit to it or where is it to stop? Therefore the amendment is practically unworkable; it does not apply to the existing state of things. Then there is the other question of adequate protection for minorities. What is the adequate protection for minorities? It is the Executive Government. Take my English friends here, what do they rely on? They come here in sufficient numbers to state their case from their point of view. After that they rely on the common sense of the Council, and if the Council comes to a perverse decision, then they rely on the Executive Council to override them. Therefore, as long as the British Government is here, the adequate protection is that afforded by a strong Executive Government. On nothing else can a minority rely. It is on a strong central Executive Government alone that the less powerful of the classes can rely. As to the other points in the Resolution, I have already said what I have to say. I submit that this amendment does not deal with the realities of the situation, does not deal with the facts of the case before us as between Hindus and Muhammadans.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR (Madras: Muhammadan): Sir, I congratulate the Honourable the Home Member on the manner in which he has presented the case for separate electorates before this House. I am at one with him in thinking that the evils which prevail in this country, the unhappy dissensions between different communities here, are not at all due to the separate electorates, but are due to several causes, one of which is the awakening of the people to the power that vests in them. Therefore, Sir, to try to remove these evils by getting rid of the separate electorates is not the proper way to arrive at a solution of the present problem. Sir, I recognise that the Honourable Sir Sankaran Nair was moved by very good motives in moving the Resolution which has taken most of us by such disagreeable surprise. But his intention I believe was only to draw pointed attention to the present state of strained feelings in the country; but, Sir, I am sorry that he has failed to choose either the proper method or the proper moment. He himself recognises that the feelings in the country are very much strained and that matters are not yet as they ought to be, and that attempts are being made by the leaders of the various communities here to come to an amicable settlement among themselves. He goes further and says that his object

in moving this Resolution is two-fold, first to try and assist those leaders in their attempt to arrive at a happy solution of this unhappy question. But I ask, Sir, whether to forestall those leaders, to prejudice the issue, to arrive at conclusions within the four walls of this Council Chamber without consulting the large masses that will be affected outside this House, is the proper way to arrive at a proper solution of the problem? Again, Sir, the purpose for which my Honourable friend seems to have moved his Resolution is to try and take away a pretext which may be clutched at by the Royal Commission when it comes to consider the desirability of granting further advance to this country. But, Sir, I feel that even in this he has failed as much as in his first object. Far from taking away the pretext from them he seems to have given them an absolution from all necessity to recommend any further advance. He tells them that unless the separate electorates are abolished, unless the minority communities give up their separate representation, there should be no further progress; there should be stagnation and stoppage of all useful activities. Therefore, Sir, I feel that, moved as he is by very laudable motives, by the steps he has taken in this matter he has simply succeeded in defeating the object for which he seems to have taken all this trouble. What is the Resolution, Sir? What does it recommend? It holds up all progress till a certain state of affair comes to exist in this land. Well, Sir, I ask my Honourable friend whether this is the proper attitude with which we should approach the serious problem which now confronts us. Can we approach this serious problem in this peevish manner and put it in a House like this? Can we adopt such an uncompromising attitude and say "Until I have those conditions obtaining here which I feel to be conditions precedent to the grant of further Reforms, there should be no further reforms"? Well if we are justified in assuming such an attitude, will not those in authority whom we always criticise for saying that certain conditions should obtain in this land and unless they obtain here no further advance can be made, persist in that attitude? The thing is much too obvious to need any comment.

Now, Sir, as to the various objections that have been made here, there have been several suggestions made, all of them disclosing an extreme divergence of opinion. While my Honourable friend Mr. Suhrawardy would regard separate electorates as the corner stone of any policy of Reforms, any scheme of Reforms, that may be framed for this country, another Honourable friend, Sir Sankaran Nair, feels such abhorrence for such separate electorates that he would even forego all progress and suffer stagnation if he could merely avoid these separate electorates. Now, Sir, as one who represents a Moslem constituency in the South, I am bound to voice the view which my community takes as a whole. But even I would be prepared to work for the millennium which Sir Sankaran Nair desires provided that that millennium were within the range of practical politics. However high, however noble, however alluring the ideal, we cannot lose sight of the practical, living as we do in a practical world, having to do with stern realities and ugly facts. India is a vast continent with a heterogeneous population, with different classes and creeds inhabiting this place, each one of which has got its peculiar, special interests, which need to be protected and safeguarded quite as much as the interests of the nation as a whole. To my mind it looks that so long as these special interests tend to alleviate the condition of those communities without militating against the general interest of the country at large they are quite legitimate and need to be

[Saiyed. Mohamed Padshah.]

promoted and protected, and to say that the country as a whole should not advance simply because a particular community will also be advancing is nothing but reactionary. The Honourable the Home Member rightly drew our attention to the observations which His Excellency the Viceroy made recently at Poona. Though communalism may not be an unmixed blessing still it would be quite all right if the various communities could make the best contribution possible to the common cause, if they are prepared to give the best they can to the common good; and therefore, Sir, I feel that any accretion to the strength of any of these communities which compose the whole body politic in our country cannot but be an additional source of strength to the whole body politic provided all the component parts of the commonwealth work together. Therefore, Sir, I feel that we need not necessarily think it wrong if any of the minority communities insist on having separate electorates. So long as there is good-will and co-operation it matters not whether we have separate electorates or general electorates: all that matters is that there should be a willingness on the part of all communities and all classes in the country to work together, to stand shoulder to shoulder in the cause of the common weal and of progress.

Sir, it may be said that if we allow these separate electorates to continue we may not all at once arrive at an ideal constitution. It may be that we may not have the opportunity to boast of having produced a facsimile of the constitution that exists in Western countries; but, Sir, if you can have some form of responsible government, some form of democracy—a democracy which though perhaps different in minor details from other democracies in the world would still be the best suited to the present condition of this country, is it prudent, is it common sense, to reject this which is the only thing possible under present circumstances simply because it will not enable us to rise one fine morning and boast of having produced an exact copy of the constitutions obtaining in other parts of the world? Therefore, Sir, my humble submission to my Honourable friends here would be that in considering a matter of such vital interest to the country they should not be guided by any narrow view but try and take a very broad view of the facts that bear upon the matter. I am one of those who do not regard the separate electorate as the best form of electorate but who as practical men would tolerate the lesser of the two evils. There are only two courses open to us—either the minorities would have to give up all their individuality or they should preserve it by these separate electorates. Between these two I think the minorities are really well advised in choosing to protect themselves by these separate electorates.

Now, Sir, something has been said about the desirability of having general electorates. I am at a loss to see why separate electorates are such a scare to most of my Honourable friends here. They admit that minorities have got to be represented by their own people; they admit also that this could not be done by merely having a general electorate; they admit that there is a necessity to safeguard their interests by making provision by way of reservation of seats. But what I really cannot understand is, when you seem to be ready to grant anything, when you see also necessity of taking special steps to protect the interests of your minorities, why you should feel so nervous about separate electorates. To my mind separate electorates are more innocuous than the reservation of seats in a joint electorate, because in a separate electorate a Mussalman or a Sikh generally

goes only to his own people and requests them to return him to the Legislatures merely on his intrinsic merits. But if instead of this, there is to be a general electorate, a Hindu going to a Hindu constituency and a non-Hindu going to a non-Hindu constituency will not only have to appeal to them on his own merits but would perhaps also have to pander to their lower feelings by trying to arouse their communal feelings and sympathy by asking them . . . .

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT:** The Honourable Member has exceeded his time limit.

**THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR:** Well, Sir, I will submit that I am not one of those who would like to perpetuate differences; but so long as these separate electorates are necessary, I am one of those who have the courage of their convictions to tolerate them.

**THE HONOURABLE SIR ALEXANDER MUDDIMAN:** Sir, after the long speech I made this morning the House will hardly expect anything in the way of a second speech, certainly at this moment, when our thoughts are now turning to more pleasurable things. But I have just one or two words which I should like to say to the House. The Resolution moved by my Honourable friend has provoked a most interesting debate, a debate which I think will be of the greatest value to those who in future will have to examine this difficult problem. The amendment moved by my Honourable friend as it originally ran also represents a point of view that will have to be considered. If I may suggest to Honourable Members, they represent rather extreme points of view. This is one of the cases in which it is not well to arrive at a decision in favour of one extreme point of view or the other extreme point of view. It is a case where the wise man recognises that both sides have arguments that need to be considered. Now, as my Honourable friend Sir Sankaran Nair and several other speakers have said, it is a fact that in a comparatively short time from now there must be a Statutory Commission. And it is a fact that one of the matters which will doubtless engage their attention is the question of the electorate, not merely on this narrow communal question,—for it is a somewhat narrow question, however important it may be—but the whole question of the electorate, because if you are really going to establish effective constitutional government in this country it can be on the basis of a sound electorate. I do not propose to detain the House on this amendment by examining what are the requirements of a sound electorate; but the position, I think, is incontrovertible that at that not very distant date this question will come under examination. Now, I think the House will agree that those who have spoken have rendered a distinct service in this connection. They have formulated their views in a way which will doubtless require the careful attention of the Statutory Commission. But I would ask the House “Is it wise to go further? Do you think, does my Honourable friend the Mover of the Resolution and does my Honourable friend the Mover of the amendment think that any great advantage would be served by pressing this matter to a conclusion which, I think, this House is not really capable of reaching in an effective way?” I would ask my Honourable friend the Mover whether he is not prepared, after this discussion, to withdraw his Resolution, and also my Honourable friend the Mover of the amendment whether he is not prepared also to adopt that course. I think that would be a

[Sir Alexander Muddiman.]

course which would be in consonance with the wisdom and common sense which this House usually displays.

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT:** The original question was that the following Resolution be adopted:

"This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that the number of members in the Legislative Councils in India be not increased, that their constitution be in no way modified, that no additional powers be conferred on them expressly or by implication, and that no further step towards responsible government be taken until the Hindus and the Muhammadans agree to dispense with election of members to those Councils by separate electorates composed only of Hindus or Muhammadans."

Since which an amendment has been moved:

"That for the original Resolution the following be substituted namely:

'This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that in any scheme for the future constitution of India or for the amendment of the provisions of the Government of India Act, the following basic and fundamental principle be secured and guaranteed, i.e., all Legislatures of the country and other elected bodies shall be constituted on the definite principle of adequate and effective representation of minorities in every province by means of separate electorates, provided that such representation shall not reduce the majority in any province to a minority or even to an equality.'"

Since which amendment a further amendment has been moved:

"That in the Resolution proposed by the Honourable Mr. Suhrawardy to be substituted for the original Resolution, for the word 'minorities' the words 'important minorities' be substituted, and for the word 'separate' the word 'joint' be substituted."

The first question I have to put to the Council is:

"That in the substituted Resolution for the word 'minorities' the words 'important minorities' be substituted."

The motion was negatived.

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT:** The second question I have to put to the Council is:

"That in the substituted Resolution for the word 'separate' the word 'joint' be substituted."

The motion was negatived.

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

"That the Resolution proposed in the amendment of the Honourable Mr. Suhrawardy be substituted for the original Resolution."

The motion was negatived.

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT:** That brings the Council back to the original Resolution of the Honourable Sir Sankaran Nair.

**THE HONOURABLE SIR SANKARAN NAIR:** If the Council will give me leave, Sir, I propose to withdraw my original Resolution.

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT:** Is the leave of the Council granted to the Honourable Sir Chettur Sankaran Nair to withdraw his Resolution?

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

The Council then adjourned for Lunch till Half past Two of the Clock.



The Council re-assembled after Lunch at Half Past-Two of the Clock,  
the Honourable the President in the Chair.

# RESOLUTION RE DELIVERY OF SPEECHES IN HINDI OR URDU BY MEMBERS OF THE INDIAN LEGISLATURE.

THE HONOURABLE SETH GOVIND DAS (Central Provinces: Hindustani General): Sir, the Resolution that I have the honour to move reads thus:

"This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to alter the rules of legislative procedure so that Members of the Indian Legislature may make speeches in Hindi or Urdu and that these speeches be regularly reported, printed and published as part of the official proceedings of the Central Legislature."

Sir, we have been talking of Swaraj for so many years, and the word "Swaraj" has become so popular that even His Majesty the King Emperor used it in his message which he sent to us through His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught. But, Sir, I am afraid that we have not yet understood the full significance of this word. To me, Sir, political Swaraj without Swaraj for our civilization, art, culture, and last but not least, for our language is meaningless. It is but natural, Sir, that the proceedings of the Legislature of a country should be conducted in the language which the people of that country speak. It is impossible even to imagine the proceedings of the British Parliament or of the Italian "House of Representatives" being conducted in any other language than English or Italian. But, Sir, here in our case the Standing Order No. 27 quietly lays down that "the business of the Legislature shall be transacted in English." And, Sir, to add insult to injury, Sir Frederick Whyte, the ex-President of the Legislative Assembly who presided over that popular Chamber for about five years and who established so many useful conventions for us, says in his book, "India, a Federation?":

"None of the indigenous languages has any chance of becoming the *lingua franca* of the whole of the Indian Empire. Therefore, whatever in future may be the language of provincial autonomy in India, English is and will remain the federal language and as such, it is one of the greatest of all the instruments in the making of Indian unity."

I repeat, Sir, that this is adding insult to injury. If English is going to be the *lingua franca* of united India, then, Sir, permit me to say that this united India will be a denationalised India. English is not and cannot be our *lingua franca*, and this, Sir, I want to prove to the satisfaction of the House.

Figures of the last census show that of the total population of India which is about 32 crores, English is the spoken language of only 3 lakhs of people and it is understood by a very small number of the population as will be seen from the Census Report. The Census Report says that in the whole of India 2.5 million persons or 160 males and 18 females in every 10,000 persons of each sex aged 5 and over can read and write English and this, Sir, is going to be made the *lingua franca* of our country. During the last 150 years of British rule, only such a microscopic fraction of the Indian population could be educated in English. With this snail speed, Sir, I put it to the Honourable Members of this House how long will it take to teach English to the whole population of this country? Then, Sir, is it desirable that the whole country should learn English and

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adopt a foreign language as its *lingua franca*? The people who abandon their own language or who are compelled to abandon it are nowhere, and they lose their individuality what the Irish poet Thomas Davis has to say on the subject in his mother tongue Gaelic can thus be rendered into English:

"A nation without a mother tongue cannot be called a nation. The defence of one's mother tongue is more essential than the defence of the boundaries of one's motherland, because the mother tongue is a more powerful barrier against the intrusion of foreigners than even the natural barriers of rivers and mountains."

And, therefore, Sir, whereas it has been the invariable policy of all the conquering races in history to thrust their own language on the conquered. The latter also have strenuously resisted these encroachments and have preferred to lose lands but not their tongue. We find it in the history of so many countries. In English itself after the Norman Conquest the Normans wanted to force upon England their language, Norman-French, which, for administrative purposes, became the common language for some time, but it was found impossible to continue this and Anglo-Saxon had to be substituted. The same thing is to be seen in the history of Poland. When Poland was partitioned amongst themselves by the Russians, Prussians and Austrians, and when these people wanted to force their respective languages on Poland, the Polish people offered an uncompromising resistance. They boycotted the educational institutions of their own country where the Prussian and Russian languages were taught, and strove to revive their ancient universities at Vilna and Cracow. The same thing happened in Hungary when the Austrians wanted to thrust their language on the Hungarians. The people of Hungary protested against it and refused to be a part of the Austrian Empire until their two conditions, one of which was that their language should have equal place in the administration of the Empire, were accepted. Ireland repeated the same thing when she was compelled to adopt English. The Irish wanted to revive their Gaelic and they did revive it. The same thing we find in South Africa. The Boers compelled the English before they entered the Union that their language should find an honourable place in the administration. The same policy is being followed by the English people in India, which will be clear from the extracts which I proceed to read, extracts from the statements of British high officials in India.

In 1792 Mr. Charles Grant, a well known officer of that time, pointed out the necessity of bringing Indians closer to England, and said:

"We shall take the most rational means to remove inherent great disorders, to attach the Hindu people to ourselves, to ensure the safety of our possession, to enhance continually their value to us."

Sir Charles Trevelyan, a Governor of Madras, under the East India Company, and also a Member of the Supreme Council in India, in his book on the Education of the People of India said:

"Educated in the same way, interested in the same objects, engaged in the same pursuits with ourselves, they become more English than Hindus, just as the Roman provincials became more Romans than Gauls or Italians. What is it that makes us what we are, except living and conversing with English people and imbibing English thoughts and habits of mind? They do so too, they daily converse with the best and wisest Englishmen through the medium of their works, and form perhaps a higher idea of our nation than if their intercourse with it were of a more personal kind."

He further says:

"The spirit of English literature, on the other hand, cannot but be favourable to the English connection. Familiarly acquainted with us by means of our literature, the Indian youths almost cease to regard us as foreigners. . . . From violent opponents or sullen confirmists, they are converted into zealous and intelligent co-operators with us."

Further on he says:

"Instead of regarding us with dislike, they court our society and look upon us as their natural protectors and benefactors: the summit of their ambition is to resemble us."

When the reins of administration of India came into the hands of Parliament, then also the policy was not changed. In 1880 Sir Alexander Arbuthnot declared:

"My conviction is that the more thorough and the more complete the education is which we impart to the people of India, the better fitted they will be to appreciate the blessings of British rule and the more they will depreciate any material change in the existing order of things."

In 1880 Sir Richard Temple, in his book "India in 1880" said:

"Nevertheless, a well-founded assurance may be entertained that those natives who have learned to think through the medium of the language and are imbued with the literature and the philosophy of England, will bear towards the English nation that heartfelt allegiance which man may feel without at all relinquishing their own nationality."

So, Sir, it is clear that the policy of educating Indians in English was adopted by the English people only to establish themselves here and to destroy our own nationality.

Now the question will be that if English is not and cannot be our *lingua franca*, which is the other language which can be the national language of this vast land? Fortunately for us we have such a language and that is Hindi or Urdu. It may be said that Hindi and Urdu are not one and the same. Let me point out, Sir, that they are the same. The construction is the same and the grammar is the same. A European gentleman, Dr. Beems, says:

"It betrays a radical misunderstanding of the whole bearing of the question and the whole science of philology to speak of Urdu and Hindi as two distinct languages."

I am sure, Sir, that my Honourable friends, the Muslim Members of this House, will bear me out in this and say that Hindi and Urdu are not two different languages, and that is the reason why I have put "or" and not "and" between the words "Hindi" and "Urdu" in my Resolution.

Now let us see what is the existing position of Hindi in this country. There are, according to the last Census Report, 13½ crores of people, who speak this language, and then practically all the Bengalis who number nearly 5 crores, two crores of Mahrattas and one crore of Gujratis understand it more or less. All these communities can very well follow Hindi, although they experience some difficulty in speaking it, but even this difficulty can be easily surmounted. In Southern India people who are a little above 4½ crores do not understand Hindi at present, but let me inform the House, Sir, that even to them Hindustani is not Greek. For the last seven years a branch of the Hindi Literary Conference has been working there with most satisfactory results, and in the National Congress held at Cocanada the Chairman of the Reception Committee, himself a Telugu, read his address in Hindi. The same year a special session of

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the Hindi Conference was held there, and at that Conference too the Chairman of the Reception Committee, again a Telugu, delivered his address in Hindi. Many Southern Indian people, Tamils and Telugus, took part in the proceedings and read out a number of papers written in Hindi.

The next question will be whether the people inhabiting different provinces of India, Bengalis, Gujratis, Mahrattis, etc., will accept Hindi as the national language. I shall quote the opinions of the scholars of these languages. Let us see what they say. Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, a man of world-wide fame in the domain of literature and the greatest poet of Bengali has accepted Hindi as the national language. Sir Guru Das Banerjee, Romesh Chandra Dutta, and Doctor Rajendralal Mitra have done the same thing. The late Romesh Chandra Dutta said:

"If there is a language which will be accepted in a larger part of India, it is Hindi."

Dr. Rajendralal Mitra said:

"Hindi is the most important language of India and it is the language of the educated people of India."

The same thing we find in regard to the Mahrattas. It was only a year and a half back that Maharashtra scholars assembled in a Marathi Literary Conference passed a resolution accepting Hindustani as the *lingua franca* of India. Lokmanaya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the first All-India leader, began to learn Hindustani and I myself heard him deliver a speech in it at Jubbulpore some time before his death. Dr. Bhandarkar says:

"The honour of being made the common language for inter-communication between various provinces must be given to Hindi. There does not seem to be much difficulty to make Hindi accepted by all throughout India."

The Historian Rao Bahadur Chintamani Vinayak Vaidya says:

"Hindi is from every point of view by far the most suitable language to be selected as the *lingua franca* of India."

Guzerat's devotion to Hindi cannot be emphasised too much. Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Mahatma Gandhi are her two greatest sons. The former wrote all his works in Hindi and preached his religious doctrines in it. Mahatma Gandhi is a great advocate of the Hindi language and it is through his efforts that Hindustani became the language of the Indian National Congress. What does he say? He says:

"English will never be learnt by the masses and we have to reckon daily more and more with the masses in all our political transactions. As against hardly one per cent of the total population knowing English, over sixty per cent of the total population of India at the present moment understands the ordinary rustic Hindustani."

We find that even in the past many authors of Bengal, Maharashtra and Guzerat have written in this language. Mirabai and Narsi Mehta were two famous poets of Gujerat who wrote in Hindi and even to-day poets Dayaram and Narmada Shankar have written in Hindustani. In Bengal Justice Sharda Charan Mitra and Amritlal Chakravarti patronised Hindi by their writings. In Maharashtra Saint Tukaram and Moropant wrote in the past and Pandit Madhava Rao Sapre and many others have written in Hindustani even these days.

Now let us see what Europeans say about it. Dr. Grierson, the great Orientalist of the Linguistic Survey of India, says:

"Then the language fulfilled a want. It gave a *lingua franca* to the Indians. It enabled the men of widely different provinces to converse with each other. It was easily intelligible everywhere, for its grammar was that of the language which every Indian had to use in his business relations with Government officials and its vocabulary was the common property of all."

Mr. Frederick Pincott says:

"The Hindi language has grown apace and cannot much longer be denied its rightful place in the public offices of the sixty millions of people who speak it. The Hindi language is rapidly forcing its way to the front and the enormous literature now in process of formation will render it impossible for the present extraordinary state of things to be long maintained."

Now let us see what the policy of the Indian States is regarding Hindustani. I will not speak about those Indian States which are Hindi-speaking. I will speak of only those whose language is not Hindi. In Baroda, though the language of the Royal family is Maharati, and the language of the people is Gujerati, they have made a knowledge of Hindi compulsory in their educational system. Hindi is now being taught to everybody there. Gwalior and Indore are two other Indian States where, though the language of the Royal families is Maharathi, Hindi is used as the language of their States.

Then, Sir, let us see whether Hindi possesses a vocabulary fit for becoming the *lingua franca* of the country. The old idea about vernaculars was that they were "a fantastic thing, unintelligible, foolish and full of unmeaning vain pedantry." That was the idea of Europeans in the old days. Now all this is changed.

Mr. Crust in "Linguistic Oriental" says:

"Indian vernaculars are magnificent vehicles of speech and capable of expressing any human conception and being the vehicle of the highest scientific education."

We read in the Census Report of India of 1901 in Volume 1, page 807:

"Hindi possesses such a vocabulary and a power of expression not inferior to that of English."

Then, Sir, there is another question. It will be asked whether it is easy to learn Hindustani . . . .

THE HONOURABLE SAIYID ALAY NABI (United Provinces West: Muhammadan): May I rise to a point of order? Is my friend the mover of the Resolution in order when he talks about a *lingua franca* and refers to the sayings of other people, however eminent they may be? The only question before the House is whether the proceedings of this House should be printed, published and circulated in Hindi and Urdu or not, and the question of the *lingua franca* is absolutely irrelevant to the question.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I take it that the Honourable the Mover of the Resolution is seeking to establish the point that the proceedings of the Council should be, when printed, intelligible to everybody who wants to read them. That I imagine is his point, that the proceedings of the Council should be printed in Hindi or Urdu so that all those who understand Hindustani, which I understood him to say, will be the whole population of India, will be able to read the proceedings of the Council.

THE HONOURABLE SETH GOVIND DAS: Mr. Mackmurdy says:

"The English language is difficult to a foreigner for three reasons: its mode of spelling is irregular, the vocabulary is very copious, and it has many peculiar idioms."

Now, Sir, let us see what Mahatma Gandhi says about the learning of Hindustani, whether it is difficult or easy. He says:

"An average Bengali can really learn Hindustani in two months if he gives it three hours per day, and a Dravidian in six months at the same rate. Neither the Bengali nor the Dravidian can hope to achieve the same result with English in the same time."

Thus, Sir, when almost the whole population of India can understand Hindustani and when half of it can speak Hindustani, is it not a tyranny to compel us to have our proceedings of the Central Legislature in English which is spoken by only 300,000 people and which is understood by not more than 3,000,000 of the people in this country, that is by about 1 per cent. of the population. For a handful of Europeans, who call themselves the servants of India, we are compelled to conduct our proceedings in the English language. If they are really the servants of this country they should learn our language. They are the servants of India but we have to learn their language and have to conduct our proceedings in that language. The present Standing Order, Sir, gives preference to the English language. It says:

"The President may permit any Member unacquainted with English to address the Council in the vernacular."

Well, Sir, this at its best can only mean that the vernaculars are merely tolerated. Just as our Indian officials, my Honourable friend Sir Muhammed Habibullah and the Honourable Mr. S. R. Das, although occupying such high posts, are merely tolerated because high offices are generally given to Europeans. Similarly our vernaculars are put up with because this cannot be helped. I say, Sir, that the position should be reversed. As we want to Indianise the services, we wish to Hindustanize, if I may use the term, our Legislatures and their language. Then, Sir,

3 P.M. it is lamented that the masses are apathetic towards the reforms and the newly established Legislatures, but what is the reason? The reason is that they cannot follow the proceedings of these Legislatures. What do we see up in those galleries there? Either English-knowing people come to watch our proceedings or such people come here as are fond of seeing the grandeur of the House or the handsome faces of Honourable Members! Sir, there are very few people who come here to follow our proceedings. The same apathy used to be seen in the Indian National Congress until the Congress adopted Hindustani. Up to 1919 a limited number of delegates went to the Congress. Very few visitors came. But from the time the Congress adopted Hindustani as the language of its proceedings we saw a very great change. And I assure the Government the day they reverse this position here in this House they will find the galleries will be packed with visitors taking a real interest in our proceedings.

Another difficulty that will be put before the House is, Sir, that there is no Hindustani shorthand—either in Hindi or in Urdu (*An Honourable Member*: "No, there is") I say I am afraid some one will advance this plea but as some Honourable friend just said this is not correct. There is such a shorthand and I say it is a very perfect one. In fact, the Hindi shorthand is more perfect than that of English. No man can learn English shorthand in less than 4 months; while a man may master the Hindi system

of shorthand within two months. The system was tested in 1921 when the Congress adopted Hindustani as the *lingua franca*; and the whole proceedings of the Ahmedabad Congress were correctly taken by this system. So let us not be afraid of this. The day the Government encourage people to speak in Hindustani they will find that many people will come here well versed in Hindi shorthand and will take down the reports very easily.

In conclusion, Sir, I will appeal to the Government. They say that evolving an Indian nation and giving Swaraj is their declared policy. Allow me, then, to say, Sir, that a national language is the *sine qua non* of nationality. We have fortunately one such language which is and can be the national language, which can become the *lingua Indica*. What do we find in Germany? Up to the Treaty of Frankfort Germany was divided into so many languages—High German, Low German, and so many other dialects; but after they adopted one language they became a great nation. Let the Government adopt Hindustani and I assure them that they will see that the Indian nation will be built up in no time. Then, Sir, whenever we demand Swaraj, the Hindu-Muhammadan question is trotted out; but fortunately on this question, Sir, we are all united. Hindus and Muhammadans are united on this question. Sikhs are one with us. All their religious books, including their Granth Sahib, are written in Hindustani. So I say that all the communities of India, whether they be Hindus, Muhammadans, Sikhs or Jains, are united on this demand. Let the Government by accepting this Resolution give a proof of the sincerity of their declaration that they are striving to build an Indian nation. With these words, Sir, I commend my Resolution to the acceptance of this House.

THE HONOURABLE COLONEL NAWAB SIR UMAR HAYAT KHAN (Punjab: Nominated Non-Official): Sir, if this Resolution had been so worded that the whole of the proceedings of the Council should be in Urdu I would have supported it, because most of the English people who come to this country have to pass a language test, some of them before they are given promotion in the Army, and the civilians could not carry on their work if they did not know the language of their province. I think Urdu and Hindi are considered to be the court languages. (*The Honourable Sir Arthur Froom*: "What about Madras?"). Perhaps not in Madras. But what I mean is that if the whole debate were in Urdu everybody would understand it and the debates, when published, would be of some use. But simply for Members at their choice to speak Urdu or Hindi would be such that it is bound to bring down the standard of some of the Members. If a Member who stands for a constituency can speak Hindi the constituents will say "He is all right; why not allow him to go to the Council". They will elect him and when he comes here he will not be able to follow the debates. Perhaps he will read his speech, although another member may have said all he says in English and even the President, not being able to follow him, will not be able to stop him if he is repeating what somebody else has said or not. One of the rules of this House I believe is that one should not repeat what another has said in a debate. In the same way the Madras people will say "We speak Tamil" or some other dialect they may have. Then the Tamil-speaking members will be returned who would come here and would not be able to follow either English, Urdu or Hindi. So there will be a very curious sort of debate altogether in this House. There is a story of a man who was walking home when another man saw him bringing some vegetables from the bazaar. The second man told the first man "Mizaj Shariff" which means "How are you?". Then he asked

[Sir Umar Hayat Khan.]

"How are your children" to which the other man replied: "*Sab ka Bharta banaenge*". He was being asked about his children and he said he was going to chop them all up! That will be the state of confusion which will prevail in this Honourable House if the Resolution were carried. In the Provincial Legislative Councils where people are allowed to speak in the vernacular, some people go there of such a standing that they are absolutely no use to their community or to their constituency. They do not follow the debates and when they cannot follow they go out. I know of one occasion when a great number of such members who did not want a certain measure to be passed got so bored in the Council that they all went out to drink tea. They did not know how far the debate had gone and the measure was passed in their absence. So it is for the sake of efficiency that I am not in favour of this Resolution as it stands. But I do say one thing, that if the idea be to hold the whole debate in the vernacular, say Urdu, and make Madrassis read it and everybody read it as a common language, it will be absolutely the right thing for the Council and the people. Had the Resolution been worded like that I would have given it my whole hearted support.

THE HONOURABLE MAJOR NAWAB MAHOMED AKBAR KHAN (North-West Frontier Province: Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I do not know if the Honourable the Mover of the Resolution meant to say that all students get spoilt by assimilating English manners. I do not know about the correctness of his saying that by assimilating English manners we get spoilt. I should say the case is quite the other way about, Sir. Nobody has forced anybody to pick up the worst literature in English. English literature is very vast, and it is for the student to pick up the best in it. As a Muhammadan I can assure him that it is laid down in our Shariyath and our tradition tells us that we are to go and seek the best of everything no matter where it may be, wherever it is to be found, whether in English, in French or in German; no Mussalman should spare the trouble but he should go and study the very best literature and should follow the very best manners, no matter from what nationality they may come.

Then there is another thing. I do not think that, if certain Members want to express themselves in Urdu or Hindi or in their vernacular, there has been any restriction imposed upon them. The Honourable the Mover must have heard the Honourable Nawab Sahibzada Mehr Shah delivering his speech the other day in Urdu; nobody objected to it.

THE HONOURABLE MR. S. R. DAS: Was it Urdu or Hindi?

THE HONOURABLE MAJOR NAWAB MAHOMED AKBAR KHAN: Urdu.

THE HONOURABLE MR. S. R. DAS: I thought it was the same.

THE HONOURABLE MAJOR NAWAB MAHOMED AKBAR KHAN: Before that the late Nawab Sir Behram Khan always used to make his speeches in Urdu and nobody ever objected to his doing so. But of course there is one thing. It could very easily be done. If a Member after having finished his speech were to hand over his Urdu speech or Hindi speech to the reporter here, it could very easily be translated into English and published with the other speeches. I agree that Urdu will be understood by the people of the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province and the United Provinces, and, I should say, by some people of Bengal and not by everybody.



by most people in the Central Provinces: Bombay people too can understand Urdu. I do not know anything about Madras; but there are a good many people who can understand Urdu quite well in the Nizam's territory. So I do not think it will be a very difficult business to acquire Urdu. I do not know anything about Hindi, but I say it ought not to be very difficult for a person to acquire a sufficient knowledge of Urdu or Hindi—in fact I should say it can be gained quite easily—within six months' time. (*An Honourable Member*: "Two months".) I cannot say two months but I should say six months; I am talking of Urdu because that is my experience; and Urdu I should say is understood by a good many of the Englishmen too. If a speech is made in Urdu in this House, I do not think that it will be listened to with a vacant air; there will be a good many Members who would understand and follow it. I have no objection particularly to Hindi, although there may be some different wordings which perhaps at the very beginning we people will not understand; but we can acquire them very easily if we apply ourselves to it. As I have said in the very beginning, I do not think that the delivering of a speech in Urdu or Hindustani or Hindi will be objected to by anybody and I do not know that there is any restriction about it in the Standing Orders. The Honourable the Mover of this Resolution has my sympathy at any rate, and I think I will support him in the Resolution he has brought forward.

THE HONOURABLE MR. W. A. GRAY (*Burma Chamber of Commerce*): Sir, when I saw this Resolution on the paper I wondered how the Honourable Mover was going to fit the province of Burma into the scheme of things and I am not surprised that he has omitted it from consideration altogether. Sir, would it not be a tyranny if the inhabitants of Burma, and—I think I may say—the inhabitants of Southern India also, were compelled to learn Urdu and Hindi?

THE HONOURABLE SAIYID ALAY NABI: Sir, the question before the House is a simple one, though I think it has been to some extent complicated by the fighting speech of the Honourable the Mover. By that speech perhaps he might have prejudiced his case and he might have alienated the sympathies of others. But there is one thing to which I gladly subscribe in this Resolution and that is the latter portion of it where it is said that these speeches be regularly reported, printed and published as part of the official proceedings of the Central Legislature. My point is this, that if you allow a certain Member for one reason or another to speak in Urdu or what he calls Hindi—though it does not make any difference between Hindi and Urdu from what I have heard from him—the only difference is of the script and not the language—if you allow a Member to speak in Urdu or Hindi, then he should have the ordinary and common advantage of his speech being reported in the proceedings of the Council. Otherwise his speech goes without notice and the countryside is not aware of what he has done to advance the interests of the country in the Council, and I think it is but fair that after having allowed him to speak in that language his speech should go out to the public in order that his constituents may know what he has been doing on their behalf in this House. So far as that is concerned, Sir, I would support the Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. RAMADAS PANTULU (*Madras: Non-Muhammadan*): Sir, I shall say very few words. I quite sympathise with my Honourable friends on the opposite side because I am practically in the same position as they are with regard to Hindi or Urdu. But I find that

[Mr. V. Ramadas Pantulu.]

the Honourable Mr. Govind Das only says that a Member may make speeches in Hindi; luckily he does not say that we ought to; in that case I should have found myself in a very difficult position. But we in Madras are trying to learn Hindi because we really feel the necessity for a common language all over India for many purposes, not only for the purposes of the Legislatures, but also for the purposes of political work, social work and other work in the country. For my part I do not think for that reason that I can complain because it only lays down a permissive rule. With regard to the existing rule all that it says is, I believe, that people who are unable to speak in English may make speeches in the vernacular. There is a great deal of latitude in that rule, I say, because it is open to many of my European colleagues on the other side, if they gave an honest opinion, to say that most of us on this side really do not know how to speak English. It is a question of degree. I do not know that all of us can speak English sufficiently well to say that we are able to make speeches in English. Therefore on this ground the practice in the Madras Legislative Council is for the President not to go very deeply into the question, whether a particular Member knows English or not; if he chooses to make his speech in the vernacular, he generally permits it and I dare say, Sir, that you also will follow the same example, and if any Member wishes to speak in Hindi or Urdu you may tacitly understand him to say that he does not speak sufficiently well in English. The rule is elastic enough for the purpose. Apart from this, the request to allow Members to speak in Hindi comes a day not too soon, because the tendency is to return to these Councils people in increasing numbers who are not conversant with English, and though you occasionally permit Members to speak in the vernacular, in Hindi or Urdu, still I think a larger latitude should be given to Honourable Members of this House, if they wish to speak in the vernacular. The only difficulty will be about the interpretation of those speeches, but I shall be very glad if the Honourable leader will arrange for suitable interpreters for the benefit of all the Members of this House, and I do not think it will be very expensive to provide for interpreters when the Members are allowed to speak in Hindi or Urdu. On the whole, Sir, the desire to make speeches in the Central Legislature in the national language of the country or in a vernacular is a very legitimate one, and I hope the Honourable Member in charge of this Resolution will not oppose this Resolution, because it is only permissive, and I hope the Government will see their way to accept this modest Resolution.

\*THE HONOURABLE SRIJUT LOKENATH MUKHERJEE (West Bengal: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I rise to support the Resolution moved by my friend Seth Govind Das, and in doing so, I have no hesitation to admit that Hindi or Urdu is not my mother tongue, nor can I speak fluently in either of these languages. On the other hand, I, as a Bengali, should naturally like to have Bengali as the only medium in my province. But that is no reason why as an Indian I should not press for a common medium which may be acceptable to the whole of India. With these words, Sir, I support the Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE SHAH MUHAMMAD ZUBAIR (Bihar and Orissa: Muhammadan): Sir, I rise to support the Resolution moved by my Honourable friend, that Members of the Indian Legislature may be allowed

\*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

to make speeches in Hindi or Urdu. It is an important Resolution and has been very carefully worded. To my mind, Sir, Hindi or Urdu as is generally spoken and understood is one and the same language, except that there is a difference in the script. No doubt an attempt is now being made in some quarters to use more Sanskrit and Vhasha words in Hindi, but the Hindustani which is now being encouraged by the Indian National Congress is neither Arabicised Urdu nor Sanskritised Hindi. With these words, Sir, I support the Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE MR. S. R. DAS (Law Member). Sir, I sympathise with the Honourable Mover in the motion which he has just placed before the House, but I am afraid on practical grounds I must oppose the Resolution. Now, the Resolution may conveniently be divided into two portions. The first part is that Members of the Indian Legislature may make speeches in Hindi or Urdu, and the second part is that those speeches should be reported, printed and published as part of the official proceedings. Now, the practical difficulty that strikes us with regard to the speeches being allowed to be made in Hindi or Urdu is this. I am not going to deal with my friend's contention what should be the *lingua franca* of India or what should be the national language. After all, we have got to take facts as they are now, because this motion, if it is passed, has to apply to present circumstances. Now, what are we here for? We are not here, I take it, to make speeches so that they may be reported and read by the public outside, although that is one of the objects, but the real object is that we should try to press our views amongst our colleagues, controvert the views put forward by our opponents and persuade them to adopt our views. Now, surely in order to do that, I must speak in a language which can be understood by most people here. It is no use my speaking in Hindi or Urdu if I am trying to controvert a Resolution moved by a Member of the House who does not understand Hindi or Urdu, and I do not think my friend Seth Govind Das will go so far as to say that every Member of this House understands Hindi or Urdu at the present moment. We have got to take the facts as they are. The other day the Honourable Saiyad Mohamad Mehr Shah spoke, and I dare not say whether he spoke in Urdu or Hindi. One Honourable Member just said that it is the same thing. I may say that I am equally ignorant of both, and I could not follow a word of what he said. Now, what is the good of making a speech which I cannot follow which I doubt if my friend Mr. Ramadas Pantulu could follow, which could not be controverted, which could not have the slightest effect on our deliberations. When the day comes when Hindi or Urdu becomes the common language of all, I can understand that being the language in which speeches should be allowed to be made. Sir, this matter was very carefully considered at the time the rules were framed, and it was felt that, in order to make the debates in this House and in the other House really intelligible, and to make them effective, that English should ordinarily be the language, because, as matters stand at present, that is the language which is understood by most of us. In fact, I believe, in this House, with the exception of my friend Saiyad Mohammad Mehr Shah, and even he understands a little English though he cannot speak it, every one understands English, and the rule provides that, should there be a case like that of my friend Saiyad Mohammad Mehr Shah who cannot speak in English, the President may allow the Member to speak in Hindi or Urdu. Now, take that very instance of the Honourable Saiyad Mohammad Mehr Shah. What good did that speech do? It may have been an excellent speech; for all I know, it may

[Mr. S. R. Das.]

have been a very persuasive speech. But after all, what was the good of that speech so far as we were concerned? I could not understand a word of it, and as I said, there must be many Members here who could not understand a word of it either. Hindi and Urdu may be the same language,—I do not know. But so far as I am concerned, I can follow Hindi to a certain extent, and I certainly cannot follow Urdu, and most people in Bengal are unable to follow Urdu, except of course a few among the Muhammadans, and even all Muhammadans in Bengal cannot follow Urdu. So that from a practical point of view I am obliged to oppose this motion. We must take things as they are now. I dare say it is very desirable that Hindi or Urdu should at one time become the national language of India and therefore that should be the language of our deliberations also, but that is not the case now. My Honourable friend Mr. Ramadas Pantulu says that in Madras they are learning Hindi. All to the good; let them learn Hindi, and when they have learnt it, they will be able to follow our proceedings when they are conducted in Hindi, but they do not know it now. What is the object of having our speeches in Hindi which they cannot understand? Similarly, take the case of Burma. After all, a time may come when Burma may be separated from India, but for the present Burma is there; but how can you have speeches in a language which a Burmese cannot follow? So that from a practical point of view, it will not be possible to accept this Resolution, and I trust that this House really would be carried by practical considerations, and not merely by sentiment, and that they will not agree to this Resolution.

Then take the next part which suggests that the speeches made in Hindi or Urdu should be reported, printed and published as part of the official proceedings. Well, when a speech is made in Hindi or Urdu by the permission of the President, we do report it. But my friend says that very few people outside know English and therefore these speeches ought to be published in the vernacular so that they can all read it. There is something to be said in favour of that part of the Resolution, because if you want the outside public to understand what is being done here, you must publish the proceedings in the vernaculars so that they may all read them, not merely Hindi or Urdu, because for the present there are other languages, and there are people who do not understand Hindi or Urdu.—I can understand the speeches being reported and published in all the vernaculars.

But that would be a very expensive job, and after all, will it really serve any useful purpose? Even the English reports which are now published, how many people outside the House read those reports? How many people of the small number who know English read the reports of our proceedings? The public generally get to know of our proceedings through the newspapers. What is the difficulty? The newspapers report the speeches made here in the various languages in which the newspapers are published. They may report them in Bengali, in Hindi, in Urdu, even in Malayam. There is nothing to prevent that, but the reporting of the speeches in those various languages in the proceedings of this House would serve no useful purpose. The outside public will never read the proceedings, and therefore it would be incurring useless expenditure. Therefore although I sympathise with my friend's Resolution, at least the

sentiment which underlies that Resolution, I hope this House will take the practical point of view and will not, if I may say so, commit itself to a Resolution which really cannot serve any useful purpose.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYID ALAY NABI: Do I take it that the Urdu speeches made by Members here are translated into English and published?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I think if the Honourable Member will look at the Appendix of the issue of debates, which contains the Budget discussion, he will find a translation of the Honourable Nawab Shah's vernacular speech.

THE HONOURABLE SETH GOVIND DAS: Sir, much has been said against my Resolution by my Honourable friends, Colonel Nawab Sir Umar Hayat Khan and Mr. Das. Sir, I would have myself liked to have put the Resolution before this House in the words of Colonel Nawab Sir Umar Hayat Khan, but I am afraid, Sir, that that would have appeared still more impractical in the eyes of the Government; as is clear from the fact that even in my modest language it has appeared so to my Honourable friend, Mr. Das. If I had brought a Resolution asking the Government to compel all the Members to speak in Hindi and not in English, what would my Honourable friend Mr. Das have said? He would have said the same thing that he is saying now and would have said it with much greater force. I say I would have liked to have brought that Resolution, and would have satisfied Colonel Nawab Sir Umar Hayat Khan, as well as myself but I did not do so, afraid as I was of the practical bogey.

My Honourable friend, Mr. Das, has said that we should see the question from the practical point of view. He appreciates my sentiment and admits that there should be a national language, and I take it that he accepts this also that English cannot be our national language, although he has not said this in so many words. He knows that if after 150 years of English rule, English has not become our national language, how can it become now? He feels the same practical difficulty in the case of the English language. Then he asks me to wait up to the time Hindi is understood by everybody throughout the country. We have waited for 150 years. We are every day degenerating so far as our language is concerned. It is a matter of common knowledge that there are some Indians even to-day who think that Hindustani or Hindi cannot be made the national language and that English alone can take that place. If English becomes sufficiently diffused they and the Government will say that as English is now firmly established, let there be no talk of making any other language our *lingua franca*. So I ask him to accept my Resolution and show that the Government have the cause of Hindi nearest to their heart and that they want it one day to become the national language of this country. What do I ask, Sir? I merely ask that those persons who want should be allowed to speak in Hindi irrespective of the fact that they can or cannot speak English. I do not compel the Honourable Members who want to speak in English to speak in Hindi. I merely claim equality for Hindi from the Government and nothing more; and when such a moderate measure, so important a measure which has so great a sentiment behind it, is opposed by the Government, I simply feel staggered.

I am unable, Sir, to accept the arguments which have been put forward by my Honourable friend, Mr. Das, and I move my Resolution.

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

"That this Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to alter the rules of legislative procedure so that Members of the Indian Legislature may make speeches in Hindi or Urdu and that these speeches be regularly reported, printed and published as part of the official proceedings of the Central Legislature."

The Council divided :

**AYES—12.**

Akbar Khan, The Honourable Major Nawab Mahomed.  
Govind Das, The Honourable Seth. Manmohandas Ramji, The Honourable Mr.  
Muhammad Hussain, The Honourable Mian Ali Baksh.  
Mukherji, The Honourable Srijut Lokenath.  
Ram Saran Das, The Honourable Rai Bahadur Lala.

Ramadas Pantulu, The Honourable Mr. V.  
Rama Rau, The Honourable Rao Sahib Dr. U.  
Roy Choudhuri, The Honourable Kumar Sankar.  
Sett, The Honourable Rai Bahadur Nalininath.  
Sinha, The Honourable Mr. Anugraha Narayan.  
Zubair, The Honourable Shah Muhammad.

**NOES—22.**

Alay Nabi, The Honourable Saiyid. Bell, The Honourable Sir John. Brayne, The Honourable Mr. A. F. L.  
Charanjit Singh, The Honourable Sardar.  
Corbett, The Honourable Mr. G. L. Das, The Honourable Mr. S. B. Evans, The Honourable Mr. F. B. Forest, The Honourable Mr. H. T. S. Froom, The Honourable Sir Arthur. Gray, The Honourable Mr. W. A. Habibullah, The Honourable Khan Bahadur, Sir Muhammad, Sahib Bahadur.

Haig, The Honourable Mr. H. G. McWatters, The Honourable Mr. A. C.  
Misra, The Honourable Pandit Shyam Bihari.  
Rainy, The Honourable Sir George. Stow, The Honourable Mr. A. M. Suhrawardy, The Honourable Mr. Mahmood.  
Swan, The Honourable Mr. J. A. L. Symons, The Honourable Major-General T. H.  
Tek Chand, The Honourable Diwan. Thomas, The Honourable Mr. G. A. Umar Hayat Khan, The Honourable Colonel Nawab Sir.

The motion was negatived.

**RESOLUTION RE ELECTION OF DEPARTMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES.**

**THE HONOURABLE MR. V. RAMADAS PANTULU:** (Madras: Non-Muhammadian): Sir, I beg to move the following Resolution which stands in my name:

"This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to modify the rules relating to the constitution of Departmental Advisory Committees in such a manner as to provide for election of all the members of the Advisory Committees and to abolish the system of electing panels from which Members are selected to serve on those Committees."

I propose to say only a very few words on this motion. These committees, as their names imply, are purely advisory in their function. They have not got the initiative of bringing before the Government any measures

they want to advocate. They are really consulted by the Government on measures on which Government wish to consult them. It will certainly tend to the convenience of various groups in this House if they are allowed to select their own representatives and I do not see why the Government should insist upon having a large number of Members elected to these panels from which they can choose their own men. I do not see why for these impotent bodies the Government should be suspicious about Members being sent by direct election. The election by a single, transferable vote is a safeguard to enable the Government to get suitable men. It will conduce to the self-respect of Members of this Council to be elected entirely by the House instead of its being left to the choice of the Government either to select or not to select them when they are put on the panels. There is no danger to Government by acceding to this proposal for, as I have said, the functions of these bodies are advisory and they have no power to influence the Government in any way. With these words I move the Resolution.

**THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR NALININATH SETT** (West Bengal: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I support the very reasonable proposition embodied in the Resolution of my friend Mr. Ramadas Pantulu. The Resolution seeks to do away with the ridiculous procedure under which a panel of Members is elected by the Council from which the Government chooses such Members for actual service on the Committee as it thinks convenient. It is to be regretted that the Government, even in a matter of this nature, cannot give a free hand to the Members of this House. Indeed what are the functions of these Committees? They merely advise Government in matters on which it chooses to consult them. The Government is not bound to accept or to carry out the recommendations of these Committees. As a matter of fact these committees are very rarely called. If the Government is at all sincere in having the recommendations of the representatives of the people, the only way is to allow this House to elect its representatives to form the various Committees, instead of Government having the power of not taking one in whose favour the largest number of votes may have been cast. In a way the present system is a negation of representative government. The principle is bad. I therefore request my friends here to support the Resolution.

**THE HONOURABLE COLONEL NAWAB SIR UMAR HAYAT KHAN** (Punjab: Nominated Non-official): Sir, I think the present system is the very best system that could be devised. To begin with, the Government does not nominate any Members; it is with the House to nominate, and the panel is chosen out of those Members who are elected in this way. Government has got a hand in it as well as the House. If everything was left entirely to election alone, then half of us who are nominated Members would not be here. Why are the nominated Members here? Because some portion of the number of Members is given for people to elect and the others are picked by the Government out of the best men in the country. It is the happy medium, and it is the best way as it has been done, and for this reason I think the present system ought to continue.

**THE HONOURABLE SIR ARTHUR FROOM** (Bombay Chamber of Commerce): Sir, at first eight Honourable Members might think that there was

[Sir Arthur Froom.]

a good deal of reason in the Honourable Mr. Ramadas Pantulu's Resolution, but if Honourable Members will think it over for a minute, I think they will come to another conclusion. First of all, I think my Honourable friend suggested that Government took their own men for these panels. By their own men I suppose he does not mean their own officials because no official Members are elected to these panels; the panels are elected from the non-official Members of this House. Now, Sir, if we could imagine such a wholesome thing in this Council that everybody voted from his own dictates, his own conscience and his own feelings, then I think there would be something to be said for the proposal that the House should elect their direct representatives on the Committees; but I am afraid that if this Resolution was accepted, we might get Members elected to the Commerce Department panel who knew nothing whatever about Commerce. Also for the Central Railway Advisory Council we might get men elected who knew nothing about Railway matters. I think the present system of electing so many Members to a panel and leaving it to Government to make a wise choice is the best. They will not necessarily vote with the Government; but Government select from the panels the men who, they think, have the best knowledge of the subjects which are being dealt with.

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. G. HAIG (Home Secretary): Sir, my Honourable friend the Mover I understood to advocate his proposition on the ground that these Committees were really of very little use and it does not much matter how they are appointed. I think it would be convenient if I just mentioned briefly to the House the real object with which these Committees are appointed and the work that they do. The idea originated in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, where it was suggested that the elected Members of the Legislative Councils should be familiarised with the processes of administration. The matter was discussed in the first despatch of the Government of India on constitutional reforms and it was there stated that the Government of India proposed to adopt this suggestion as a means of providing a certain number of people with some acquaintance with administrative methods. The proposal then came up before the Joint Committee, and the Joint Committee agreed with the other authorities that it might often greatly assist the political education of India if standing committees of the legislative bodies were attached to certain departments of Government. I do not for a moment deny, Sir, that the process of education is not all on one side. No doubt besides the Committees deriving a certain amount of information as to the working of Government, the Government too derives a great deal of useful information as to the attitude of public opinion and receives valuable suggestions on matters which are referred to them. But I wish to make this point, Sir, that as far as I know there is no exact constitutional parallel—at least I have been able to discover none—in any other constitution. We are all familiar with Committees of the Legislature. No legislative body can conveniently do its work without remitting certain functions to committees which it naturally elects and whose members it determines. We have instances of that under our own constitution. We have for instance the Standing Finance Committee or we have Select Committees dealing with legislation. Those are what I should call true committee of the Legislature. The Legislature is charged with certain definite duties—to pass or not to pass the budget grants and to consider legislation. For these purposes the Legislature remits certain



matters to committees which it itself elects. That is the natural ordinary development. But, Sir, these committees are not committees of that nature. They are not committees to advise the Legislature. They are committees to advise the executive; and I submit, Sir, that that is a very important distinction. They are more analogous to committees or commissions that may be appointed by the Executive Government for particular inquiries and I think Executive Governments in all parts of the world insist on themselves appointing members to such committees. It strikes me, Sir, that there is rather a remarkable consensus of authority on this point, that when these committees which are intended to advise the Executive are appointed, the Executive should have at any rate some voice in determining their composition. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report, in which this scheme originated, suggested that two-thirds of the members of each committee should be elected while Government should nominate the remaining one-third. That scheme was not supported but the Joint Committee made it quite clear that they only recommended this proposal of Standing Advisory Committees on the understanding that the composition of such committees should be a matter wholly and exclusively within the discretion of the Governor General. Well, Sir, the device actually adopted seems to me to be a very convenient device. It is a method of combining the principle of election with a certain amount of discretion to Government. The Legislature elects a panel of members whom it considers representative of opinion generally in the legislative bodies and Government selects from these panels those members who it considers are most likely to be able to give valuable advice to Government and to represent all points of view in the legislative bodies. Apart from constitutional theory—which as I have said is against any system of direct election by the Legislature to such bodies—it seems to me that we do in fact get very suitable committees appointed in this way. The Honourable Sir Arthur Froom explained from his experience that the Government is able to form useful and valuable committees by these means. I am not aware, Sir, that there have in practice been any complaints that Government exercises its discretion in an unreasonable or unfair way. I suggest to the House that they should let well alone and not attempt to interfere with a system which is at present working well. I therefore urge the Council, Sir, to reject this proposal.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. RAMADAS PANTULU: Sir, I wish to answer one or two objections raised to my proposal. The Honourable Sir Umar Hayat Khan seems to think that I have left out the nominated Members from my scheme of election. It is so easy for them to send their own representative under the proposed system of representation. If all nominated Members join together it will be quite easy to send their own representative. If on the other hand, their nominees fail to get in the Government will certainly see to their Members getting into committees.

The Honourable Sir Arthur Froom's objection was that the right kind of men may not get into the Committees. It has been very effectively answered by the Honourable Mr. Haig, who pointed out that important committees like the Standing Finance Committee or the Standing Committee on Railways are entirely elected, there is no question of panels. Now, if the Legislature is able to exercise this function very rightly and properly in all these cases and is able to send the proper men, I really do

not see where the fear expressed by my Honourable friend Sir Arthur Froom comes in with regard to advisory committees alone. Therefore his objection is answered by his friend on the official side.

With regard to the constitutional theory argument, I am afraid it is done to death in this House. My Honourable friend quotes from the famous document which is said to contain many things for which it is responsible and not responsible—the Montagu-Chelmsford Report; and then he says that constitutional theory is against allowing this House to elect a few representatives to advisory committees. Why should the Government not take such advisers as this House chooses? Because after all they are not bound to take their advice. It is best for them to get advice of the sort that is tendered to them and not of the sort that they seek. Am I to understand that the Executive must pick and choose their own advisers? Surely it conduces to their own best interests to have people who can give them straight and frank advice—those who, it may be, do not see eye to eye with them in all matters. It would certainly conduce to the better administration of this country that such advisers should be available to Government than that Government should be satisfied with advisers who may not represent the true opinion of the country or the House. A Government which is irresponsible and irresponsive ought to welcome the idea of advisers being sent to them who will say straight forwardly and frankly what they think. That is one advantage they will gain by accepting my proposal instead of doing the constitutional theory to death in the way they do. With these words I commend my Resolution to the House.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The question is:

“ That the following Resolution be adopted, namely :

‘ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to modify the rules relating to the constitution of Departmental Advisory Committees in such a manner as to provide for election of all the members of the advisory committees and to abolish the system of electing panels from which members are selected to serve on those Committees ’.

The motion was negatived.

The Council then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday the 21st March, 1927.