

Saturday, 7th March, 1931

THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

(Official Report)

Volume II, 1931

(19th February to 11th March, 1931)

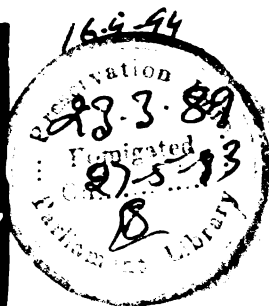
FIRST SESSION

OF THE

FOURTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,

1931

Chamber of Delegates... 18-10-73



SIMLA
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESS
1931

Legislative Assembly.

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MIAN MUHAMMAD SHAH NAWAZ, C.I.E., M.L.A.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Saturday, 7th March, 1931.

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

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE IN LONDON—*contd.*

Mr. President: The House will resume further consideration of the following motion moved by the Honourable Sir George Rainy on the 2nd March, 1931:

“That the Parliamentary papers in connection with the Indian Round Table Conference be taken into consideration.”

Maulvi Muhammad Yakub (Rohilkund and Kumaon Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): I am one of those who are alive to the importance of the work done by the Round Table Conference. I do not, however, share the enthusiasm which was shown by my Honourable friend Mian Muhammad Shah Nawaz the other day; I do not think that India has achieved what was wanted, or that the Mussalmans, as a matter of fact, have achieved anything. (*Mr. Muhammad Anwar-ul-Azim*: “Nothing.”) I also do not share the disappointment which was shown by my Honourable friend Mr. B. Das. What I think is that, if there is no reason for over-optimism, there is also no room for gloomy pessimism. Nor do I underrate the value of the work of those who received and responded to the invitation of His Majesty’s Government to attend the historic gathering. I also wish to associate myself in the tribute which was paid to the labour, sincerity and far-sightedness of the Indian delegates, and I wish also to associate myself with the tribute which has been paid to Lord Irwin. To Lord Irwin goes, undoubtedly, the credit of bringing together, for the first time, on a status of equality the representatives of India and England in order to discuss the future constitution of the country which would fulfil the aspirations of Indian people. Future historians of India will realize the value of the work which Lord Irwin has done to place India on a status of equality with the other component parts of the British Commonwealth. Lord Irwin did not content himself with writing despatches from the Viceroy’s House in India to Whitehall in England, but realizing the value of personal contact and face to face talk, he undertook a journey to England, and in spite of adverse criticism on the part of some of those to whom he owed his appointment as the Viceroy of India, he succeeded in bringing home to the British Government the need of speedy fulfilment of the pledges which were given by England to India; and impressed upon the British Cabinet the need of inviting the Indian representatives to a Round Table Conference. The dignity of the Conference was greatly enhanced by His Majesty the King Emperor’s consent to inaugurate the opening of the Conference, and the association of His Majesty’s august name with the Conference lent a unique dignity and inestimable importance to these proceedings

[Maulvi Muhammad Yakub.]

I am not at all sorry that the Conference could not come to any definite decisions, and that the final word on the different issues that were raised during its discussions could not be pronounced. India is a unique country in the world and its problems are also unparalleled. We cannot imitate, *verbatim*, any type of constitution prevailing in any country of the world; our problems are purely our own and their solution will also assume a form which must be exclusively our own. The Prime Minister was therefore perfectly right when he said in his last speech, delivered at the final plenary session of the Conference, that, "The precise form and structure of the new Federal Government must be determined after further discussion with the Princes and the representatives of British India."

If there is any thing in the proceedings of the Conference which has received the largest measure of unanimity, it is that the future constitution of India must assume the form of a federation and not a unitary form of Government. This must be considered as an accomplished fact, and if India's problem is really to be solved, there should not be the slightest idea of opening a back door or a side window to get out of it. It must however be recognised that the building up of a federal constitution for India, with Indian States as its component parts, is not free from complexities of an intricate nature. The representatives of British India were therefore justified in their hesitation, "To accept any constitutional change which might be thought to endanger the unity of the British India or those positive advantages which are derived from a uniform body of the law and administrative practice". It will have also to be recognised that, "Any measure of federation involves for the States sacrifices in a sphere to which they have always attached the greatest importance for practical reasons as well as on grounds of existing treaties and sentiments". I wish also to pay my humble quota to the tribute that has been paid to Their Highnesses who were present at the Conference, for the magnificent part they have played in that historic gathering, and the patriotic interest they have shown in Indian Affairs. However it would be quite premature to form any opinion as regards the form which the federal structure would assume when it is completed. The method whereby the representatives of British India are to be chosen does not present any great difficulty in my mind, but the methods by which the States' representatives should be chosen, the extent to which and the subjects in respect of which they would be entitled to influence the administration of British India, are matters of great complexity. The report says:

"Since the functions of the Federal Government will extend beyond the range of federal subjects and will embrace those matters which are strictly the concern of British India alone."

Any participation of the representatives of the Indian States, without any reciprocal rights to be vested in the representatives of British India, in matters relating to the administration of the States, apparently seems to be quite unjustifiable. Then, again, the claim of the Indian States to have an equal number of their representatives in the Senate and also "some greater representation than they would obtain on strict population ratio" in the Lower Chamber are matters which call for very great deliberation and consideration. Beyond these matters of general interest, the participation of the Indian States in the federation will greatly disturb the proportion of the Mussalmans in the population of the country, and their

representation both in the Senate and the Lower Chamber. The Muslim claim has all along been that in the Central Legislature their number should not be less than one-third of the whole, and they would not agree to any fall in this number on account of the influx of the Indian States.

The division of the Central Legislature into two Chambers does not seem to be open to any objection, but I do not feel inclined to give my unqualified support to the unanimous opinion of the Federal Structure Sub-Committee that "The British Indian Members of the Senate should be elected by the Provincial Legislatures." Although I am not wholly opposed to a system of indirect election being introduced for the selection of the Members of the Upper Chamber, yet I submit that a single electorate of the Provincial Legislatures would be too narrow and render the Upper Chamber altogether a slave to the Provincial Councils. I would suggest that in addition to the Provincial Legislatures the Municipal and District Boards and the governing bodies of the Universities in India should also form a part of the electorate of the Upper Chamber of the Central Legislature.

During the limited time at my disposal I find it difficult to make a detailed review of all the important subjects which have been dealt with by the Round Table Conference. Passing briefly over the wide range of the subjects, I should like to accept the position "that the responsibility for the Federal Government in India will in future rest upon Indians themselves", and in this connection I welcome the announcement on behalf of the British Government contained in the Prime Minister's final speech that:

"Responsibility for the Government of India should be placed upon Legislatures, Central and Provincial, with such provisions as may be necessary to guarantee, during a period of transition, the observance of certain obligations and to meet other special circumstances and also with such guarantee as are required by minorities to protect their political liberty and rights."

And I may add, their religious rights and culture as well.

It must however be borne in mind that in order to avoid dislocating jerks and shaking to the federal machinery the residuary powers of the legislation must rest with the provinces. I entirely endorse the unanimous verdict of the Defence Sub-Committee that, "In a matter of such importance as defence the utmost care was necessary." I also associate myself in their anxiety "not to create the impression that any one in any way or to any degree wanted to say anything that could even remotely tend to imperil the safety of the country or to weaken the strength of the Army, but this should not mean that there should be a slackness in the pace of Indianisation of Army and immediate steps be taken to increase, substantially, the rate of Indianisation in the Indian Army to make it commensurate with the main object in view."

Coming to questions of details of the constitution I would like to make a few remarks on the subject of franchise. Contrary to the views generally expressed on the subject, I hold that a large increase and broadening the right of vote is not desirable under the present conditions of the country. The experience of the last ten years of the manner in which elections are run in this country and my knowledge of electors, specially those belonging to the rural areas, has fully convinced me that it would be extremely detrimental to the interests of the country, if the task of fitting the machinery, of federation and provincial autonomy, is left in the

[Maulvi Muhammad Yakub.]

unskilled and untrained hands of medieval-age-like peasantry of the country and I hope that great care and caution would be exercised in taking further steps in this direction. In any case educational qualification must form an integral part of the franchise qualification both for the Central and Provincial Legislatures. The North West Frontier Province has been treated most shabbily by the Government, and it is high time that the province should immediately be given the status of a Governor's province, with the same rights and privileges as will be enjoyed by other autonomous units in the country. In matters of defence and foreign policy, the province will no doubt be dealt with by the Central Legislature, but in other respects there should be no difference. The formula recommended by the Sub-Committee, *i.e.*, "that the Executive should consist of the Governor assisted by the advice of two Ministers," cannot be acceptable to the people who have so long suffered the atrocities of an autocratic rule. The suggestion made by Sir B. N. Mitra, *i.e.*, "acting on the advice of two Ministers" must therefore be adopted. In the composition of the Council the number of fourteen nominated members out of a total of forty is inconsistent with the spirit of autonomy; this number in no case should exceed six, and nominations should be confined to military officers, whose presence in the Council of that province, in my opinion, seems highly desirable. I am strongly of opinion that the Hindus and the Sikhs in the North West Frontier Province should be treated in a most liberal manner, both as regards their representation in the Legislature, as well as the provincial services,—“their representation might be three times the figure to which they would be entitled on a population basis”. The safety of the whole country mostly depends upon the contentment in the North West Frontier Province and the loyalty of its inhabitants, and it must be the first and foremost duty of the Government to restore peace and contentment in that province.

Lastly I would like to make a few observations as regards the safeguards for the Mussalmans in the new constitution. I do not wish to introduce communal heat in this debate, and it would be very unfortunate indeed if the discussion in the House assumed a communal form. On this occasion I halt for a minute and wish to dissociate myself from what was uttered by my friend, Mr. Maswood Ahmad, the other day. I think, Sir, he was doing great harm to the cause of Mussalmans when he wanted to deprecate the status and position of the Mussalman delegates to the Round Table Conference. Although the Muslim delegates were not selected by means of a direct election, yet I am confident that if resort were had to election, 85 per cent. of these gentlemen would have been elected by a very large majority of the people of their own community. Now, who were these representatives? One of them was His Highness the Aga Khan. Since 1906, when the Mussalmans took a deputation to Lord Minto, he has been recognised as the leader of the Mussalmans of India. It was he whom we invited from England to preside over the historic All-India Muslim Conference held in Delhi in 1918, and it is he whom we have just now invited to preside over the deliberations of the Conference again. Can anybody doubt the representative character of His Highness the Aga Khan? Can anybody doubt the representative character of Mr. M. A. Jinnah, who has for a long time been the President of the All-India Muslim League and has been the trusted spokesman of the Mussalmans

in this House as well as in outside conferences and other bodies. Can anybody doubt the representative character of Sir Muhammad Shafi, who is one of the founders of the All-India Muslim League, who has presided over the deliberations of that important body and who is looked upon as one of the most important leaders of Muslim opinion in India? I will also mention the name of Begum Shah Nawaz. That Mussalman lady, who, by the work that she has done, has enhanced the position of Indian ladies in England. She has given a material and personal reply to Miss Mayo's "Mother India". It would be very unfortunate if we in any way tried to deprecate the work of the delegates who went to London. I wish to make it quite clear that the Mussalmans in India are not behind any other community in their demand for Dominion Status. Personally I am prepared for any sacrifice that we may have to undergo in order to achieve this object. Even the lives of my co-religionists, however dear to me, have no value when the freedom of our motherland is concerned. I should be very happy indeed if we were to lay down our lives for the sake of our country and the foundations of a free India were laid in our graves. But what really we want is a free India, in which all communities and classes should enjoy equal rights of citizenship. We want freedom for all and equality for all, and not a change of masters. Mussalmans demand an equal share in different branches of administration of the country, and not mere safeguards. Mussalmans will not be prepared to merge their entity in the majority. They want to live like a living nation, free to enjoy their religious rights and to maintain their culture and their traditions. I need not reiterate the Muslim demands on this occasion. Mr. Jinnah's 14 points have now obtained so much publicity that they require no introduction. The fact is that the party which is numerically larger, financially more prosperous, and educationally superior can and ought to behave in a more generous and more patriotic manner. The owner of a thirteen-anna share can easily afford to make a gift of two or three annas, while a poor beggar who has got only three annas in his purse can ill-afford to spare a single pie.

Mr. President: The Honourable Member's time is up.

Maulvi Muhammad Yakub: Very well, Sir.

Mr. K. Ahmed (Rajshahi Division: Muhammadan Rural): You had better summarize then.

Maulvi Muhammad Yakub: I will summarize within two minutes. I am not enamoured of separate electorates. Separate electorates are not a goal in themselves; they are only a means for reaching the goal, and if a more suitable method could be found to achieve the object in view, I would have no hesitation in giving my best consideration to the question of abandonment of separate electorates. The real safeguards of the Mussalmans consist in their majority in the Punjab and Bengal not being reduced to a minority, the separation of Sind and the inauguration of full-fledged reforms in the N.-W. F. Province. Personally, I think we want separate electorates only for the Punjab, Bengal and the Central Legislature, while in provinces where we are in a minority I would prefer a scheme of joint electorates according to the formula suggested by the late Maulana Mohamed Ali, and with reservation of seats although an overwhelming majority of Mussalmans in my province favours separate electorates. In the matter of weightage

Mr. President: Order, order. There are so many Members who wish to address the House that I intend to enforce the 20-minute rule rigidly.

Maulvi Muhammad Yakub: Well, I shall finish, Sir. I have said most of what I had to say. In conclusion I will only say this, that on our part we are ready for any honourable settlement, and we have extended our hand of re-conciliation, as is clear from the fact that I invited Mahatma Gandhi and his friends to attend the meeting of the Council of the All-India Muslim League, and we want to see what response we get from the other side.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Sir, although convinced that the work of the Round Table Conference was of a character that will meet with general acceptance in our country, I do not stand before you as an uncompromising advocate of all the suggestions made in the Reports of the Sub-Committees. The best proof of the success of the Conference is, in my humble opinion, the prospective co-operation of that school of political thought led by Mr. Gandhi, which has up to now not recognized the ability of this Conference to lead India to her cherished goal. Sir, there must be convincing proof in the pages of the Blue Book laid on the table for our consideration, of His Majesty's Government's desire for legislation both honourable to England and honourable to India if it has tempted men of the school of thought led by Mr. Gandhi to promise their future co-operation. I think it can be legitimately claimed that the Conference has laid a sound foundation for a future self-governing India. The names of some British statesmen will ever remain honourably associated with the work of the Conference, and especially that of one who, although he was not present at the Conference in England, will ever remain honoured not only in connection with the work of the Conference, but with the work that he has lately done in this country—I mean the honoured and distinguished statesman, the Viceroy of India. (Loud and prolonged Cheers.) I would like to draw attention to an incident that occurred at the Conference, which has not I believe attracted notice in this country as it ought to have. When the Viceroy's name was first mentioned in the Conference by the first speaker, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, it was received with an unprecedented ovation, which lasted from two to three minutes, and I feel sure that that ovation had a most beneficial effect and created a deep impression upon the British delegation and the British public, and I also feel sure that every Honourable Member of this House will consider that that ovation was more than justified. (Applause.)

Sir, the idea of a federation or a united states of India was no new one. It was mentioned in the Nehru Committee's Report. It was considered by the Statutory Commission, but unfortunately it was placed in the category of a distant goal. It was also mentioned in the despatch of the Government of India. But it was the Conference that at one leap traversed the long period of delay forecasted by these two documents, and brought within practical politics a transfer of power to this Legislature, with certain reservations, I admit. It was this achievement of the Conference that is outstanding, and if it had done nothing else but had only brought forth a statement of policy that the transfer of power should now take place, and that this Legislature should be the responsible body in India to whom the Government should in its turn be responsible, I consider that, that achievement alone would have been worthy of the consideration of this country.

Sir, once this issue was decided naturally the minds of the delegates were confined to the reservations.

I would like here, Sir, just to say a few words on the unique method adopted at the Conference to enable Honourable Members to realize that it is really difficult to follow the proceedings of the Conference by merely reading the Reports. The Chairman usually tried to summarize what he thought was the conclusion of the majority. There was no voting and each delegate, each member of the Sub-Committee then expressed his own opinion agreeing or disagreeing placing counter-proposals and arguments in support of the counter-proposals, which were all taken down *verbatim*. Those Reports were presented to a Committee of the whole Conference, and every Member was allowed to express his disagreement with the suggestions made in the Sub-Committee's Reports and those disagreements were noted in writing and you have them before you in the Blue Book; and therefore, to understand what the majority and the minority really suggested or what individual Members suggested, it is not in the Reports of the Sub-Committees that you will find it, but in the *verbatim* reports of the Sub-Committees and of the Conference. In the Reports of the Sub-Committees you will find that the disagreement of certain members is recorded in writing, but if you want to go further than that you must study the *verbatim* reports of the Sub-Committees and of the Conference in Committee. Sir, the Reports are not drafts of a Bill. It is essential to understand the intention underlying the suggestions made and that can only be realised by reading the speeches. It is also essential to realise and understand the underlying spirit of every paragraph of the Committee's Reports. And may I here pay a tribute to the spirit of friendliness and the spirit of co-operation exhibited by the British statesmen in England? No words of mine are required to supplement what has already been said in the Press and on the public platform, but had it not been for that spirit of co-operation, which was dominant in every one of the Labour Government, namely, to see that India got her desserts, you would not to-day have witnessed in this country a prospect of peace and prosperity.

Sir, I will now go to the safeguards. The principal safeguard that has been criticised up to now to my knowledge in this country has been the safeguard recorded, in the Federal Committee's Report and commonly known as the financial safeguards. The underlying principle of those reservations or safeguards was to ensure that the credit of India would be maintained when the change of Government took place. That was the main underlying idea. We have got to examine and see whether the wording in the Reports, and especially in the speeches of British statesmen, really justifies their contention that they had no other desire or object in view except to protect India's financial credit in the markets of the world, and especially immediately after the transfer of power from the present Government to a Government responsible to this Honourable House. I contend, Sir, that I have been convinced that that was the intention of the British statesmen who championed these paragraphs in the Report which have been so criticised. I do not contend that these safeguards were in the interests of India alone; they are also in the interests of Great Britain, for we cannot forget that the sterling loans that have been raised up to now have been raised with the moral support of the British Government in England, who may not be legally responsible but are certainly morally responsible. (Sir Hari Singh Gour: "They are legally responsible.")

[Sir Cowasji Jehangir.]

And I contend that they have a right to see that future Governments in England are in a position to discharge their moral responsibilities to those investors who may not be able to protect their own interests. Looking at it from that point of view, these safeguards are intended to be not only in the interests of this country, but also in the interests of the investors in Indian securities, investors who have been tempted to invest fully relying on the moral support of Great Britain. Sir, that principle is enunciated in the Report in these words:

"In the sphere of finance the Sub-Committee regarded as a fundamental condition of success of the new constitution that no room should be left for doubt as to the ability of India to maintain her financial stability and credit both at home and abroad."

It is contended that the safeguards as specified are only intended to carry out this intention. I am prepared to admit that that paragraph and one or two other subsequent ones are vague and wide;—I have already said they are not drafts of a Bill. That fact was pointedly brought to the attention of the Conference by several of the delegates, and especially the delegates from Bombay. You have only to peruse the Blue Book to find that many of the apprehensions felt by Honourable Members of this House and outside this House were felt by the delegates and pointedly brought to the notice of the Conference.

Mr. K. Ahmed: What did the Chairman say about it?

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: I will come to that later on. Now, Sir, let me say that the Indian members of the Federal Structure Sub-Committee—and I was not a member of that Sub-Committee and in no way responsible for this draft, although it was my privilege and duty to criticise it in the Committee of the Conference—themselves have insisted upon a paragraph in the Report which clearly states their position as follows:

"On the question of finance Indian opinion was that even the safeguards set out in the report went too far especially those giving special powers to the Governor General."

Now, Sir, Lord Reading was asked to explain the position, and I cannot do better than quote his own words. I will do so very briefly. This is what he said:

"What we are seeking is to preserve the financial credit and stability of India so that when this important change is made India shall not suffer."

Further on he says:

"Now, the whole object of that is not in the slightest degree to interfere with the discretion and the judgment of the Financial Minister. What is intended and what we have in mind—certainly what I had in mind, as a result of a considerable amount of discussion with some of the best experts in this country and in relation to Indian finance—was that it would be necessary to have some such provision when you are making a change, in order that it should not be thought here that internal loans might be raised in such a manner as to prejudice India's credit, which of course would affect her here as it would elsewhere in the world. That is the sole purpose of it. . . ."

"If you look further in the report you will see that by these limitations the Sub-Committee do not contemplate any differentiation between the position of the Finance Minister and that of any other Minister responsible to the Legislature."

Sir, he makes a distinction between internal and external loans. With regard to external loans, it was rightly contended by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and others that there was no difference between India and the Dominions. Even the Dominions, if they desire to raise a loan in England, have to get the sanction of the Treasury, specially if they desire that those loans should be Trustee Securities. Now, Sir, if India desires to go into the open market in England, we have to submit to a scrutiny by the Treasury. But there is nothing to prevent India from going into the open market in any other part of the world, just as any other Dominion, nor is there anything to prevent India from going to any private financier in England provided that private financier is prepared on the security offered, to give India the money. But in the case of internal loans, as I have explained, there is a desire to place some sort of restriction, and in explaining it further, Lord Reading said that what he intended was that if the Government of India was unfortunately faced with several years of deficit, and if the Indian Government desired to meet that deficit by loans at an exorbitant rate of interest, then and then only the Viceroy should be allowed to interfere and to interfere not only in the interests of India, but to interfere in the interests of those who have invested in sterling securities on the moral support and on the moral responsibility of the British Government.

Then, Sir, I will come straightaway to the Reserve Bank. There is no difference of opinion as to the advisability of the inauguration of the Reserve Bank, and the only point that was raised by my Honourable friend Mr. Chetty was whether the previous sanction of the Governor General to an amendment of the Coinage and Currency Act was to continue after the Reserve Bank was established. As I understand it, it was not intended that the Viceroy should have those powers after the inauguration of the Reserve Bank, and I will draw the attention of the House to my own remarks at the Conference. Though I raised this point before Lord Reading and asked for an explanation, I must admit that no further explanation was forthcoming because the Prime Minister said it was a detail which could be arranged in the drafting of the Bill. Sir, I would like to have gone into the question of the trading rights of the British community, but I find that I have no time.

I would just like to say one word, Sir, on the communal question which will take me two minutes.

Mr. President: The Honourable Member's time is up and I am very sorry to be obliged to discharge the unpleasant duty of restricting each speaker to 20 minutes. There are many Honourable Members who wish to take part in the debate and the time is limited. I will have therefore to enforce rigidly the 20 minutes' time limit.

Mr. Arthur Moore (Bengal: European): Sir, we last discussed this question so recently as Monday. Today is Saturday, but in the interval something has happened and we meet today in very much happier circumstances. (Hear, hear.) The Viceroy and Mr. Gandhi between them have made history. (Hear, hear.) We believe that they have opened a new chapter in the ever-broadening freedoms and glories of the British Empire. Sir, the words which we listened to from your lips two days ago were, I think, received by us all with no mere transient feelings of pleasure but with a deep and abiding satisfaction. I remember, that when His Excellency

[Mr. Arthur Moore.]

addressed us on July 10 last in Simla, he spoke in a darkened hour and yet at that black moment he had the courage to speak of the possibility of a miracle. Well, Sir, the Viceroy has wrought a miracle of faith (Cheers) and he has put the doubts and the fears of the rest of us to shame and to flight. The Round Table Conference has as yet neither succeeded nor failed, but it has produced a tremendous situation. We, in this House already, were, I believe on all sides, animated with nothing but goodwill and now we hope and believe that that goodwill is universal. I hope that as we approach the discussion of details and difficulties, we shall be able to do so as much collectively and as little communally as possible. But, I should like to endorse, on behalf of the European community, the words that Sir Hugh Cocks has already said concerning the attitude of that community. Some, no doubt, will feel that things are moving too fast. Some will feel that not sufficient account is being taken of the failure up to the present of democratic institutions in all parts of the world to deal with the world conditions which arise today. In regard to that, I would ask our Indian friends not to misunderstand our attitude. We do not say that India is unfit for self-government; we do not say that she ought for ever to have the British Government to control. We accept the situation that the tutelage of the British democracy at home is proving unequal to meet the conditions today. We accept the situation that India should move away from the control of a democratic Parliament in London. But we do say, let India have her own strong Government. Let us have self-government, but let it be a strong government in this country, so that India shall be able, within the British Commonwealth of Nations, to meet the strains and the difficulties of the coming times in a very unstable world. There are two words which I do not think are on the active list of the political vocabulary of the British in India. Those two words are boycott and non-co-operation. We are definitely out to help. Certainly we are not so pigheaded as to attempt to oppose ideas of our own to proposals which have been accepted by the representatives of all sections in India and by the representatives not only of His Majesty's Government but by His Majesty's Opposition. We hear in these proposals the passing bell of a famous service in its present form, the Indian Civil Service, which in the 19th century was Great Britain's greatest contribution to Indian administration. It is unfortunately the fashion today to decry that service. I believe that in an early tomorrow, when in its present form it will have passed away, it will receive posthumous recognition, and that those who are called upon to govern India in different circumstances in the near future will realise for themselves the integrity and devotion that that service gave to this country. Well, Sir, as I have said, we are out to help. More than that, we too can see the vision splendid, and dream the great dream, of a self-governing Federal India, an organic whole, a whole continent united in one political union in that true League of Nations which is the British Commonwealth today. That is a new ideal, not historically a new ideal, but it is a new ideal to put before the whole of the youth of this country.

There is the dream and there is the business. I believe that the first business is to provide a strong Government for that Federation, to ensure that the men of single mind and purpose, who may be called upon to guide India's destinies, shall not be at the mercy of the political combinations and intrigues of those who have a less single mind and purpose.

With regard to the safeguards, I welcome the view regarding them that was put forward by Sir Cowasji Jehangir. It is the same view as was put forward by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru in London; it is the view which was recorded in the statement of settlement which you, Sir, read out the other day. The purpose and end of those safeguards is to safeguard the Dominion of India; that is to say, they are in the interests of India itself. It is in that light that we shall discuss those safeguards; and we wish to emphasise, as Sir Hugh Cooke emphasised, that all we ask is that British citizens in this country,—we to whom already you have accorded the right to vote and the right to take part in your politics, to sit in your Legislatures, and to whom you have always extended a welcome which we appreciate,—that we should not be treated in a penal way, or should be deprived in matters of commerce, of any of the equal rights and privileges which every Indian receives the moment he sets foot on the shores of Great Britain. That is substantially all that we ask for.

In conclusion I would like to hope that the outcome of this debate may be, now that we are assured of the great help of Mr. Gandhi and of his fellow-workers in the solution of all these tasks, to carry on the work from the point to which it has been brought by the very remarkable and distinguished labours of those who went to London,—that the outcome may be that for non-co-operation, which to us represents the frustration of the human spirit, we may now have definitely substituted an ideal of co-operation. Thus can we work together to harness the political enthusiasm of the young men of the country for what Mr. Gandhi himself and Mr. C. R. Das have both categorically stated at different times to be the higher and the finer ideal, that is to say, a great political union within the British Empire. (Applause.)

Sir Hari Singh Gour (Central Provinces Hindi Divisions: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I have no doubt that Honourable Members on this side of the House will appreciate the tone and the temper which underlies the utterance of the Honourable the Deputy Leader of the European Group. He has struck a sympathetic note, to which not only we on this side of the House but all India will respond. We have always felt, and we feel all the more today, that with the support of the European community in India, the future of India is assured, and with the assurance given by Sir Hugh Cooke and Mr. Moore, we feel certain that so far as India is concerned the struggle is not a struggle of Indians but a struggle of Indians and Europeans resident in India. Sir, the European community may be assured that the Indian people will stand by them when they get self-government, as they have stood by them when they had self-government. The people of India are hospitable and the people of India have always been hospitable. You may be sure, Sir, that whatever misgivings may be lurking in their minds, when India comes to her own, the European community in India will have no cause or occasion for grievance against self-governing India.

Sir, this is one of those occasions when you cannot enter into the details of the constitutional scheme propounded by the Round Table Conference, and as Sir Cowasji Jehangir has pointed out, it is impossible to understand the Blue Books without the contents thereof being explained by those who were present at the Round Table Conference. But, Sir, that may be the shortcoming of those who had not the privilege of attending the Round Table Conference. There are certain facts which this House must take note of. The Prime Minister in England,

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in his concluding speech, stated what was the view of His Majesty's Government on the future policy regarding India. They said: "The view of His Majesty's Government is the responsibility for the Government of India should be placed upon Legislatures, Central and Provincial". Honourable Members must remember what these words mean, because the federation in India is to be the federation of self-governing provinces with the Indian States; the responsibility for the Government of India cannot be placed upon the people of India, but upon their Legislatures. That is to say, that in any federation that might be accomplished, the responsibility will be the responsibility to the Legislatures and not to the people at large. The second point that Honourable Members must remember is that this responsibility is subject not to safeguards only but to statutory safeguards; that is to say, safeguards will be entered in the statute, but their limits will be defined and their scope limited to the purpose mentioned in clause 2 of His Majesty's declaration. Then, Sir, these are the two fundamental declarations of His Majesty's Government. That is to say, the first is that the responsibility is to be transferred to the Legislatures and the second thing is that the responsibility will be subject to statutory safeguards.

Passing on to the next paragraph, His Majesty's Government point out that the future Central Legislature shall be established upon a federal basis, and there it is pointed out that the precise form and structure of the new Federal Government must be determined after further discussion with the Princes and representatives of British India, and it is upon this point that this House can usefully contribute to the discussion as to the future constitution of the Federal Government of India. Sir, Honourable Members who have spoken on this subject have, one or two of them, expressed a doubt and asked, if there is to be a federation of British India with the Indian Princes, who are autocratic within their own States, how is this federation to work? I can only remind the Honourable Members of the speech made at the Round Table Conference where it is stated in the Federal Structural Sub-Committee's Report, page 198, that:

"The Indian States do not desire either to discuss or vote upon questions which concern British India alone and are of opinion that this question should be definitely excluded. Nor do the Indian States contemplate that any question of paramountcy will come at any time within the purview of the Federal Government."

Now, so far as the intervention of the Indian States in the administration of British India is concerned, this statement is perfectly clear. The Indian States demand that their representatives in the Federal Assembly will take part only in matters which are classed as federal, and that in matters which are of British Indian interest, the federal Members of the Indian States, whether nominated or elected, will not take any part. That ensures a certain degree of autonomy and independence to British India, and that, I think, allays one of the lurking fears in the minds of some Honourable Members on this side of the House who objected to the federal structure of the future constitution of India. Sir, federation was thought of not only by the Round Table Conference, but in the Montagu Report there are two pregnant paragraphs dealing with the future federal constitution of India, and if Honourable Members will

remember the words uttered at the Imperial Conference of 1917, they will find the following statement of policy regarding the future constitution of India. There it was stated:

"That any re-adjustment of constitutional relations while thoroughly preserving all existing powers of self-Government and its complete control of domestic affairs should be based upon a full recognition of the Dominions as autonomous nations of an Imperial Commonwealth, and of India as an important portion of the same in British India; should recognise the right of the Dominions and India to an adequate voice in foreign policy and in foreign relations; and should provide effective arrangements for continuous consultation in all important matters of common Imperial concern and for such necessary concerted action founded on consultation as several Governments may determine."

Sir, I regard this as the *Magna Charta* of India. In 1917, the Imperial Conference, after cancelling the Resolution of the Imperial Conference of 1907, pointed out that India must be brought into the family of the self-governing nations of the British Commonwealth, and that India as an important part of the British Commonwealth must be consulted upon all important matters of Imperial concern. Sir, it is following on this declaration of policy relating to India that India was invited to be a signatory to the Peace Conference in 1919, and in 1920 when the League of Nations was established, India became a Foundation Member of the League of Nations, and it must be remembered that the membership of the League of Nations under the covenant of the League was only open to self-governing countries, and India was thus placed on the same footing as the other self-governing countries. Honourable Members are aware that in later years India was invited to the Naval Conference; she became a party to the Kellogg Pact, and has been empowered to appoint her own Trade Commissioners, and only I think the other day the Government of India entered into a commercial treaty with Turkey. So that the international status of India was established independently of the statutory constitution which India possessed under the Act of 1919. Sir, it is this new status which India acquired in the comity of nations that has been recognised and legalised by the deliberations of the Round Table Conference. British India cannot stand alone. British India with Indian India must now conjointly go ahead if there is to be a future constitutional development of this country. I therefore submit that, so far as the federal constitution of India is concerned, there cannot be two opinions.

We now pass on to the safeguards. Sir, Honourable Members on this side of the House have expressed misgivings as to the meaning of safeguards affecting the financial autonomy of India, and as Sir Cowasji Jehangir has pointed out, the language of the Sub-Committee on the subject is somewhat vague, and I am glad that vagueness is repeated in the concluding statement of the Prime Minister printed at page 81. It is stated there:

"The Report of the Federal Structure Committee indicates some ways of dealing with this subject, including a Reserve Bank, the service of loans and Exchange policy, which, in the view of His Majesty's Government, will have to be provided for somehow in the new constitution. It is of vital interest to all parties in India to accept these provisions, to maintain financial confidence. Subject to these provisions the Indian Government would have full financial responsibility for the methods of raising revenue and for the control of expenditure on non-reserved services.

This will mean that under existing conditions the Central Legislature and Executive will have some features of dualism which will have to be fitted into the constitutional structure."

[Sir Hari Singh Gour.]

What the Honourable Sir Cowasji Jehangir says is intended by the financial safeguards is this: that so long as the Reserve Bank is not established in India, there would be transitory safeguards; but as soon as the Reserve Bank has been established, these transitory safeguards will be withdrawn. If that is the meaning—and I understand that that is the meaning of financial safeguards—we have no objection to them at all, because no one is more jealous of the credit of India than the people of India themselves; and I therefore submit that the safeguards on the financial side proposed at the Round Table Conference should receive the concurrence of this House.

Sir, there are various other questions which have been raised in the Round Table Conference and which will be the subject of discussion at the future session of the Round Table Conference. I am speaking here on behalf of the non-official Members of this House, and I think I shall be justified in conveying to the Honourable occupants of the Treasury Benches that there is a feeling on this side of the House which I am asked to voice, that in any future consultations that may take place, the representatives of this House must not be ignored. (Applause.)

The details of the various recommendations of the Round Table Conference are still open to discussion and debate in this House, and outside, and I do not think that we shall be justified placing our views before the Government at this stage, because the Round Table Conference will meet here and in England and then it will be time for the representatives of this House to express their views on the various topics left undecided at the Round Table Conference.

Sir, I feel and most of my friends on this side of the House feel strongly that we are under a debt of everlasting gratitude to His Excellency Lord Irwin and Mahatma Gandhi (Cheers) for having brought about this great settlement, without which the future constitution of this country could not have been settled with the concurrence of the people of India. When we turn to the proceedings of the Round Table Conference itself, we cannot forget the yeoman service done by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru (Cheers) and Mr. Jayakar and Mian Sir Muhammad Shafi, the Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri and his numerous colleagues who have contributed to the success of this great Conference. All that we can now hope is that the future work of this Conference will be conducted with the same amity and goodwill which has characterised the first Conference in London.

Mr. Muhammad Yamin Khan (Agra Division: Muhammadan Rural):

Sir, instead of wasting my time on complimentary phrases to the people who went to the Round Table Conference, I wish at once to proceed to analyse what has been achieved in the Round Table Conference. I welcome the announcement of the Premier that responsibility is to be given to India in the centre and in the provinces. I now wish to analyse the Report of the Federal Structure Sub-Committee. I welcome the fact that the Princes have come and joined hands with the other delegates from British India for the progress of India; but the scheme which has been evolved and the demands which have been put forward by the Princes as regards the part which they want to take in the future constitution does not appeal to me at all. I cannot agree, and I think no right-minded

man who goes deeply into the matter will agree, with the scheme which has been put forward by the Federal Structure Sub-Committee at all. What is it that they want? They want to have 50 per cent. of the seats in the Upper House and 33 per cent. of seats in the Lower House for the Princes. Who will be the persons coming from the States will be decided by the Princes themselves. The people from British India will go there by election according to the present system, while the people from the Indian States will be the nominees of the Princes. Let us see what more they want. They want a share in the Executive; and what will be the Executive? The Executive will not be removable unless by a vote of a two-thirds majority of both the Houses combined. This means that in the Upper House of 150, the Princes will have 75 seats; in the Federal Assembly they will have 33 per cent. or 84 out of 250 seats, or altogether more than 160 seats in both Houses; and no Minister can be removed unless he can be removed by a majority of two-third votes of both Houses combined. Now, the Minister who will be appointed will be a Minister who will enjoy the confidence of both Houses and not of any one particular House. This means that the Princes alone will have a voice in the future administration of India and not the British Indian citizens. Therefore what we are going to have is the substitution of the British bureaucracy by an autocracy of the worst kind in India which is prevailing. That is the scheme which we are going to have before us today and I am surprised that several Honourable Members have got up one after another to praise this constitution which has come like a boon to them

Diwan Bahadur A. Ramaswami Mudaliar (Madras City: Non-Muhamadan Urban): If my Honourable friend will permit me to interrupt him for a moment

Mr. Muhammad Yamin Khan: I am not ready to give way. I do not want my time to be wasted. What else do we get under this scheme that the Princes want? They say that we should have nothing to do with their States but that they will have everything to do with our country

Sir Hari Singh Gour: No; they do not say that.

Mr. Muhammad Yamin Khan: My Honourable and learned friend, Sir Hari Singh Gour, ought to have read better before interrupting me. If he had carefully gone through page 25, paragraph 36 of the Report, he would know what is the position of the State's representatives in relation to matters affecting British India alone. I do not want to waste the time of the House by repeating what is stated there in the book.

I want to know what will be the position of those who will come from the Indian States. Even if they come by election, as long as there is no democratic constitution in the States, they will only be the nominees, practically the nominees of the ruling Princes. Nobody can dare oppose the person who is put up by the Princes in any State as long as the autocratic power remains in their hands. Now, I cannot see how the people who will go from the Indian States to the Indian Legislature will not be a drag on British India. The Princes will try to use their influence and the power which they wield in the shape of money, in the

[Mr. Muhammad Yamin Khan.]

shape of gifts and in the shape of jobs at their disposal, and surely, you do not want to go back on the progress which British India has made already. British India has made quite enough progress and she can look after her own interests without the Indian States being dragged into her affairs. The Indian States will be quite welcome to our assemblies when their subjects have been enfranchised and the Princes accept the position of a constitutional Governor; only then, and not till then, can we have them in our midst.

Let me say that I would rather have no responsibility at the centre than have a responsibility on this condition, and be ruled by the Indian Princes in this House and in the Government of India. It may be that my Honourable friends have not carefully read the scheme, and as such they welcome it. I can quite see the enthusiasm of Sir Cowasji Jehangir, who is anxious to advocate his cause because he was a party to this scheme, but we have to examine, and carefully examine what they have done. It is not for them to speak, to advocate their own cause, but it is we who have to judge what they have achieved there.

Another point that I wish to stress is that I have thoroughly examined the scheme and I am not in any way convinced that this is a step for the improvement or progress of India. Leaving this subject aside, there is another matter where I feel that a great deal of injustice has been done to the consistent demand of the Assembly, and I wonder how any Honourable Member, who has once voted that full reforms be given to the North-West Frontier Province, can welcome the reforms which are recommended for that province today and to which they have agreed in England. With the unanimous voice of the elected Members of this House, it was recommended that the North-West Frontier Province should get the same reforms as the other provinces in India, but I am sorry to say that some Members in their enthusiasm and zeal over the words "responsibility at the centre" have completely ignored all other factors. They seem to be enchanted by this scheme, as they were by the eight units scheme which was hurled at them in 1923, and I say that they will repent later that they ever accepted the proposed reforms. Sir, the North-West Frontier Province is the only province that deserves absolute freedom. The people there are united, there is no communal or racial discrimination there, and they are the people who deserve the greatest consideration. Yet, they are to be put back, and the reforms which are to be given to them are a little better than those which were devised under the Morley-Minto constitution. And still, some of my Honourable friends want me to join with them in praising the delegates who have agreed to that meagre measure of reform. However eminent the delegates to the Round Table Conference were, I cannot be a party to praising them for having agreed to this kind of thing.

Then, what have they done about the Army? It is said that these two subjects, namely, foreign relations and the Army, are reserved. Let it be so, but still, there might have been an advance in the shape of Indianisation in the Indian Army and keeping control of it in our own hands, which the delegates have failed to do. Sir, the Conference cannot have my support or any word of praise from me in that behalf. I would have liked them to realise that we should not be at the mercy of a policy which would be enunciated from a distance of 8,000 miles from this country.

Some of those who went to England deserve real praise for their effort to try and bring the one vexed question of minorities to a successful conclusion. But there were certain others who did not see their way to have this matter settled in the cool atmosphere of London, and they have left it over to be decided here. I should have rather liked that these members had not left it to be decided here and thus evoked the comments of people who cannot see outside their own caste and creed. If this matter had been settled, that would have settled many other things too, but I find that has been left as a legacy to the people here, whereas that is a question which ought to have been decided in the cool atmosphere of England. I cannot congratulate those people who were a drawback in the settlement of this question, and I think there is a great deal to be achieved before we can think of congratulating anybody, or having any kind of democratic Government for India. We do not know how the future will materialise. I see germs which may develop and break this thing for which so many laurels are given by my Honourable friends.

Nawab Naharsingji Ishwarsingji (Bombay Northern Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, at the very outset I take this opportunity to express my deep sense of gratitude on behalf of the constituency I have the honour to represent and myself, towards the British as well as the Indian and Provincial Governments for endeavouring to bring India to its proper level, materially, politically and socially. In my opinion it is but just that Honourable Members of different schools of thought should combine with open hearts to make the best use of the opportunity to bring about an honourable and amicable settlement in accordance with the noble announcement made by the Prime Minister of His Majesty's Government, with such modifications as the circumstances of the country need.

In my opinion the announcement of the Premier is very sincere and the discussion that took place at the Round Table Conference was real and genuine, and I must say that Honourable Members who took part in the Round Table Conference deserve credit and sincere compliments.

It will be seen, Sir, that nearly nine Sub-Committees were appointed to deal with the questions of Federal Structure, Burma, North-West Frontier, Franchise, Defence, Services and Sind. And before I speak on this subject I would like to make few observations pertaining to general masses and agriculturists.

India is not a small country, but India is a big continent with numbers of religions, and sentiments. Over and above this, there are numbers of castes and creeds. Thus it is a most difficult task to get all into one focus. Not only that, but India is an agricultural country and nearly 70 per cent. of the whole population is agriculturist. Thus it is quite clear that one has to work very carefully and to face numerous mentalities with varieties of opposition. The conditions in the rural areas are not such that the people can properly realize what the real meaning of the reforms is, nor can they take an interest in them without burdening themselves with responsibilities, or until the power of appreciation has been created among the agriculturists. Whatever reform is introduced it will surely be viewed with suspicions and doubts, and the causes of misunderstanding will remain as usual, and ultimately the progress and advancement of the country will be very slow. It seems to me that, whatever new structure is made hereafter, there is nothing for this class

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of people to aspire to. After all, whatever new structure is framed, powers vested in the new structure will be exercised over them, and it is but just that the sense of appreciation and the sense of understanding the administration should be created among them. Most of us are elected in this House by the agriculturists; we have to live among agriculturists; we have to take money from agriculturists, and the State has to rule over the agriculturists; and it is proper that some solution should be found. The question now arises, what should be the solution? And my reply would be this—that along with other questions, the question of establishing of a Rural Council should be again thought out, whereby a new field may be opened for this class of people, where they can exercise their activities and put forth their grievances through that Council and discuss the questions affecting them in their own language, in their own way and in their own manner. If this could be achieved, they will think that they are not neglected. They will think that they have got something to aspire to and that they have to discharge certain duties and responsibilities. The ultimate result of this would be that the power of understanding the administration would be created, which would be of very great value to the general progress and advancement of the country.

Now, coming to the main subjects discussed at the Round Table Conference, I will make a few observations. The question of the federal structure is the most important one, but at the same time it is complicated too. The Ruling Princes deserve compliments from all of us for having accepted the idea of federal government. Whether the combination will turn out successful or not is a subject of doubt, but this is a subject which can very well be dealt with by the Princes themselves. On the question of separation of Burma I would say that if Burmans are prepared to shoulder the burden, I do not see much objection in granting them their request. If they want to be separated from us, they can well do so, or if they want to remain with us they are welcome to remain with us.

On the question of the separation of Sind, I say that it should be separated as the people of Sind desire so. But here the question of readjustment should arise, because the importance of Bombay Presidency will be reduced. It is known to everybody that the Ruling Princes of Kathiawar are shifted from the Bombay Presidency and placed under the control of the Indian Government, and Sind also is to be separated. Thus the Bombay Presidency will be very small, and so the question of readjustment will naturally arise, which should be considered very carefully when the question of new reform is considered.

Now turning to the question of the Frontier Province I am in agreement with the opinion expressed in this House, with such modifications as the circumstances of the country call for, and I would further say that whatever discontent prevails in that part of the country should be remedied.

Now coming to the question of franchise, in my opinion, the principles laid down are open to criticism, because the main principle is on a population basis. I think so long as the class possessing different interests and the class which has got a real stake in the country are not able to get a sufficient number of seats in accordance with the vested interests they have got in the country, strong discontent will have to be faced, and

therefore I urge that, before any final conclusion is arrived at, this question should be thoroughly investigated. And side by side the question of establishing a second Chamber in Provincial Councils should properly be thought out, and I feel sure that all the complicated questions will be solved mainly if not wholly.

I am much pained to see that the question of the Muslims of India has not been properly solved, and I am afraid that until and unless Hindu-Muslim unity is achieved, there will be a deadlock in the progress which is to be made hereafter. Muslims are born Muslims; they are Muslims, they will remain Muslims and they will die Muslims. Neither can the Hindus drive out the Muslims out of the country, nor can the Muslims drive out the Hindus from India. Both have to live in India and have to die in India, and I see no reason why both should not meet with open hearts and shake hands to bring about an amicable and honourable settlement. I cannot share in the theory that there should be a mixed electorate with reserved seats, because Muslims are not a small community, but Muslims are a nation. Muslims have got equal rights with Hindus, and until the feeling of brotherhood is created, no new structure can be built in India. Muslims should have the privilege of having a separate electorate on the principle of self-determination, and their seats should be proportionately maintained, and not only that, but the interests of Muslims should be safeguarded in all directions. I mean the interests of the Muslim community should be guaranteed, socially, politically and materially.

Let me remind you of our old days of happiness and harmony and peace prevailing between Hindus and Muslims. We both used to take part in marriages and on sad occasions with equal feelings, and we used to carry out the worldly affairs with mutual help and goodwill. But somehow or other the same feelings are not in existence today, which is a matter of great regret. We both should unite and find out the causes, and when causes are removed I feel sure we shall be the same again that we used to be before, and under these circumstances I very strongly appeal first to Muslims and then to my Hindu brothers to come forward with open hearts and place their cards on the table and the result will be nothing but peace and peace alone.

The question of other minorities will have to be considered very carefully and sympathetically, and care should be taken that sufficient safeguards are maintained in the new constitution. Minorities should feel with confidence that their rights in the country are guaranteed.

There is another point which is not of less importance. There is a class in the country generally known and called Landholders, Talukdars, Inamdars, Jagirdars, Zamindars, and their holdings on more than one occasion have been guaranteed by Government. Their holdings are on different tenures, and in no circumstances should the tenure be affected. Care should be taken, when the question of constructing the constitution is considered, that their vested rights in the country and in lands are properly safeguarded politically and materially. Moreover their representation in all the Chambers or, say, Houses should be maintained in accordance with their importance. Their number of seats in each House should be allotted so that their voice may be of some importance.

Sir, when I refer to the small book of the Round Table Conference, what I find is that not a single delegate from Bombay Presidency was

[Nawab Naharsingji Ishwarsingji.]

chosen by the Bombay Government or by the Indian Government from this class who could represent their interest, although almost all other provinces had thought it desirable to select delegates from this class. I should say it was most unfortunate. This class is scattered over all the presidency, and from the beginning of the British advent till now they have played their part most loyally, both in the interests of the public and Government, and I feel confident that, even now they will not fail to discharge their duty if they are placed rightly in the new constitution, with adequate seats in their possession. It appears from this small book, page 43, that there is an idea and suggestion about forming a second Chamber.

The question about establishing a second Chamber is most worthy of consideration. This class in the Bombay Presidency is an important class, and if Sind is excluded, we have to remember that nearly hundred lakhs of rupees are paid by this class to Government, which is nearly one-fifth of the total land revenue of the Bombay Presidency, and I think that the Bombay Government would be well advised, in consultation with the Indian Government, and the class particularly interested, to consider this problem most carefully and sympathetically. This is not the place, nor is this the time where the detailed grievances, and negligences on the part of the Government can be explained, as detailed matters can very well be dealt with when we are actually sitting to form the new constitution, and I leave this matter, merely saying that the question may be fully considered along with the whole scheme when it is considered.

To support the case of this class, I will only refer to para. 147 of the Report (1918) on Indian Constitutional Reforms, page 94, and page 4, para. 5 of the Government of India's Despatch on Proposals for Constitutional Reforms (1930).

Before I conclude my speech, I would like to say a few words in connection with the safeguards and the powers proposed for His Excellency the Viceroy and the Governors of the Provinces. I do admit without hesitation that the reservations and safeguards regarding Army, finance and foreign relations are absolutely essential and that emergency powers to ensure peace and tranquillity in the country, to guarantee the vested rights of the landed aristocracy and other minorities and to stop drastic measures of legislation, ought to vest in His Excellency the Viceroy and Governors of the provinces.

It is the common law of nature that no responsibility could be placed without powers. If His Excellency the Viceroy and Governors of the provinces are made responsible to carry out the administration with efficiency, powers and safeguards are indispensable.

If a careful survey is made of the Reports of the Round Table Conference, there is a clear indication that the Government at Home, the English delegates and the delegates who had gone to the Round Table Conference from India have played their parts most soberly and with sincerity in the best way they could, and they deserve credit and compliments from all of us. Indian delegates have been treated on equal terms and with affection and feelings of brotherhood, and I once more thank them all most heartily, and I do hope that when the delegates from London arrive in India, India will not fail to maintain the Indian tradition of hospitality.

Lastly, I should say most emphatically that until and unless there is confidence and trust between the rulers and the ruled, no settlement can be achieved. I therefore hope that the persons who desire the welfare of the country, and desire to see India progressing and advancing materially, politically and socially, should come forward, leaving aside all petty and minor differences, to shake hands with open hearts, and I do feel sure that India will be elevated to its proper level within the Empire. (Applause.)

It is a matter of great satisfaction that His Excellency the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, has been able to achieve a settlement with the Congress people through Mahatma Gandhi, and I feel sure that all the sober-minded people will appreciate the noble work done both by Lord Irwin and Mahatma Gandhi in the interests of the country, which will surely facilitate the carrying out of the work of the Round Table Conference, and I take this opportunity to thank both His Excellency the Viceroy and Mahatma Gandhi for their noble efforts, which are purely in the interests of the country.

Let us now forget the past. Let us mind the present and think of the future. (Applause.)

U. Tun Aung (Burma: Non-European): Sir, after you have heard all about India, a voice from Burma may give you a change. Burma, Sir, is a country which is cut off from India by natural barriers, and as such, people in India have little or no notions whatsoever about Burma. Only the other day, when I moved a motion for adjournment, the Honourable the Leader of the House stated that Burma was far away, and the real conditions, the real state of affairs were not known to this House. Such, Sir, is the fate of Burma. But lately Burma has forged ahead and has received the attention of the Honourable Members of this House, as well as of the public in India, by virtue of the question of separation. There seems to be a great deal of mystery, Sir, about this question of separation. I am not here to say why or why not Burma should be separated, nor to discuss the merits or demerits of separation, but I do say that separation is and will be the necessary consequence of the aspirations of the Burmese people. Their aspiration is, Sir, not separation first. They want a political status, a constitution, which will be of the same nature as that which will be accorded to India. In Burma there are, no doubt, different sections of political thought, but if you examine all these, you will find that separation becomes a necessary consequence of the realization of their aims and objects. Now what has been done at the Round Table Conference with regard to Burma? If you refer to the Resolution that was passed, you will find that, while the principle of separation has been accepted, it is laid down that the prospects of constitutional advance towards responsible government held out to Burma as part of British India will not be prejudiced by the separation. Now here my view is, Sir, that the cart has been placed before the horse. The Burmans in Burma are claiming a degree of political advance as much as India is going to get: and in realizing that advance, we say that separation will be a necessary and natural consequence. But instead, this question of separation has been made capital of and that principle has been accepted. I am sure, Sir, that this principle of separation as a condition precedent will not be acceptable to Burmans in Burma. It is needless for me to remind the

[U. Tun Aung.]

House that when the pledge by the British Parliament was given to India, that the progressive realization of self-government would be the objective of the British policy, Burma formed, as she still does part of the British India, and that pledge was as well meant for, and equally applicable to Burma. But Burma is not India, just as much as Ireland is not England. Burma is different from India in more than one way. There is no tie in common with regard to race and religion, creed and custom; there is no common feature, in that Burma does not have communal feuds between Mussalmans and Hindus; Burma does not have the caste system; the literacy of the Burmans in Burma is very much higher than that of Indians in India. We have it even from the lips of a high official who has had experience both in India and Burma—I refer to Sir Reginald Craddock, who has been described as one of the greatest diehards—he even has declared that Burma is different from India and is fully fitted for democratic institutions. I shall just refer to the note which he wrote which was referred to at the Round Table Conference by the Burmese leader:

“There are features in the social system of Burma which mark it out as *prima facie* a more promising soil for the introduction of electoral institutions than can be found in India. The widely diffused primary education already mentioned, the emancipated condition of women, the freedom from violent religious antipathies, the great tolerance of the Buddhist religion, the absence of a landed aristocracy, of caste distinctions, and of hereditary occupations—all these are factors which tell strongly in favour of the ultimate success of democratic institutions.”

Sir, as I have said, the conditions in Burma are quite different from those of India, but unfortunately the question of Burma has been shelved merely on the hint of the principle of separation being accepted. I submit that this is not the proper disposal of this momentous question. I do repeat that Burma wants separation, and I wish it to be distinctly understood that Burma wants not merely the separation, but a separation with the proper status, status being the condition precedent. That status should be in no way inferior to that given to India. Unfortunately, that point was not made so clear in the Round Table Conference, at least so far as the proceedings show. We have read in the Government of India's Despatch, on page 86, the following:

“When the announcement of August 1917 was made, Burma was, as it now is, a part of British India. The progressive realization of responsible government was promised to Burma equally with the rest of India. It is important that the pledge then given should be re-affirmed to a separated Burma. In some quarters doubts have been cast on the motives alleged to underlie official support to the policy of separation.”

Quite rightly, doubts have been expressed because instead of going on with the question of what status Burma should get, the Government of Burma, supported by the Government of India, have been dealing with the question of separation only. And naturally doubts, arise as to what sort of constitution Burma will get after the separation has been granted. I should remind the House that everywhere both in India as well as in England the gospel of frankness, sincerity and good faith has been preached and it is time that mistrust should be replaced by trust, suspicion should be replaced by confidence, and as such the underlying motives in the minds of the Government officials both in India and in Burma with

regard to separation should now be made clear. There should be a declaration made that Burma will get a status which will be in no way inferior to that of Indian and that separation will follow as a natural consequence. It has been said in the Round Table Conference that separation was asked for purely as a matter of self-preservation. Sir, Burmans in Burma have got the same aspirations as Indians in India have. They feel that if the pledge given in 1917 and reiterated in 1919 is to be given effect to, they have proved themselves to be worthy of the trust during the years that have elapsed, namely between 1917 and 1931, in so far as the management of their own affairs is concerned. The Burmans feel that they would be in a position to tackle their own affairs as efficiently, if not better, than the Indians in India will be able to do. Now, Sir, nothing has been done in the direction of declaring what status Burma is to get. We are being asked to leave India's anchorage but we know nothing about the destination for which we are bound. Nothing has been done to show that Burma is going to get the status called Dominion Status. India has her representation in the League of Nations; Burma has none. So far as I understand, that is the first indication of the status that a country is going to have. If a country gets admitted to the League of Nations, then the fact that that country is going to get Dominion Status is well-defined and settled. But so far as Burma is concerned, not a word has been said about the representation of Burma being allowed on the League of Nations. Where is the indication and where is the sign, that Burma will be assigned a status which will be equal to that of India? How can it be said then that Burma's political advance has not been prejudiced by separation? Only the other day Colonel Kenworthy asked in the House of Commons a question regarding the status that Burma was to get. The Secretary of State simply replied that that question had been disposed of in the Round Table Conference. I submit that the way in which this matter has been disposed of has no meaning in it. There is no meaning in the Resolution that has been drawn up. It is extremely vague. Who is going to judge whether the status that is going to be conferred on Burma has in any way been prejudiced by separation or not? Who is going to decide that the constitution that is to be given to Burma will not be prejudicial to Burmans after their separation from India? We shall be left entirely helpless. We shall then be not in a position to say anything except to receive what shall be given to us when once we are cut off from India. So I wish it to be definitely understood that the separation depends entirely on the fulfilment of the first condition, namely, the status, which should be clearly defined and declared before separation is made. Only after that has been declared, the question of separation will crop up. My last word is that we ask for a political constitution on the lines of Dominion Status in the hope that we shall be able to manage our own affairs. We ask for a mare to ride and not a mare to carry.

Bhai Parmanand Devta Sarup (Ambala Division · Non-Muhammadian): Sir, no sooner we begin to talk of the Round Table Conference, our attention is at once arrested by the personality of Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi is so deeply associated with the idea of this Conference that we cannot easily ignore him while discussing this subject. We are all aware that the suggestion of a Round Table Conference was thrown out just when Mahatma Gandhi's first non-co-operation movement had reached its culminating point.

[Bhai Parmanand Devta Sarup.]

(At this stage Mr. President vacated the Chair, which was taken by Diwan Bahadur T. Rangachariar.)

The attitude of the Government was so stubborn that they rejected the idea and it did not assume any practical shape. Ten years have passed away since then, when there grew up an agitation about the boycott of the Simon Commission. After this agitation the direction of affairs came into the hands of Mahatma Gandhi and he again set up that very movement. Then, Sir, the suggestion came for the opening of negotiations and this time we find that Mahatma Gandhi and his party adopted a different attitude. They met the Viceroy and there at that meeting they wanted an assurance which could not be given under any constitutional rules. This stiffness on the part of Mahatma Gandhi and his party led to the movement called the civil disobedience movement. We all know a large number of people have been put into the jails on that account. We have also known the sufferings of the people under the *lathi* charges of the police. All these things have happened since then. But the Government having committed themselves by an announcement had to hold the Round Table Conference. Mahatma Gandhi had rejected the idea simply because the assurance could not be given to him and his party. The Round Table Conference was, however, held and we know and nobody can now entertain any doubts that this Conference has met with the greatest possible success. There was one flaw in that Conference and it was that the party for the sake of whose co-operation this Conference was called did not take any part in it. This flaw has now been removed by the peace negotiations that have been held during the last few days between His Excellency the Viceroy and Mahatma Gandhi and these talks coupled with the famous declaration of the Premier, would remain as a landmark in the constitutional history of this country.

I will just say a few words with regard to the movement of Mahatma Gandhi. We are all aware of the amount of spirituality that Mahatma Gandhi is possessed of. He came to India from South Africa with a novel idea in his mind. He wanted to introduce his principle of passive resistance into the field of political warfare. He tried this experiment during the first non-co-operation campaign. It worked for some time but the hands of Government were strong, Mahatma Gandhi was arrested and the movement was put down. Soon after his arrest, those friends of his who had joined hands with Mahatma Gandhi left him. They started a different propaganda and Mahatma Gandhi had practically to retire into private life. It was the boycott of the Simon Commission that revived his enthusiasm and he came into the field. After this, it was a piece of good luck for Mahatma Gandhi that he has lived long enough to make his novel experiment again after these ten years while his friends who had joined him during the first campaign had all passed away one by one.

Mr. K. Ahmed: This is past history of the Round Table Conference. We want present history of the papers laid on the table.

An Honourable Member: He is making his maiden speech. He should not be interrupted.

Bhai Parmanand Devta Sarup: There was also another piece of good luck for Mahatma Gandhi, namely, that at this period there were at the helm of British affairs, men of an entirely different type. Had there not

been men like Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and men of the type of Lord Sankey at the helm of British affairs, and had there not been a noble, sincere and earnest man of the type of our Viceroy, Lord Irwin, even the amount of success that this movement has met, could not have been possible. Thus, Sir, this thing has been brought about, and as I said, it was a lucky chance for Mahatma Gandhi to have lived and seen his campaign brought to such a fruitful end. Now, the time has come for all of us to be happy over this and to work for the success of the plans that have been settled.

As regards the achievements of the Round Table Conference, they have been enumerated by many of the Honourable Members here. The greatest achievement of course is the form of constitutional structure that has been settled at the Round Table Conference. No doubt as my Honourable friend over there suggested according to the new scheme, the Princes would take a leading part and we would be under the thralldom of the Princes instead of the foreign bureaucracy. But I think, Sir, the autocracy of the Princes and the democracy of British India cannot go on at the same time. Surely British India would influence the people living in the Native States and very soon the time would come when the people in the Native States would have the same rights and the same privileges that we are enjoying in this country. (Hear, hear.) It is just this federal form of constitution that is the best that can possibly be devised for a country of the type of India. Otherwise the Native States would always be a source of trouble and almost an impossible task to be handled. It is possible that this idea may have existed in the minds of many for a long time, still a very great credit is due to the British statesmen who have fixed this plan and this form of structure for the constitutional development of this country.

Then, Sir, the other great achievement of course is the responsible government. There are reservations and there are safeguards, but in spite of these safeguards and reservations, I think the fundamental principle has been finally decided by the declaration of the Premier and by that declaration the centre of gravity has been shifted practically from Downing Street to this Honourable House, over the deliberations of which you are just presiding. I think, Sir, this principle having been decided, a new era opens up before us and now we have only to do the constructive work that lies before us in order to achieve our real goal.

Leaving these two great achievements, I think I have to mention one thing, and that is that which this Round Table Conference has failed to accomplish. This is again a delicate affair and I know I am going to touch on a delicate question. It is a strange irony of fate that I would be dubbed as a communalist, although I would be speaking against communalism. Some of my Honourable friends have stated that the North West Frontier Province has not been given the same kind of government as has been promised to other provinces.

(At this stage Mr. President resumed the Chair.)

Then, again, Sir, it has been stated that the Indianisation of the Army has not been quite completed by the Round Table Conference. I would urge, Sir, that if we take all these things in a communal spirit, there is a great danger lying in that very spirit as it is antagonistic to the growth of true nationalism in this country. (Hear, hear.)

[Bhai Parmanand Devta Sarup.]

The Round Table Conference failed to achieve this part of its work and the reason is not far to seek. It was due to Mr. Jinnah, who stuck to his 14 points like the old Jew to his pound of flesh. The Nehru Committee had failed to satisfy the communal demands. The Central Indian Committee also failed in the matter and it was not expected that the Round Table Conference could so easily succeed. Even here we find there is the Council of the Muslim League sitting and giving us threats of a future civil war if these 14 points are not conceded. Not only that. In this Assembly I find an inkling of the same communal spirit. The question can be divided into two distinct phases. One is, what is the object of these 14 points? If India is to be redistributed into new provinces, and if these provinces are to be given autonomy, nobody can have any fault to find with the scheme. But such a thing ought to be settled by the Members of this House when responsible government has come in to their hands. But if these terms are presented to us in the form of conditions, and if the Muhammadan community agrees to a settlement only on these conditions, I think, Sir, that shows a strong communal bent, and the growth of such a spirit is totally antagonistic to the growth of real nationalism in this country. I do not oppose these demands of the Muslim community on the ground that they come from my Muslim brethren but on the ground that they would be most injurious and fatal to the growth of nationalism in this country.

I will just try to examine them a little. There is a demand that Baluchistan should be created a separate province. The population of Baluchistan is not even 5 lakhs. Being less than 5 lakhs, it is equal to a *tahsil* or a sub-division of any district of the Punjab, or of any district in any other province of India. To demand that such a small sub-division, where the people are most backward, most fanatical, and given to all sorts of vices which are common to backward people, should be made a province and given self-governing institutions clearly indicates that the question is looked at not from a national point of view, but only from a communal standpoint. Again, Sir, it was the Nehru Committee that settled about the separation of Sind. I remind the House that the population of Sind is about 32 lakhs. The Punjab is divided into 5 Divisions and the population of Sind is much less than the population of any one of the five Divisions of the Punjab. If the creation of a province for these 32 lakhs of people simply to please a sister community or any other community were for the future good and betterment of the country, nobody could have any objection to it, and least of all would I have any objection to the proceeding. But if this is done simply on the demand of a particular community and on the condition that they would then only agree to a settlement to get self-government for India, this means nothing but that there is a communal standpoint. Where the outlook is purely communal, it is the duty of every nationalist in this country to fight that outlook and not to allow it to go on.

Now we come to the North West Frontier Province. That province again has got a population of 25 lakhs. My ground for opposing the creation of a self-governing separate province on the North West Frontier is the same as I have put forth against the separation of Sind. It is said that it is a separate province already but I say it is not. It is a strategic province that was created for the defence of the whole of

India. If a separate province is created for the defence of the country, it is to the interest of the whole country to look to the condition of that province and not to allow it to go into the hands of one community. Sir, I was reading John Stuart Mill's book on "Representative Government". In the chapter on Federal Institutions you will find that he says one great thing. He says that wherever there are federal states and in these federal states there are living separate communities, and if one of these communities has got greater bonds of relationship and sympathy with the hostile neighbouring countries, that state becomes a great source of weakness to the federal government. If this spirit is allowed to grow among the Muslim community here in this country and at the same time we give a chance of creating a separate state in a province where sympathy with the neighbouring hostile countries predominates, it is doubtful whether the creation of such a province on these lines would be for the good of the whole country. Lastly, Sir, there is the financial difficulty. The North West Frontier Province has been supported out of the Central revenues so long. The expenditure would naturally be increased by introducing reforms in that province. Now if we are freed from the burden of paying for the new Council and the Governor and other expenses of that province, I would say, let it be so. But if all the people have to pay for the expenses for the reason that it is a strategic province and is created for the defence of India, it would be a hard thing for us to allow such a thing to happen.

Now I come to my second point and that is about the public services. First of all, comes the Army. With regard to the Indianization of the Army, my Honourable friend, Captain Sher Muhammad Khan, was urging the other day the special claims of the martial races. No doubt the martial races have a claim to special concessions on the Government and they should be encouraged because they are always ready to sacrifice their lives and to shoulder all dangers for the sake of the country. But circumstances have changed and we cannot make the art of war simply a monopoly of any particular class or particular clan in this country. The last great war has established this fact very clearly that all people, whether they are shopkeepers, traders or labourers in the factories, can go and fight their enemies in the battle-field.

Mr. President: Order, order. The Honourable Member's time is up.

The Assembly then adjourned for Lunch till Half Past Two of the Clock.

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

Khan Bahadur H. M. Walayatullah (Central Provinces : Muhammadan) : Sir, the subject of the Round Table Conference is a vast one and involves many complicated problems of great magnitude. The other Members have discussed various matters connected with it, and I have no desire to go over the same ground again as they have been so ably discussed already. I wish to confine my observations to one or two points only.

Sir, I am the only Muslim Member in this House to represent the Muslims of the Central Provinces. Unfortunately, no Muslim was chosen from that province to take part in the deliberations of the Round Table Conference, which was a great disappointment to, and forms a great and

[Khan Bahadur H. M. Walayatullah.]

legitimate grievance on the part of, the Muslims of the Central Provinces. Though few in numbers, they are part of a large and important community, and along with Muslims of other provinces, they watched with much concern the progress of the deliberations which took place in London.

The province of Berar, which is tagged to the Central Provinces has no representative in this House, direct or indirect, so far as the Muslim population is concerned. It is very unfortunate, that their case is always overlooked, and so far as I am aware, it was not even mentioned at the Conference. While the quantum of Muslim representation in the Central Legislature from the Punjab and Bengal was under discussion and each group advanced its claims and counter-claims with great emphasis and meticulous calculations, the Muslims of Berar saw with acute disappointment that they were entirely left out from these discussions and they fear that this injustice might be perpetuated for them. It is hoped that when the new constitution is framed, this omission will not be lost sight of.

Sir, the Conference has done splendid work. The previous speakers have already complimented the delegates for the successful results of their selfless labours, for their zealous and patriotic service to their mother country and on their great achievements. Many great and controversial problems have however remained unsolved, and we must not allow ourselves to be carried away by the idea that everything has been settled.

The entry of the States in a federated Indian Government is beset with difficult problems which can be solved only by men of ripe experience possessing great statesmanship. The methods of election to membership in British India and Indian India are likely to be widely different. How far the States would agree to shape their internal administration according to the decisions of this House remains to be seen. How far the members from the Indian States are to be allowed to influence our deliberations and thus take a part in the Government of British India has to be determined. These are difficult problems to be tackled and will provide ample material for the best brains of India for some time yet.

Then there is the communal problem. It is equally knotty and puzzling. The communal differences have been a curse of this country. Often they have assumed active form and caused the ruin of many families and the loss of many innocent lives on both sides. The country has suffered great economic losses and incalculable damage has been done to the national cause. All efforts to compose them have proved so far unsuccessful. Discussions have only led to the stiffening of the attitude on both sides instead of helping to solve them.

Sir, the Conference left over these disputes to be settled by the communities. It would have been much better if they had been finally settled. It reminds me of an incident. Two parties were quarrelling and fighting over something and the police placed them before a Court. The Magistrate in a persuasive tone advised the parties to settle the matter amicably out of Court. They replied that they were doing exactly the same thing and were actually settling the dispute but the police unnecessarily intervened. (Laughter.)

Sir, the question of their settlement has to be grappled with vigorously. There should be a change of heart on both sides and this question should be approached by all dispassionately in a liberal and accommodating spirit. It behoves the majority community to take the initiative and try to meet

the demands of the minority communities with magnanimity and in a spirit of compromise. I would ask both parties to remove all doubts and suspicions, to eliminate from their minds all distrust and then settle these domestic fraternal disputes in an atmosphere of perfect harmony and mutual confidence. Then and then only we shall be able to evolve a constitution for India which will command the respect and co-operation of all and be conducive to the welfare of all communities and the prosperity of this unhappy and distracted country.

Sir, I hope I shall not be misunderstood. The majority community will never lose its privileged position by granting a few concessions to the minority communities. The latter should also bear in mind that in their own interests they have to compose these differences somehow.

Proportional communal representation in the services is another controversial matter. It is desirable that the legitimate aspirations of all communities in this respect should be satisfied, consistently with considerations of efficiency. I will appeal to the majority community to minimise all chances of quarrel. Equal facilities should be provided for all communities for cultural development and for progress educationally, economically and socially.

If a serious effort is made in a spirit of compromise, the Muslim demands will be found to be capable of adjustment and fulfilment. The grant of reforms to the North West Frontier Province was deprecated at one time by a section of the people. But today the outlook is different and just the opposite. This side of the Assembly has recently given proof of its desire to extend a hand of brotherly help to the people of that unhappy province. They now whole-heartedly support their demand for fair and equal treatment. We feel as much resentment as they do for the harsh treatment to which they have been subjected for many years under peculiar laws and regulations, and we admire their powers of endurance and fortitude which alone saved them from extinction. There is now unanimity of opinion at least on this side of this House on the point of granting them the same measure of reforms as will apply to the rest of India.

Sir, the question of separate electorates is a very delicate one, and the Muslim opinion on the point is very definite and pronounced. Separate electorates may be opposed to the principles of true democracy, but we have to face realities in India. They have existed here for some years and the Muslims are not inclined to part with them. In the present circumstances, they may be continued. Mutual forbearance, joint working of the new constitution for some years, mutual confidence and adjustment may render them unnecessary hereafter and by common consent they may be dispensed with then. Until that mutual trust is created, it is waste of time to dwell any longer in our deliberations and debates on the ethics of joint electorates.

Sir, I would ask the majority community to follow the example of the Egyptians, who granted liberal concessions to the minority communities in order to win their freedom. As soon as the latter are satisfied, there will be nothing left but to make an onward march and with all component parts satisfied and all domestic questions solved, the Indian nation will be able to devote its entire energy in directions which are calculated to be of benefit to the country. To my mind, Sir, this seems to be the only solution of the vexed Hindu-Muslim question.

Mr. N. M. Joshi (Nominated Non-official): Sir, as one of the few Members of this House who had the good fortune to attend the Round Table Conference, I feel I ought to tell this House what my friend, Mr. B. Shiva Rao, and myself, who made it their duty to speak on behalf of Indian labour, did at that Conference. Sir, as is usual with me, I shall confine myself entirely to the labour point of view. It is for those who speak on behalf of the other classes to say whether the results from their point of view were satisfactory or not. But, Sir, I judge the Round Table Conference and its results by two tests. I firstly try to find out whether the working classes will have their due voice in the future constitution for India. The working classes and the masses of this country are not merely anxious for a change of masters. They want self-government, not for a few people in this country, but for all people in the country. It is from this point of view I shall judge the constitution that has been framed at the Round Table Conference. I shall also apply another test, and that test is, whether the interests of the working classes will be adequately protected by the machinery of Government that will be set up in accordance with this constitution. Sir, the Conference has decided to set up a Federation in India, a Federation in which the Princes, and not the people of the States, will have a very powerful voice, and an Honourable Member, Sir, with great delight stated the other day, that the Princes saw, came and conquered. Sir, that Honourable Member may see sufficient reason to delight at this result, but I feel, Sir, that the country need not congratulate itself if this has been the result of the Round Table Conference. I am not wedded either to a federation or a unitary form of government, but I judge every form of government that may be proposed for this country by the tests I have just mentioned.

I shall now see, Sir, how the constitution that has been proposed will stand the tests. In the first place, the legislatures that have been proposed are, in my judgment, not sufficiently large enough for the proper representation of the people of this country, especially of the masses and the working classes. In Europe, there are Legislatures having memberships of 600, 700, 800 or even 900, but a large number of Indian leaders who had gathered at the Round Table Conference agreed that in India we need not have such large Legislatures. Now, Sir, if you have a small Legislature, you will find it difficult to extend the franchise. If you increase the size of the House, you make it at least easier for the wider extension of the franchise.

Then, Sir, they propose an upper House, and the Report states that that body is expected to be a body of weight, experience and character. I feel, Sir, that some fair test will have to be found to judge whether the people who will be sitting in that House do possess the necessary weight,—perhaps bodily weight they may possess—(Laughter), whether they possess the necessary experience and the necessary character, but then are we to understand, Sir, that the lower House will not consist of people who will have the necessary character? I felt, Sir, that the Conference should not have mentioned especially the word "character" in this respect; but, Sir, I do not wish to dwell on this subject of the upper House.

I come to the lower House. Even lower House is to have a large proportion of representation of the Princes, presumably by nomination. The Report does not mention that, but the Princes state that it is the concern of themselves to decide as to what kind of representation the States should

have, whether elected or nominated. I feel, Sir, that their Highnesses should revise their opinion in this matter. If the Princes are going to join the Federation, it is not the concern of the Princes alone who will sit in the Legislatures. If the representation of the Princes is by nomination, to that extent they are going to affect the character of the Legislatures that will be set up for this country. I therefore feel that if the Princes' representation is going to be by nomination, to that extent the Legislatures will not be democratic.

Then as regards franchise for the lower House, the Report mentions that, in order that the constituencies should not be unwieldy, the franchise will have to be high, and the Indian leaders who had gathered there insisted that the Assembly, that is the lower House, must be elected on a direct system of election. Naturally, if you insist upon a direct system of election in a vast country like India, you will have to put a high qualification for a franchise. I feel, Sir, that the working classes and the masses of this country will not accept this provision. The working classes, as I stated at the outset, want to be represented in the Legislatures and want to have a voice in the elections, and if their representation can only be given on a system of indirect election, say by means of electoral colleges, I would prefer an indirect system of election of that character to a direct system of election with a high franchise qualification.

Sir, when we come to Provincial Councils, the Franchise Committee has recommended that an expert Committee should be set up and that Committee should examine whether the franchise could not be given to a number equal to 10 per cent. to 25 per cent. of the population. I feel, Sir, that there is no justification for omitting any section of the population of this country from the exercise of their civic rights. If there is going to be self-government in India it must be for every one. A vicarious self-government is not going to please the working classes and the masses. It is said that there are practical difficulties in the way of establishing adult franchise in India. The area of a constituency is very big, but the area of a constituency is not going to be bigger as the number of members in the Legislatures are increased, and the area can be still further reduced if we all agree to enlarge the number of seats in the Legislatures.

Then, Sir, it is said that there is the difficulty of polling booths. Personally I do not feel that there is any difficulty about polling booths. In India you are required to have a large number of polling booths, and you may have to add some more, but I think there is no real difficulty on this point.

It is then said that the number of voters to be canvassed would be very large. Well, it is quite true that the number of voters will be large, but can we envisage any time in which in India the number of people in the country is going to be a small one? That difficulty is always going to be with us. It is not going to disappear at any time that we can think of, and we have to deal with that difficulty. Sir, I have no prejudice against direct election, if we can secure the representation of the working classes and the masses by direct election. But, Sir, I shall certainly prefer indirect election through electoral colleges or by any other system, if that is the method by which the workers and the masses can be represented. I therefore feel that, whatever the expert committee may decide, the Round Table Conference that may be held hereafter should not agree to any proposal by which a large section of the

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people of this country will be deprived of their civic rights. The Report of the Franchise Committee makes mention of an interesting suggestion made by Lord Zetland, that there should be some people who should be represented directly and some who may be represented indirectly. Sir, if there is a fair division of the seats between those people who are to be represented by direct election and those who are to be represented by indirect election, I shall have no objection to considering any scheme of that kind. But I am not prepared to have one kind of citizenship for those who are educated and possess property and a lower kind of citizenship for those who have not got the good fortune of possessing property. If the number of voters must be reduced under any circumstances, Sir, that can be done without penalising any class, by laying down a qualification which will be common to all classes of people. I suggest that we may put down an age qualification for reducing the number of people. Let us say that those people who are over the age of 30, or 40, or 50, or 60, can alone vote. By that means you can reduce your number, but at the same time, no class of citizens will be deprived of their right of citizenship. (*Mr. Muhammad Yamin Khan*: "What about the Sarda Bill?"). If at all the Round Table Conference comes to a conclusion that there will not be adult suffrage, then, those people who will have to represent the cause of labour at that Conference will have to insist that labour must be represented in the Legislatures of this country by special constituencies. At present, there are special constituencies by which Members are elected by capitalist constituencies as the landholders, the industrialists and the commercialists. We claim that labour in all the Legislatures should have at least equal representation with the capitalists. Take, for instance, the present Legislative Assembly. The representatives of Europeans, who are the representatives of capitalists—I am quite prepared to make an exception in the case of my friend, Mr. Moore (Laughter)—the representatives of the Chambers of Commerce, the representatives of Indian commerce and of landlords altogether number 21, while only one Member, by the favour of the Governor General, is asked to represent the interests of labour. Sir, I cannot accept that position. In the Provincial Legislatures, there are nearly 90 members representing capitalist interests, while there are only 10 members representing the labour interests, and they are all nominated. Sir, labour cannot hitherto be content with nomination. Not only that, but labour will insist that its representation in the Legislatures by special constituencies must be equal to the representation of the capitalist interests. I suggest that for the representation of labour, if there are going to be special constituencies, the special constituencies should be the trade unions, and the qualification for franchise should be membership of a trade union. (*Mr. Muhammad Yamin Khan*: "What about agricultural labourers?"). Sir, I am not against agricultural labourers and what I have said applies both to agricultural labour as well as industrial labour.

Now, I would like to consider very briefly the functions of the Legislatures that will be set up under this constitution which is proposed. In the first place, it is a federal form of government. If we go by the experience of the world, it is difficult for a federation to protect the interests of the working classes sufficiently unless special provision is made for the control of the Central Legislature over the provinces in labour matters. We are therefore anxious that labour under the federal constitution must become a federal subject. A federation has no interest for the working

classes at all, if labour legislation and labour matters are not going to be a federal subject. Sir, this difficulty has been experienced in other parts of the world. Take the Dominions of the British Empire,—Australia, Canada and others. You find it difficult to get such good legislation as health insurance, unemployment insurance, etc., in all these Dominions, but take the case of Germany where the federation has reserved to itself the power of dictating to the provinces in the matter of labour questions, and you find good labour legislation in that country. Sir, I shall not take very much time, but I shall only refer to one thing. . . .

Mr. President: The Honourable Member has only one minute more.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Sir, I shall finish. And that is, that under a federation we should not be deprived of the international protection which labour has secured up to this time through the League of Nations. India is a member of the League of Nations and of the International Labour Organisation. India has ratified some of the Conventions, though not as many as we would have liked. But, Sir, if India becomes a federation with the Princes as parts of the federation, I feel that it would be difficult for a federation, consisting not only of the provinces in British India but also of 500 Indian States, to ratify the conventions, Sir, the last sentence. We, who represent labour interests, have no desire to stand in the way of any constitution coming into existence in this country. In the past, the British Government and the British Parliament may have or may not have protected the interests of the masses or the working classes. But one thing is clear that, hereafter, under no constitution will the British Government or the British Parliament, be able to protect the interests of the Indian masses and the Indian working classes. . . .

Mr. President: I cannot allow the Honourable Member to continue.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I shall complete the sentence, Sir.

Mr. President: I am sorry I cannot allow the Honourable Member any further time.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt (Burdwan Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, the Leader of the House has moved a Resolution:

“That the Parliamentary papers in connection with the Indian Round Table Conference be taken into consideration.”

Sir, if by Parliamentary papers the Report of the Indian Round Table Conference, as presented by the Secretary of State for India
 3 P.M. to Parliament by command of His Majesty is meant, I do not know how we, the representatives of the people in the Indian Legislature, come in in this matter. Has the Parliament asked us to give our opinion on the Report? I pause for a reply, but no reply is forthcoming. The Leader of the House, when moving this Resolution, could have enlightened us whether Parliament wants our opinion in this matter. If not, are we gratuitously to thrust our opinion upon a body who may or may not listen to the same? Would it at all be dignified for this House to do so? All this discussion is merely waste of time, but I hope the House will bear with me for a few minutes when I make a few observations. It may be that our discussions here may be helpful to the delegates to the Round Table Conference but even in that case I would like to know whether they really

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require our advice in this matter. We have heard more than one delegate to the Round Table Conference, who represents the capitalists as well as those who represent labour. We have heard only mutual admiration. The Report begins with an appreciation of their own achievements which would have come with greater grace from the lips of others. In page 4, the Report has been described as containing "Material of the highest value for use in the framing of a constitution for India, embodying as they do a substantial measure of agreement on the main ground plan". This is how they have complimented themselves. They have also been complimented by the Prime Minister of England in highly eulogistic words.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: They were not the words of the delegates.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt: The words are in inverted commas and it must be the words of one of the delegates. In page 72, I find the Prime Minister applauding their services so that they may not be greeted with black flags on their arrival in India with the following words:

"I think you will go back to India, whether you are disappointed as to the work or not, and say 'We were met by our British colleagues on terms of hospitable equality'."

I do not understand the exact implication of the words "hospitable equality".

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: (Rohilkund and Kumaon Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Equal hospitality.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt: Equal hospitality, as my friend suggests. If that be so, I do not grudge it. The Prime Minister continues:

"We have put our case before them and they have listened with a desire to accommodate us; and they have put their case before us and we assure you that there is so much in their case, so much experience in the working of institutions, so much in relation to the peculiar conditions of India, that they and we must come to agreements upon it."

Here comes the badge of inferiority of these delegates. They had to submit their case before a superior body and that superior body was kind enough to listen to them. They think that if they come to us with these credentials, as many of the Round Table Conference delegates have done, we shall take them at their word. Unfortunately for many of us we cannot do so. What is the reason? The reason is that the Conference was constituted without that dominant political party which only counts, the delegates were not chosen either by the representatives of the people or by the Central Legislature, but they were chosen by the British Indian Government. It was, therefore, really the Government of India meeting the British Parliament. Nothing else than that. They were the representatives of the Government of India and not the people of India.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy (Leader of the House): May I point out that, in answer to questions, I have said three or four times that the selection was not made by the Government of India.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt: That makes very little difference. I do not utter these words with a view in any way to mar the peaceful atmosphere that has dawned upon the country by the wise statesmanship of one of

the greatest Viceroy who ever came to India in consultation with the saint of Sabarmati, who represents all that is noble and good in human nature. Let us congratulate ourselves that at last the Parliament has found out its mistake and now they want to take into confidence those who really represent the people, for framing a constitution for India.

Now, Sir, I won't say anything farther about the personnel of the Round Table Conference. One criticism I beg to offer with respect to the Report that is in our hands. I hope the work will be begun anew. Some Members have applauded the recommendation about the Federal Government, though it has been criticised by my friend, Mr. Yamin Khan, and rightly criticised. I do not really understand what is meant by a federal constitution, embracing both British India and the Indian States. Either it is a camouflage or it is to have no real responsible constitution for India. There are no less than 562 British Indian States. Their system of government is certainly not the type of the government we have in British India, and the dragging in of the British Indian subjects along with the Indian State subjects has been cleverly brought in by those who do not wish to see India win Swaraj, because they know perfectly well that at some point or other there will be a breakdown. That is my idea of the whole thing. Sir, I am a believer in a constitution on a unitary basis. I am strongly opposed to that federation which has the benediction of several Members of this House. I fail to understand how that system of government can be introduced in a country like India. From the dawn of history in this land, from the Vedic times down to the days of Muhammadan rule, we have had a unitary system of government—not a federal system of government. A federal system of government in this country at least, if not elsewhere, will divide the people of one federated State from those of another and will operate as a clog in the progress of both and hamper national advance which as a nationalist I have so much at heart. (Hear, hear.) I am opposed to the idea of framing any constitution with the concurrence, or rather with the approval of the British Parliament. Sir, I am a believer in the right of self-determination for India. I contend that in this matter of framing a constitution, we are not praying for boons and concessions as we used to do in the early days of the Congress, but since then within the last two decades there have been kaleidoscopic changes in human affairs everywhere in the world as also in this country, and we stand on our legs today demanding our just rights; and those rights are nothing less than the attainment of *Purna Swaraj* about which Mahatma Gandhi has spoken in unmistakable terms. My Honourable friend over there, Mr. Arthur Moore, has said that we have already got Swaraj; well, whether we have got it or not, I wish we may get Swaraj, and I pray that Mahatmaji's hopes may be fulfilled, but, Sir, unless the Government of India choose to take the Mahatmaji's counsel, there will not be *Purna Swaraj*, and I think also that this Report should not be the basis of the new constitution and the work should be begun anew. (Laughter.)

Sir, I may be permitted to point out one other thing to this House, namely, that the proposed constitution in the Report is full of safeguards. Sir, these phrases, "safeguards", "transitory stages", "the realization of self-government by progressive stages" are the Serbonian Bog in which the Report is bound to collapse, and India cannot have real Swaraj with those

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safeguards. Sir, you want to realize the prophetic vision of Lord Macaulay which was portrayed by him nearly a century ago in such pregnant words, as:

"Having been instructed in European knowledge, they may at some future age demand European institutions, whether such a day will ever come I know not, but never will I attempt to avert or retard it. Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history",

Sir, I invite the Government of India to expedite that proudest day in the annals not only of England but also which will be one of the proudest days in the annals of our own motherland. (Applause.)

Mr. E. Studd (Bengal: European): Sir, I am very glad to have this opportunity of adding my tribute to those which have already been paid to the work of the Round Table Conference and its delegates, for, in spite of the opinions of the last speaker, I feel sure that most people will agree with me when I say that that Conference has certainly achieved a foundation which will stand as a basis for the future constitution which is to be built; and I think most people will also agree with me that the successful results of the negotiations which H. E. the Governor General has concluded go a step further with that foundation. I believe that, whatever our tribute of thanks and admiration to him may be for these successful negotiations, the verdict of history will enhance that admiration and not detract from it. Sir, there are many problems and difficulties still to be faced, and our superstructure has still to be built. I use the word "our" in its widest sense to include all communities, all parties and all interests in India. I desire to associate myself with what my Honourable friends, Sir Hugh Cocks and Mr. Arthur Moore have said with regard to any help that we may be able to give. It seems to me that the first problems to be solved are those which mainly concern Indian parties and Indian communities; but if, as Sir Hugh Cocks said, they feel that we can be of any assistance and can give them any help in the solution of those problems, they can be quite certain that that help will be gladly and willingly given. (Applause.)

Sir, I have listened with great interest to the speeches in this debate, especially to those of the delegates who have returned from the Conference, and perhaps most of all to my Honourable friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir's speech on the subject of financial safeguards. I do not think, Sir, that there is any country anywhere in the world, whatever its constitution may be, which has not got safeguards of some kind or other in the constitution—not safeguards which are merely temporary, but safeguards which are inherent in the constitution, and which perhaps have almost been lost sight of, because as a result of wise government, they have never had to be invoked; and I personally—and I know many of my community also—hope and believe that that also will be India's happy experience under the new constitution. (Applause.) I welcome the speech and the assurance of my Honourable friend, Sir Hari Singh Gour, with regard to the future of the British commercial community in this country, for it must be admitted that in many sections of my community there have been misgivings which have not been made less by certain articles appearing in the Press and certain speeches which have been made on the subject. I do not believe that those articles or those speeches represent the large body of

Indian opinion, but I was very glad to have Sir Hari Singh Gour's assurance on the subject. For, Sir, we do not ask for anything in the way of monopoly or anything in the way of preference; we merely ask that we and those who come after us should be allowed to continue to carry on their businesses with exactly the same rights and exactly the same equality which we have got now. And we do urge that it is not a matter which can be left to future consideration. Uncertainty will always prevent any man from doing his best work. It is, in our opinion, essential that the matter should be settled when the new constitution is settled. In the past, the British unofficial community had little opportunity of taking any direct part in the political life of the country. Nevertheless, I venture to say that even then we were able, though possibly only indirectly, to contribute something to that political life. Under the present constitution we have the right of voting, the right of representation in the Legislatures and the right of taking our share in various parts of the working of the country—rights which we value and appreciate, rights which we realise carry with them a responsibility; and I think the proof of our recognising that responsibility is the fact that we come and take our part in the work of this Assembly. (Applause.) In the future we are to have similar rights of voting and representation, and a similar share in the working of the country, but responsibilities are going to be bigger and the work is going to be harder. I can assure you that we appreciate those rights and also appreciate the responsibilities, and shall do our best to fulfil our part of them. Now, Sir, it seems to me that if we are given those rights of citizenship, it is not logical or fair to differentiate and to say, you may vote, you may be represented in the Legislatures, you may take your share in the working of the country but you may only have certain limited rights as far as business and commerce are concerned. I do not believe that that will ever be the attitude of that broad-minded Indian opinion to which my Honourable friend Sir Abdur Rahim referred on Monday. The position, I think, is still more strengthened by the fact that in the United Kingdom the British Indian has just the same rights as I or any member of my community have for trading and carrying on his business. We have, Sir, a large stake in the country; our interests are of a permanent character, for we are not just here to-day and gone tomorrow. Most of our interests have been built up over generations of hard work and organisation, often the son succeeding the father for two or three or four generations, and I think we may claim that we have done a great deal of pioneer work in developing the commerce and the industries of India. I think we may also claim that, in doing that, we have done much for the good of India and for the good of Indians. During the ordinary course of our business we have learnt to appreciate the good qualities of many Indians with whom we have had to deal. We not only appreciate their good qualities, but we have formed friendships with them which we value. Sir, no man or company or firm can carry on a business unless as the basis of it he has got the goodwill of the people with whom he is dealing. We maintain that we have got that goodwill, and I go further and say that the basis of everything must be goodwill, whether it be the framing of a constitution or the working of a Government or the running of a business, or even dealing with safeguards, for, however much you may try to make them, unless you have goodwill behind them to work them, their value is a doubtful one. Sir, it seems to me that India in her industrial and commercial development is still only at the beginning of things. There is an

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enormous field for development and if India is to develop that field to the full, surely she must mobilise all possible resources of capital, of brains and of industry in order to do so. We have very deep and sincere sympathy with Indian aspirations, not only political but commercial and industrial as well. We believe that when the new constitution comes into being there will be many problems and many difficulties which will have to be solved. We cannot help feeling that Indians and the Government then in power will need our help and will be glad of such help as we can give them. Again, I should like to assure them that they need have no fear of any lack of response on our part. We shall, as equal citizens in the country with them, be only too anxious to take our share and do everything that lies in our power to help them in the difficult task which they have undertaken. (Applause.)

Dr. A. Suhrawardy (Burdwan and Presidency Divisions: Muhamadan Rural): Sir, untroubled by the responsibilities and cares of leadership and untrammelled by any restrictions and restraints imposed upon members of a party, I find myself in the happy position of being able to speak freely, fearlessly and frankly, and that for hours but for the fear that the 20 minutes' rule might cut me short in the midst of a sentence and make me run the risk of being misunderstood and misrepresented. I am, therefore, not inclined to pay any compliments or shower congratulations on the members of the Conference or its Committees and conclaves or bestow compliments on the lesser and greater gods of His Majesty's Government. I have neither the time

Mr. R. S. Sarma (Nominated Non-Official): But you are taking up all the time in introduction!

Dr. A. Suhrawardy: My time is not yours.

Maulvi Muhammad Yakub: That is his look-out.

Dr. A. Suhrawardy: I have neither the time nor the inclination to burst into a pæan of praise or sing halleluiahs on bended knees like my friend who interrupted me from the other side of the House. I shall only make a very few observations as regards the character and composition of the Conference and its findings. But before I do so, I will have to take notice of the unmaidenly speech of a new Member who, judged by his past exploits is not a maid, old or young, and judged by his speech he is not a nationalist at all, but a rank communalist. Fortunately for him **Mr. Jinnah** is not in the House. Had he been in the House, in spite of the protection which chivalry extends to maiden speeches, my Honourable friend **Bhai Parmanand** or **Premanand**, who had thought it fit to pour out the vials of happiness or of love in order to soothe Muslim feelings, would have found to his great regret and cost that **Mr. Jinnah**, in spite of the fact that his name begins with "J" is not an old Jew but a young Tartar. He has complained of communalism. He has complained of the Fourteen Points of **Mr. Jinnah** to which he stuck like the old Jew. We all know that the Fourteen Points of **Mr. Jinnah** are not the Fourteen Points of **President Wilson**. Even of **President Wilson's** Fourteen Points, I do not know how many are embodied in the Treaty of Versailles or the Covenant

of the League of Nations. We all know that the Fourteen Points of Mr. Jinnah are neither the Twelve Axioms of Euclid, nor the Ten Commandments of Moses. They were on the same footing as the Eleven Points of the Mahatma; and even the Eleven Points of the Mahatma were reduced to Six Points and they are now embodied in the terms of the armistice or the settlement of peace. But where they are I leave it to my Honourable friend to discover—whether the Eleven Points have all evaporated into nothingness or are to be found in the crystals and grains of salt and the provisions for manufacturing salt in the villages. The Fourteen Points of Mr. Jinnah are only fourteen points for the basis of a compromise. And if similar midnight vigils are held in a secret conclave in a place not far away; if men of goodwill meet in the same spirit the leaders of the Muslim community; if our demands contained in the fourteen points are not treated contemptuously and not lightly brushed aside, but treated in the same spirit of statesmanship and goodwill; if night after night the great Christian Viceroy, who strove hard to convince the Christian of the East to apply the noble ideal of the Sermon on the Mount to practical politics and to affairs of the world, till as a result of his labours you all see the glimmerings of the dawn of peace, applies the same single-minded effort of statesmanship, the same devotion, the same earnestness of purpose and accords the same treatment to Muslim leaders, then another miracle may yet be wrought. But if the Mussalmans are treated with contempt either by Government or by the leaders of the Hindu community, well, I think, I will not be far wrong if I were to state on the floor of the House that Mussalmans, upon whom is not lost the lesson of the triumph of the non-co-operation movement, will take a leaf out of the book of the Mahatma, and the Round Table Conference whether in Westminster or in Delhi, whether in mid-winter or in mid-summer may go on without the Muslim representatives, at least of Bengal. (*An Honourable Member*: “Why of Bengal only?”) I speak of Bengal because I have the honour to represent Bengal. We are in the unhappy position that not a single Muslim representative who enjoyed “the hospitable equality” to which reference has been made by my Honourable friend, Mr. Amar Nath Dutt, is present here today. “Mr. Jinnah”, in the words of Mr. Mudaliar, “has not chosen to return to India” and Mr. Ghuznavi, I do not know where he is, has not chosen to be present in the House. Those were the only two Muslim Members of this House who were selected, I do not know by whom, whether by His Majesty’s Government or by the Government of India, but the Honourable the Leader of the House has repudiated that soft impeachment more than once. Out of the only two Muslim representatives, not one is present here today. So our misapprehensions cannot be allayed

An Honourable Member: There is Sir Abdul Qaiyum.

Dr. A. Suhrawardy: I am talking of elected representatives of the people. Sir Abdul Qaiyum is certainly here, but I do not know whether he is present in the House. My Honourable friend Bhai Parmanand also referred to the communal spirit shown in the demand for the creation of Baluchistan as a separate province. He says, it consists of only 5 lakhs of human souls and they are a very backward people, fanatical and not fit for self-government or self-governing institutions. I should like to place all these arguments together and make a present of them to the die-hards against whom severe complaints are made on the floor of the House for

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not granting full Dominion Status or *Purna Swaraj* or responsible government to India. These are the arguments and weapons drawn from the armoury of die-hardism and I cannot understand how my Honourable friend, who spoke as a great nationalist, could rely on such arguments for the denial of rights claimed for and enjoyed by the rest of India to the people of Baluchistan. He also wishes the North West Frontier Province to be treated as the Cinderella of the Provinces in India. He says it should not be allowed to be created into a separate province—it is a separate province already—he says it should not be allowed to go into the hands of one community. He has enunciated a new doctrine and a new idea of nationalism which he preaches. I should like him to take possession of the North West Frontier Province if he so desires. We have no objection, we Mussalmans have no objection to the North West Frontier Province being populated by the Hindus exclusively and entirely. If there is another peace Conference at Lausanne and another Treaty of Lausanne and if we, Mussalmans, will have a voice in the deliberations of such a conference, we will not have the slightest objection to an exchange of populations and to allow the North West Frontier Province being entirely populated by the Hindus. Let them have the burden of the responsibility of defending the frontier. He says that sympathy for the neighbouring hostile province is one of the reasons why the North West Frontier Province should never have a full-fledged self-government. This is a novel and a new doctrine. They can never hope to have the same degree of responsible government unless they become *suddhi-ised*, unless they become non-Muslims because they have the misfortune of being the co-religionists of the neighbouring Muslim kingdom of Afghanistan. Sir, I do not think I should take the remarks of my Honourable friend Bhai Parmanand seriously. I should leave other Members hailing probably from the same province as himself to deal with him.

Now, I should come to the points which I wanted to touch upon when I rose to speak. My Honourable friend Maulvi Muhammad Yakub had found fault with Mr. Maswood Ahmad for making certain observations as regards the character and the composition of the Round Table Conference. Although I am partly in agreement with the views of Maulvi Muhammad Yakub, I do not wish either to dissociate myself wholly from the views of Mr. Maswood Ahmad, nor do I wish to associate myself wholly with his views. Mr. Maswood Ahmad, being a new Member, had bluntly stated what my Honourable friend the Vice-Leader of the Nationalist Party stated in his diplomatic language. He stated that, "The Assembly has been ignored and we want representatives of the Assembly". That is a mild way of saying that the Conference was not fully representative and reflective of public opinion and in that I agree with him. There are two senses in which the word "representative" is used, and for the benefit of my Honourable friends, I should like to place before them the views of a great man whose views are entitled to respect. Maulana Muhammad Ali stated at the Conference:

"I am the only person belonging to my party who has been selected by His Excellency the Viceroy or the Government of His Majesty here or whoever it is who has appointed these wonderful delegates. Whose delegates we are we do not know. I do not pretend to represent anybody."

That may be the feeling of many of the delegates themselves. That may be the feeling shared by many of us in this House. But I do not desire to dilate upon this point.

There is another point which I want to place before the House and there I find myself in agreement with the views of my Honourable friend, Mr. Amar Nath Dutt, when he says that it is a waste of time to discuss the Parliamentary papers which have been placed before us. Member after Member have appealed to us to bury the dead past. I am also anxious to bury the past. But the past is a fascinating subject. There have been occasional lapses into the past, even into the realms of epic and poetry and the days of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. I hope the House will forgive me if I also succumb to the same temptation and if I refer to the long-drawn history of the Reforms. I will not start from 1861. But I will come to the year 1929 when the members of the Indian Central Committee were hustled into submitting their Report by a certain date in October. What was the fate of that Report? It fell still-born from the press. (*An Honourable Member*: "Whom did the members of that committee represent?") They represented nobody, just like the delegates of the Round Table Conference in the words of the late Maulana Muhammad Ali. But they were certainly Members of this House and two thirds of the members of the Central Committee were elected Members of the Central Legislature, one half of its members being elected by the Council of State. Their Report fell still-born from the press. Then there was the long-expected Simon Commission's Report

Mr. R. S. Sarma: Was Mr. Kikabhai Premchand an elected Member?

Dr. A. Suhrawardy: He was a nominated Member, but he was a Member of this House.

Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum (Nominated Non-Official): What a curse he should be a nominated Member!

Dr. A. Suhrawardy: It does not lie in the mouth of my Honourable friend Mr. Sarma of Madras, the proprietor of the *Bengalee* and representing Bihar in this House by the favour of the nomination of Government to ask whether Sir Kikabhai Premchand

Mr. R. S. Sarma: The Honourable Member suggested that the members of the Indian Central Committee had the distinction of being elected Members of this House

Mr. President: Order, order. The Honourable Member will please resume his speech.

Dr. A. Suhrawardy: Then that historic document, a classic and a masterpiece, the Simon Commission's Report, was thrown into the waste-paper basket and was not touched even with a pair of tongs. Then followed the Government of India's Despatch the existence of which I must confess I am not even aware of, because I do not think I was presented with a free copy of it and I am not rich enough to spend a few shillings or a few rupees to buy it. Now we have got this Indian Round Table Conference. Before the discussion on the Parliamentary papers could be finished there is a change in the scene. A new vista opens up before us,

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a vista of hope and of promise. This change of scene from Westminster to Delhi, the change of environment and of settings and surroundings and the introduction of new actors may altogether change the character and the complexion of the findings of the Indian Round Table Conference. What boots it then with incessant care to scan the pages of these volumes, to find out whether the safeguards are real or unreal, illusory or illusive?

An Honourable Member: Your time is up.

Dr. A. Suhrawardy: Very well, Sir.

Mr. President: Order, order. I should like to inform Honourable Members that with the utmost desire to allow every Member desiring to address the House, to do so, I must ask them to recognise that it is not possible within the time available to give an opportunity to every one who desires to participate in this debate. I should like to appeal to every Honourable Member who succeeds in catching my eye that he should try to curtail his remarks and bring them within ten minutes in order that other Members may have a chance of addressing the House. I would appeal to each of them to restrict his remarks within as narrow limits as possible and not try to exceed ten minutes.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh (Muzaffarpur *cum* Champaran: Non-Muhamadan): Sir, the Round Table Conference has no doubt assumed a large amount of importance since the happy termination of the Irwin-Gandhi negotiations. We have reason to congratulate ourselves and to congratulate the country on that happy event, and I am speaking in no language of convention when I tender our respectful thanks to His Excellency Lord Irwin and also to Mahatma Gandhi for the happy termination of a tense situation which was prevailing in this country. (Applause.) Sir, the history of the Round Table Conference in a nutshell is this. Government appointed the Simon Commission over the head of this House and of the whole country; and the people resented not only the personnel but also the composition of that Commission. The result was a thorough boycott of the Commission. This House boycotted the Commission and refused money; the country outside boycotted the Commission effectively; and certain Members of this House who were nominated to the Central Committee participated in their own individual capacities and against the wishes of this House and of the country at large. Sir, Government perceived their mistake, although they had not the courage to own it in so many words. It was therefore considered advisable to put forward Sir John Simon himself as the originator of a scheme which culminated in the constitution of the Round Table Conference. This Round Table Conference when it was convened in London for the first time had not a very happy augury of promise, but it was the changed attitude of the Princes which turned the tide of events in that Conference. Sir, the Princes of India were smarting patiently under the control exercised by the Political Department; and as the result of a representation which was made to His Excellency the Viceroy, the Butler Committee was constituted to look into the question. As stated in the Butler Committee's Report, the request for an inquiry originated at a conference convened by His Excellency the Viceroy at Simla in May, 1927, when a representative group of Princes asked for the appointment of a special committee to examine the relationship existing between themselves and the paramount power, and to suggest

means for securing effective consultation and co-operation between British India and the Indian States and for the settlement of differences. The Princes also asked for adequate investigation into certain disabilities under which they felt they had laboured.

That was the origin of the Butler Committee. Now, Sir, the Princes wanted bread, but the Butler Committee gave them a sugar-coated pill, or, if I may say so, a stone. The finding of the Butler Committee was this:

"The fact of the paramountcy of the Crown has been acted on and acquiesced in over a long period of time. It is based upon treaties, engagements and sanads supplemented by usage and sufferance and by decisions of the Government of India and the Secretary of State embodied in political practice."

This was very comprehensive; and the Princes felt that their only safeguard lay in a federal system of government. Our thanks are due to them for the very patriotic part which they played in the Round Table Conference in London. They showed that they were Indians first, and Princes afterwards. Sir, I shall try to follow your desire strictly, and I shall only just say this much with regard to the remark made by my friend, Mr. Yamin Khan. He envisaged a state of things in which the Indian States will be allowed to meddle in our affairs in the federal system, while we shall have no power of interference in their internal affairs. That is not the sort of thing which is contemplated. I will read out only one sentence from the Blue Book which has been supplied to us:

"The Indian States do not desire either to discuss or vote upon questions which concern British India alone and are of opinion that these questions should be definitely excluded; nor do the Indian States contemplate that any question of paramountcy will come at any time within the purview of the Federal Government."

Mr. Muhammad Yamin Khan: What about the executive? Read on further.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: The federal system of government has been accepted not only by many Members of this House who have spoken, but also by the Indian National Congress; and I find that an integral part of the agreement between Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Irwin is based upon the recognition of a federal system of government. I shall put on record the sentence referring to this:

"As regards the constitutional question, the scope of future discussions is stated with the assent of His Majesty's Government to be with the object of considering further the scheme for the constitution of the Government of India discussed at the Round Table Conference. Of the scheme outlined therein, federation is an essential part: so also Indian responsibility and reservation or safeguards in the interests of India for such matters as for instance, defence, external affairs, the position of minorities, the financial credit of India and the discharge of obligations."

So Mahatma Gandhi and the great party which he represents are willing to enter into this Conference on the basis of a federal system of government. Personally I am not going to express my opinion one way or the other, but I am merely pointing out to the House that a large body of opinion represented by the Indian National Congress has in essence assented to this federal system of government. The critical point will arise as to the constitution and scope of this federal system, as well as the character and number of the safeguards which may be necessary to be imposed during the transitional period. But there must be an immediate transfer of full responsibility.

[Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh.]

Sir, I will ignore the remark made by my Honourable friend Mr. Maswood Ahmad the other day, and I would appeal to my friends to ignore some remarks to which they might legitimately take exception. We want to start with a clean slate, with a happy augury of promise and success for the future government of India. (Cheers.) We want that every community and every minority shall have the right to enjoy its own liberty, unfettered by any undue restrictions by any other community or interest. If we start with a desire to be sincere, to be honest and just, not only to ourselves but to all interests concerned, I do not think there need be any apprehension in the mind of any one community or interest that its legitimate interests will not be adequately safeguarded under the changed circumstances to which we are all looking forward with eager expectancy and hope. (Applause.)

Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, it is a matter of profound satisfaction to me and the members of my community—the depressed classes—whom I have the honour to represent in this House, that the Indian delegates to the Round Table Conference have laid the general ground plan for the future constitutional reforms. Talking on a momentous occasion like this, let me tell this House that the depressed classes are in no way behind any other section of this country's inhabitants in their desire for political advance. Rather they appreciate freedom more than anybody else, just as the caged bird longs for freedom all the more keenly because it has known the limitations of a cage or restrictions on its liberty. I may go further and say that we are more anxious for the freedom of this country than others, because we are the original inhabitants of this land, and the country's interests and ours are closely associated.

I can assure this House that we are happy that we are on the road to responsible self-government, a government of the people for the people, and by the people. The outcome of that government, we believe, will be the largest amount of good to the largest number of people. Since we the depressed classes form a large section of the population, we expect the largest amount of good to our people. It is with this expectation that the reformed constitution will bring in new hopes and increased happiness and liberty to the 45 millions of the depressed classes in this country, a vast mass of humanity, that we welcome the change. But we certainly do not favour that kind of political concessions which if given will only benefit the intelligentsia and will not enable the depressed classes to participate in them with equal benefit with the upper ten of the community.

Sir, all of us are eager to raise a magnificent constitutional edifice, as my Honourable friend Diwan Bahadur Rangachariar has said, "A new house", in our beloved country. In my vision of the building of such a constitution I had occasion to view the plan, and to survey the materials out of which this grand edifice has to be built, for it has to be admitted that no solid and harmonious structure can be put up without a preconceived plan, and that no amount of political phrases or catch-words, however ethereal they may be, can conjure up a concrete and stable machinery of government. During my survey of the plan and materials, it has struck me that a splendid mansion of constitutional government can be raised in our country upon four corner stones, namely, the caste—Hindus, the Muslims, the Depressed Classes and the other Minorities. But unless each of these communities is sound and strong, how can they support a lasting

superstructure? Sir, I am qualified to speak at least of one of these, namely, the depressed classes. Can you say with truth that an important section of your country the depressed classes, who form more than one-sixth of its population, are given the privileges which are enjoyed by the rest of their countrymen? Nay, are they not denied even the most elementary rights of mankind and condemned eternally to live in squalid surroundings, the hotbeds of dirt and disease?

Now I say to you who are really interested in the country and in the welfare of the nation that you should prepare yourselves for responsible self-government, and more especially for social solidarity through the breaking down of the caste system as it obtains at present in our country, and this can be brought about by a moral revolution, the sacrifice of selfishness; and the sooner this ban of untouchability is removed, the nearer will you be to the goal of complete Dominion Government for India. Unless you do this, India cannot be free, no matter how much self-government she obtains now. And in the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "You will gain Swaraj only to lose it the next month". Sir, patriotism is good and noble, but I ask what is patriotism without love for your neighbours?

In January 1921, ten years ago, the Indian National Congress passed a resolution for the removal of untouchability. Commenting on this Mahatma Gandhi wrote in *Young India* that the removal of this blot on Hinduism was necessary for the attainment of Swaraj, and that "it was a reform not to follow Swaraj, but to precede it." Just a year ago, in March, 1930, Mahatma Gandhi is reported to have said:

"We want to rule the untouchables, and on the other hand the Government want to rule us. Both are thus equal. If this goes on we do not deserve Swaraj. I am really pained to see this. If you do not allow the untouchables to mix with you, then rest assured Swaraj will go far away from you."

The late Lala Lajpat Rai and Dr. Moonje both have affirmed that Swaraj and untouchability are incapable of reconciliation. What did the late lamented friend of the depressed classes, Lala Lajpat Rai, say? He said:

"I believe that India will not be fit for Swaraj unless this blot on the fair name of Hinduism has been completely washed away."

And I am sure the House would also like to know the opinion of Dr. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the leader of the Moderates, who played a most important part in the Round Table Conference. He remarked thus:

"I do say what is my most sincere conviction, that unless you are able to solve your own social problems about the depressed classes and the untouchables, I do not see any real prospect for real genuine constitutional advance and any constitution that you may get will certainly not arouse any interest in me, because I do feel, howsoever good, howsoever perfect, howsoever ideal your constitution may be, unless you have got the support of the minorities and unless you command the confidence of those whom in your vanity you may describe as Depressed Classes, your constitution will not be worth a day's purchase."

And my friend Dr. Moonje was right in saying that if there was a real desire for Swaraj, the removal of untouchability was not a big Himalayan task, for it is not a herculean task to root out this oppressive system, and especially its most cruel feature, namely, untouchability. Where there is a will there is a way. If the British enjoy a form of government which allows the maximum amount of liberty and fair play to individuals, it is because through every century of their history, and especially during the

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last, they have set themselves to remove the oppressive features in their social structure, whether they affected capital or labour, children, women or the poor.

If Japan again has made the most remarkable progress, it is because the privileged classes, the Samurai, had voluntarily given up privileges which wrought injustice on others, with the single-minded aim of benefiting the country as a whole.

Even when the English nation as a whole was unripe for reforms, or violently opposed to it, a Shaftsbury was able to get laws abrogated which worked oppressively on women and children. A John Howard succeeded in affecting improvements in prison life and a Wilberforce spent his life-time in winning freedom for slaves even in the teeth of opposition from powerful quarters.

If only the smallest percentage of the efforts expended all over the country for the recent salt-making campaign and the methods of defying the Government were directed towards excising this canker of untouchability, which veritably eats our social and political system, untouchability would soon be a thing of the past.

Sir, from what I gather from the study of the history of our country, India has not suffered so much from the want of knowledge of the ideals of government as from the evil of disunion among its people. This evil genius has been at work in destroying the glorious destiny of our dear land. It was not the want of physical power to resist the invader that was the cause of the defeat of our people. It was disunion pure and simple and it has continued down to this day, and it will continue in the same groove till doomsday unless we cry, halt, and turn over a new leaf in our history,—but not a new leaf in a paper constitution, which after all might be termed “a scrap of paper”, but a new leaf in our moral effort. India can be the India of our dreams, “if it chooses”, not in paper, but in its conscience.

Sir, the British have given a definite assurance to fulfil their promises, pledges and obligations. It remains for the Indians now to fulfil their promises, pledges and obligations to the depressed classes. Sir, we are glad safeguards have been promised to us. I fully hope and trust that they will be properly incorporated in the constitution. We no doubt want adult franchise, and what is more important, representation through separate electorates, and that on a population basis.

Sir, the caste Hindus ask us: “Why do you want safeguards? Why do you want separate electorates?” Might I ask them, Sir, in reply, what would they want, if like us they were held in subjection by long standing custom by the domineering classes against their will? What would they want if they were exploited? If they were intellectually starved? If they were denied the benefits of schools, roads, wells, temples? If we now ask for safeguards, it is not our fault. That fault is to be laid at their doors. Sir, for the successful working of responsible government, the contentment of all classes is very essential and it would be only wise to grant the community its desire. Why force an unwanted system upon us? It would be far better to foster the growth of confidence by removing all suspicions of majority manipulations, by granting to us separate electorates. The moment our confidence in their sense of equity, justice and fair play

grows to such an extent as would render separate electorates unnecessary, rest assured, we will not hesitate to join them in joint electorates. At present as the community is so weakly represented in the electorates and so little versed in the craft of the politician, it should be given the protection and the sense of security afforded by the separate electorates. Sir, we are a separate community, though we are labelled as Hindus. We are not allowed to take part in Hindu ceremonies; we are not allowed into a Hindu temple to worship a Hindu god; we are not allowed to read the Vedas, the Hindu scriptures, and it is also said that we have no place in the Hindu heaven. In consideration of our separate interests, our numerical strength, our political importance and our undoubted disabilities, we press our undoubted right as a distinct community to elective representation on the Legislatures, by means of separate electorates.

In this connection I may point out to this House that the depressed classes did not boycott the Simon Commission. Depressed classes associations throughout India appeared before the Indian Statutory Commission and placed before them their considered opinion. In para. 79 of the Indian Statutory Commission's Report, Vol. II, it is said:

"Most of the Depressed Classes associations which appeared before us favoured separate electorates with seats allocated on the basis of population, though one or two still wished to retain nominations."

It will interest the House that the two delegates nominated by the Government to represent the depressed classes at the Round Table Conference held in London are not from those associations that favoured separate electorates, though the Government of India also in paragraph 35 of their Despatch on proposals for Constitutional Reforms had pointed out that, "Recent meetings of Depressed Classes Associations have re-affirmed their belief in separate electorates".

Sir, we want also an adequate share of Governmental responsibilities, particularly a fair share of public services, both civil and military. All that we want is our manhood, our rights.

Sir, on an occasion like this, I will not be true to myself if I do not publicly acknowledge that it is the presence of Englishmen in India that has brought to us a sense of our rights as men. They have been our friends, and we are thankful to them for this. Now that political power is passing from the British into the hands of those who have oppressed us and have been oppressing us in the past, we feel that our position in the future would become intolerable and that under Swaraj or responsible self-government, they would look after the interests of their particular communities and would either neglect us or train us in such a way as to look upon them for ever as our masters. This is why, Sir, we urge for safeguards.

The moment they infuse confidence in us, the moment they bring in a real living feeling of common brotherhood based on equality, the moment they destroy, root and branch, the oppressive and inhuman caste system, the moment we see that real change in them, the change of heart, I assure you, Sir, we will say, 'no more of these safeguards'. We want them only as a temporary measure until real democracy is established, till conditions improve and a real national outlook is developed. I do not

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put separate electorate as an end in itself, but only as a means to an end, the object being effective representation in the Councils for the depressed classes. But we do not believe in social unification by means of formulas, speeches, resolutions and conferences.

Now that we are going to get responsible self-government, I wish to sound a note of warning to the majority communities in this land. When you get power into your hands, see that you do not misuse it, I am afraid a day may come sooner or later—or it may not come at all as it all depends upon how you conduct the affairs of the State with reference to the depressed classes. I say a day may come when the depressed classes will agitate for their legitimate rights and privileges, and if you then resist or repress their legitimate demands, they will then start non-co-operation and civil disobedience movements against your Government. See that you then view their demands and aspirations as you wish the present British Government to view your present civil disobedience movement. After having obtained power into your hands, see that you do not use it as a giant. Do not bring in section 144 against our leaders, and do not promulgate ordinances to send our men to jail.

In conclusion I hope that the depressed classes will secure their voice and representation in all future negotiations and collaborations with Government and that their point of view will always be considered.

Mr. N. M. Dumasia (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Mr. President, as the Honourable Mr. Arthur Moore has pointed out, a new history has been made during the week-end, chiefly on account of Lord Irwin, who has identified himself with the best national interests, and Mahatma Gandhi, who has dedicated his life to attain freedom for his country. Mr. Moore's speech is conceived in a most laudable spirit, which is a happy augury of the absolute success of the Round Table Conference. If Pandit Motilal Nehru—whose loss we all mourn deeply and sincerely, who strove for peace till the last, though unfortunately he did not live to see the happy result,—awoke from his grave, he would not fail to give his blessing to the settlement, which promises to usher in a new and brighter era in India. We all see the twilight of the dawn, and we can await with confidence the glorious sunshine which will restore once more happy smiles on the faces of the people of this unhappy and distracted land.

Sir, the subject that we are discussing today is a vast one. It is the biggest national transaction that has taken place since the transfer of India from the East India Company to the Crown and it is of gigantic proportions and tremendous importance, and it is not possible to come to a satisfactory conclusion without making proper adjustments of different claims. I am speaking as a non-Hindu and a non-Muslim, and as such, I say that unless the claims of the Muhammadans are satisfied, there will be no Round Table Conference, and that is what Mahatma Gandhi himself said yesterday to the representatives of the foreign Press who waited upon him for an interview. Sir, if a new Round Table Conference is not held, it would be a disaster of great magnitude. What the Muhammadans want is that their rights in accordance with their historic and their political importance should be conceded. I have said that there is a demand for the adjustment of various claims. Mr. Joshi pleads for

the labouring classes, the Muhammadans put forward their own rights, and the Indian States people make their own demands. All these demands can be discussed and adjusted at the new Round Table Conference.

The subject that has aroused controversy in India is in regard to the rights of the British commercial community. Reference has been made to this in the Nehru Report, in which it was stated that India was prepared to give equal rights to Englishmen resident in India along with Indians, but the definition of citizenship was not given. Then, again, in this House, on a former occasion, Pandit Motilal Nehru said that when Swaraj came, they would not in any way deprive the Englishmen of their existing rights. If we proceed in that spirit, Sir, I am sure that we will be able to achieve a lasting peace, instead of the provisional peace that has been achieved at present. Mahatma Gandhi said yesterday that he wanted the help of Englishmen. Englishmen inside this Assembly as well as outside have offered their help. If, in return, we tell them that we shall stand by them, that we shall not deprive them of their existing rights, then I may say that a satisfactory solution of all the difficulties will surely be arrived at. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Englishmen. They were the pioneers in commerce and trade and industry, and many English statesmen have done their best to advance the political rights of India. If we recognise that debt of gratitude which we owe to the Englishmen, and if we promise to stand by their rights, and those of the minorities, then we shall be able to achieve a lasting peace not only for India, but for the whole world.

Mr. B. K. Puri (West Punjab: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, we have heard some very interesting speeches, this afternoon, particularly from my Honourable friends who have had the opportunity of going across the seas and taking part in the deliberations of the Round Table Conference. And what I have noticed in particular is that the discussion has more or less assumed a sort of a party aspect, in which the gentlemen who were members of the Round Table Conference felt that they were more or less on their defence, that as such they should uphold and support the findings of the Round Table Conference, whether they were good, or whatever their value or worth might be. A deliberate attempt has been made to convince the House that whatever they have been able to achieve is something so valuable that the House ought at once to go down on its knees and acknowledge it. Well, we are not in that mood at all. We are willing, we are quite prepared to acknowledge whatever these friends have been able to achieve, and to that extent they deserve well of their countrymen. But, Sir, if they really think that they can befool us in any way into believing in the efficacy of certain methods recommended which we really and honestly believe are not possessed of that value and of that worth, they are very much mistaken.

I have carefully gone into the Reports, at least with regard to one or two particular subjects, and I find that so far as the Defence Sub-Committee's findings are concerned, they are highly unsatisfactory. I regret to say so, and I hope that any observations made by me or by any other Honourable Member in this House will not hereafter handicap the labours of those who have yet to sit in deliberation and to chalk out a constitution for this country. We are out to help them if we can, but still, as the representatives of the country, it is up to us to say boldly and frankly if

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we find that there is a flaw here or a defect there. I find, so far as *defence* is concerned, that two obstacles apparently have been cited as a sort of thing which stands in the way of the achievement of the real goal, the real goal being that no self-governing country can exist even for a day unless it has got the capacity to defend itself and so far as the capacity and the power to defend oneself is concerned, I submit that that goal can only be arrived at, if the whole Army of this country is Indianised. At the same time, we cannot ignore the consideration that this sort of thing cannot be achieved all in one day. We must be reasonable, and the process must begin from today; as a matter of fact, it ought to have begun long before, but that process was delayed for reasons which are best known to those in whose hands the reins of government were at the time. Now, when the things have come to a head and we are called upon to see where the shoe pinches, and how the defect could be removed, we find that in the past a policy was pursued which was so suicidal, so detrimental to the interests of this country that, if the House bears with me just for one second, I will place the situation by referring to a passage in that well known book of Sir Sivaswamy Aiyer, where the position is summed up so far as the defence question is concerned. At page 101 of the book the learned author says:

"The policy followed by England with regard to the military organisation of India has been based upon a deep-rooted distrust of the people and the princes of India and the one dominating motive has been how to maintain her hold on India in the event of a general rising among the people. The distrust was the unavoidable result of the government by a foreign power of a vast country inhabited by many millions of people of alien races, creeds and languages. It was deepened by the great mutiny and has not been substantially affected by the lapse of seventy years of peaceful rule and the consolidation of the Empire."

The whole subject of the organisation of the army in India was reviewed by the Peel Commission in 1858-59 and by Eden Commission in 1879."

Then follows the finding of the Eden Commission :

"The purposes of the army in India were stated by the Eden Commission to be to prevent and repel foreign aggression, to prevent armed rebellion within British India and to watch and over-awe the armies of feudatory Native States. The two principles followed by the Government were to demartialize the people and to divide and rule. The demartialization of the people was accomplished by the wholesale disarmament of the civil population. Recruiting was confined to certain areas and classes only on the ground that they furnished comparatively the most valuable fighting material, and that, where the object was to spend money allotted for military expenditure to the best advantage, it was not desirable to recruit from the areas and classes which were supposed to be less martial. Whatever truth there may be in this argument, it was overlooked that from the national point of view, the exclusion of particular classes of the people from recruitment would extinguish the taste for a military career. Such a policy was bound to perpetuate the inferiority, if true, of the excluded classes and inflict injustice on the ground of birth upon members of such classes who might possess all the necessary qualifications for a military career. Now was any opportunity for military training or developing a taste for the profession of arms provided by any system of enrolment in a volunteer corps. Admission to the volunteer corps was practically restricted to Europeans and Anglo Indians."

That was the policy which was followed and that is the finding of the Eden Commission. These are not the criticisms or outbursts of any political agitator. These are the findings and conclusions of a commission presided over by an Englishman and if this was the policy which was pursued in the past, is there any wonder that today we hear that we cannot achieve complete Indianisation because we cannot get the right class

of people, because the martial classes are so scarce in this country, that there is not sufficient number of eligible and properly qualified persons who can be availed of and therefore the Army cannot be Indianised for a considerable time yet to come. These are the arguments which are today being put forward. Now so far as the right of any particular class of people to being called a martial class is concerned, my submission is that the martial classes are not the products of any statutes. There is no such thing as a statutory martial class. Nor can such a title be bestowed by the Government or any power upon any class that "From tomorrow you will be a martial class". Martial classes are brought into existence by the exigencies of the occasion and the time, and it is the time and the occasion which make men martial. In the history of this country and in the history of various other countries and climes, it is a notorious historical fact that when the occasion has arisen, men have also arisen along with it. Look at our own history. The weak Bengali was capable of unsettling things which had long been settled. Then again look at the Sikhs who came into existence owing to the wrongs of those times committed upon the Hindu religion. The occasion gave birth to that class who at the present time are the flower of the Indian Army. That is the Sikhs. Why go so far. Look at the present times. See what has been the result of the Congress movement. Women and children have proved martial during the last 12 months or 18 months. After all what is martialism? Martialism means that you must have the courage and the fortitude and the pluck to meet organised forces. Have not all these qualities been demonstrated to the fullest extent in the recent political demonstrations? I claim on behalf of these people that as occasion demanded they have risen and proved true to the occasion, so that when circumstances demand a particular class of people, they are automatically produced. What was the position of these so-called martial classes when the war was declared? On that occasion there was no discrimination made whether a particular man belonged to the martial or non-martial class. Every Tom, Dick and Harry could enlist and was given a place in the Army. If suitable men came forward, they were even given the position of officers. That in a country like ours, with a population of 300 million people, there is not enough martial material is a position which cannot be tolerated even for a second. There is no lack of material in this country. So far as Indianisation problem is concerned, we have got enough material. Given proper chance and training, we can produce any number of officers and any number of rank and file. If today there is any difficulty on that score, it is due to the wrong and unjust policy that has hitherto been followed. It is not the fault of the people.

Now, Sir, just a word with regard to the speech of my Honourable friend Diwan Bahadur Mudaliar. He was profuse in the distribution of all sorts of compliments, beginning with the Prime Minister downwards. No doubt they are all entitled to our thanks. While I do not deny that at all, my suggestion is that if the list of thanks is not already closed and if my learned friend gets a further opportunity of making a speech, he might also consider the claims of the one party which is entitled to all the thanks that we can possibly give, namely, the Congress. My view is that the Round Table Conference, along with its Dominion Status, whether perfect or imperfect, has been conceded only by the efforts of the Congress and not by the soft or the eloquent speeches made by my learned friend. It is due to the Congress and the men and women who

[Mr. B. R. Puri.]

have made all the sacrifices in the country during the last year or two years.

Sir, if my time is up, I shall only require a hint from you and I shall sit down.

Mr. President: You have exceeded ten minutes, not twenty. You can go on if you like.

Mr. B. R. Puri: If that is so, I shall stop here and will give others a chance.

Mr. H. P. Mody (Bombay Millowners' Association: Indian Commerce): With the establishment of a truce, the conclusions of the Round Table Conference may be said to have emerged from the turbulent arena of party politics into the clear light of day. I hope, Sir, that the financial Pundits and military experts, who have been so greatly in evidence in the last few weeks, will now cease to expound their wonderful theory that with the safeguards and reservations which have been imposed on the constitution that has been outlined in London, India will be under worse disabilities than she is suffering at the present moment. When so much has been left unsettled and so much has been left in the stage of tentative agreements, it would be absurd to make any extravagant claims for the Conference, but this, I think, can be legitimately claimed, and every fair critic must concede it, that the Conference has evolved a constitution which is going to result in the transfer of power from British to Indian hands. That, I think, is the main achievement of the Conference. If I may use a metaphor, the outer fortifications have been stormed and captured, or perhaps, to put it more accurately, they have been willingly surrendered, and it is only a question of time when the inner defence works will be given up entirely. The time has therefore arrived for subjecting the conclusions of the Round Table Conference to a dispassionate and searching analysis.

A great deal has been made of the safeguards and reservations. Unfortunately, some of the critics of the Conference seem to think that the safeguards are the constitution itself, instead of being merely temporary features. Amongst these safeguards those which have attracted the most criticism are naturally enough in the domain of finance, where Indian opinion has expressed itself in no uncertain terms. Now, Sir, as one who recorded his dissent from these safeguards at the Round Table Conference, I shall be the last man to stand up in defence of them in this House. Some of those safeguards are couched in language which is rather vague, and is in other cases a little too wide. I am not going to discuss those safeguards. All that I wish to say is that when the time comes for subjecting them to a careful analysis, we will have to see that those powers which are reserved, to be exercised only in cases of emergencies, are so defined that they cannot possibly operate in ordinary times, and cannot to that extent fetter the independence and powers of the Indian Finance Member. I will only deal with one of those safeguards, that which has aroused most criticism, and which lays down that the Governor General's assent will be required to any Bill which has for its object an alteration in the currency laws of the country. Now, Sir, if this power is to remain with the Governor General only until such time as the Reserve Bank

comes into existence, there is a general disposition to allow that. But, considering carefully the language of the Report of the Federal Structure Sub-Committee, where those reservations appear, it does not seem to me that the power is expressly reserved to be in operation only till the Reserve Bank comes into being. Now this and the questions of the budgetary arrangements, which are again vaguely referred to, and of the internal and external loans, all these will have to be very carefully considered in the new Conference that is going to be set up. I will only say this, that in matters of finance we are all bound to recognize the force of certain considerations—considerations like that of the credit of India in the markets of the world, considerations if you like also of the susceptibilities of those from whom power is to be transferred. I have no doubt that, with the spirit of accommodation which was so much in evidence at the Round Table Conference and which I hope will also be in evidence at the coming Conference in India, the financial safeguards will be so watered down that while on the one hand they confer practical autonomy in financial and economic affairs on the people of the country, they also reserve to the Governor General such powers as are essential, if in the initial stages of the new constitution the fabric is not to tumble down—powers which should be exercised only in case of grave emergencies.

There is just one other matter to which I should like to make a reference, and that is with regard to what is known as the discrimination clause. I want to dwell on this briefly, but very frankly. When the clause first emerged from the Federal Structure Sub-Committee, it was too categorical in terms and it seemed to lay down without any qualification or reservation that there was to be complete equality of treatment between the British and Indian commercial classes. I thought it my duty at once to get up and point out to the Conference certain considerations which must weigh with the Conference before it could accept a clause of this character. I said that, while I was the last man in the world to suggest that there should be anything but equality of treatment between Indians and Britishers as regards their commercial rights, this was subject to the paramount consideration that Indian interests were to be first. I pointed out that where key industries were concerned, and where certain essential national interests were involved, it might not be possible for the principle of strict equality of treatment to be conceded. Upon that, Sir, there was a certain amount of discussion and we had to meet in various informal conferences with a view to evolve a satisfactory formula. That was done, and it is now embodied in the conclusions of the Conference. That formula, I want the House distinctly to understand, safeguards the position of both Britishers and Indians. It safeguards the position of Britishers in this, that so far as their ordinary trading rights are concerned, there is no intention on the part of anyone to discriminate against them. So far as Indians are concerned, it assures to them that in respect of national industries, and where vital national interests are involved, they will be perfectly entitled, not to make "discrimination"—I hate that word, "discrimination"—but to protect their national interests. This clause is clearly to be understood as safeguarding the position both of the Indian as well as the British community. I am sorry that, on account of the shortness of the time at my disposal, I cannot dwell upon this and other important matters more fully. I only want to say that, while we do not claim that we have achieved miracles—judging from some of the speeches of my Honourable friends it would seem as if they thought we

[Mr. H. P. Mody.]

were hungrily looking for compliments and bouquets—we did what we conceived to be our duty; and from the opinions expressed during the last few days, it would appear as if we did not acquit ourselves too badly.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali (Lucknow and Fyzabad Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I am very much obliged to you for your giving me an opportunity to speak on this question. Sir, it is not easy for us now at this late hour to try to cover the whole ground, but for us to say that the Round Table Conference was not a representative body, or that the delegates were not our delegates or things like those, is, I submit, an absolute waste of your time and the time of the House. Now, Sir, what we have to consider at present is how is India going to advance in the future, how the country is to develop. I think, Sir, ever since this truce has been declared, there are now three matters which stand out boldly before us and in the light of which we ought to study this question. The first is—as we find it in the words of the Prime Minister —“that equality with other Dominions will be the goal of India”, and the second is, in the words of Mahatma Gandhi as declared today, “complete disciplined rule from within will be the goal of India”; and the third is—as has been declared by three great Mussalman delegates from India, Mr. Jinnah, His Highness the Aga Khan, and Sir Muhammad Shafi—that it is very difficult to evolve any complete system of administration unless the rights of the minorities are safely, properly and adequately safeguarded. Now, Sir, it is in the light of these three problems that I say the Round Table Conference deliberations will have again to be gone through.

Now, being pressed for time, I think it will be very difficult for me to go in detail into all the deliberations of the Round Table Conference, but I would simply submit and say one word about the Indian States. Sir, I think, just as we find in the House objections expressed about the Indian States coming so easily into the Federation, I think the Indian States similarly might also hurl such arguments in our faces and say, “We stand on a certain basis which you British Indian people do not have”; and that we shall have to consider very seriously; we know it very well that Indians in Indian States have produced very great administrators, and that some of the Rulers themselves are very great administrators, and that although their subjects may be called backward in certain respects, my idea is that they have achieved, on the whole, a great deal of education and are also men of thought and intelligence. At the same time I would say that the Indian States might help us in the task of the Indianization of an Indian Army. So, we have to study these questions in the future Round Table Conference. If I were to say here that the whole thing which has been done ought to be declared a fiasco, or that it should have been done this way or that way, it would not be right now, my submission is that this is not the time for the House to discuss these questions in that light.

Now, Sir, I will say something on the subject of safeguards. Of course, we do not look upon the safeguards as the vital question of our future constitution. We know that safeguards will be put in where they are necessary and I stand here as a representative of my own province and I say that safeguards, so far as the depressed classes are concerned, are very necessary. So far as other communities and the minorities are

concerned, they are very necessary too. In the same manner it is my supreme duty today to declare in this House that this second chamber, in the Provinces, I absolutely dislike, and I would be the first man to oppose it. Why is this second chamber hurled at our heads when we knew nothing of it so far? This second chamber will be an autocratic chamber and what will be its function? It will be simply putting a gag on our future constitution. Having this second chamber will be a dilatory method of dealing with the introduction of the Bills and laws of the country. This second chamber will not in any way, as it is said to do, represent the agriculturists of the country. My idea is, and I say it very plainly, that this second chamber will be always in the way of the poor tenants of the country. It will be not only in the way of the agriculturists, but it will also impede the progress of the industrialists of the country. Sir, it may be said that these great magnates will have to find some place in the constitution of the country. They can come and fight as commoners and as ordinary men in the new constitution of India. Anything which divides them and which tries to throw any kind of discrimination between any parties in India will not be in conformity with the principles of self-government and self-determination. With these remarks, Sir, I conclude my speech.

Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayum: Sir, I did not wish to take part in this debate as some of the speakers who were at the Round Table Conference had put the case so clearly before the House that it was not possible for a man like myself to elaborate it any further. As a matter of fact it was after my friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, had fully explained the whole position at the Round Table Conference that I had really given up the idea of taking part in the debate, but certain remarks passed by one of the speakers this morning about the N. W. F. Province necessitates my saying a few words about it.

Sir, the Conference was a body consisting of people who represented all shades of opinion in the country. The Viceroy, or whoever selected the delegates, had taken care to bring in every class of people that counted in the country. From the Liberals to the Nationalists and from the Mahasabhaites to the Arya Samajists and from the various sections of the Hindus and Mussalmans, men were selected for the Conference and every organisation was represented there. Whether the delegates succeeded in achieving all that they pleaded for or whether they failed in achieving all that they wanted, is a different matter. The question before us is whether every delegate claiming to represent a class had done his duty honestly and had put his claim fully and clearly before the Conference or not. If any of the critics in this House can refer to any statement made by a delegate to show that he had not put in his full claim, we shall admit our fault, but if they are only referring to our failure, we cannot be held responsible for it. In some cases, and especially in my own case, I had a certain mandate from my people, and whether my personal views coincided with the mandate or not, still I had to carry out that mandate; and I think those who were present at the Conference will bear me out that I put the case of the North West Frontier Province fully and clearly before the Conference.

Sir, my attention was drawn to a speech made this morning in this House to which reference was made by my friend Dr. Suhrawardy. I am sorry I was not present when this speech was made; I believe it was

[Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum.]

made by a new comer, so I should like to take this opportunity of informing the Honourable Member that the whole delegation from British India, or rather the whole of India, were not of the opinion which he, I hear, expressed this morning with reference to the rights of the North West Frontier Province for constitutional advance. The case of the North West Frontier Province was not considered from the point of view of policy to which, I hear, he referred. It was placed before the Conference as a matter of right and was based on the broad principles of fundamental political and civil rights, and that was the view which was taken by the Conference of the case. The Honourable Member should remember that there are Provinces where the Mussalmans are in the same position as the non-Mussalmans in the North West Frontier Province, so the position of a minority cannot be any strong argument against the introduction of reforms in a Province. Our case was really based on our fitness, educationally, intellectually and socially for reforms as part and parcel of India. The claim was well scrutinised and I was glad to see that not a single dissentient voice rose from the side of the Indian delegates against our attaining the full measure of reforms and rights of citizenship which were being enjoyed by the rest of India. If certain differential features were introduced into the Sub-Committee's Report, those were to be of a temporary nature, and I am sure that they will all automatically disappear after a short-time. If it is doubted whether people with no experience of reforms in the past will be able to fulfil those responsibilities satisfactorily or not, I can only refer to the state of affairs in the tribal areas where the Pathans are living side by side with the small minority of non-Muslims, who entirely depend on the attitude and treatment of the overwhelming majority of these Pathans. Are the minorities not quite safe there? You will never be able to quote a single instance where non-Muslims have been treated shabbily or badly by that overwhelming majority. There may have been cases in the settled districts of disputes and quarrels between Muslims and non-Muslims, but these cases are generally amicably settled, unlike such disputes in other parts of India, where to my knowledge no case can be quoted of such communal disputes being settled amicably. I can at least say this much that we hope to be able to work out these reforms, better than Benares Katarpur, etc., where people were burnt alive. I assure the Honourable Member—I am sorry I do not know him personally—that we shall never prove to be of the Katarpur calibre, but will be more docile and more reasonable and more just to our neighbours as we have been in the past, especially in the trans-border area, where the protection of life and property rests entirely with our people there. Sir, I do not wish to bring this question of communal troubles before this House because only recently *i.e.*, last week, the N. W. F. P. received the united support, sympathy and good will of all the elected members of this House, both Hindus and Muslims, over an adjournment motion on its behalf and that ought to be enough to satisfy the new comer that, after long experience and long long debates over the question of the introduction of reforms in the North West Frontier Province, the House was convinced that our people were as fit for reforms as the people of any other part of India, perhaps fitter than certain parts of India.

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad: On a point of order, Sir. Half the time has been taken away by the Members of the Round Table Conference either

in praising themselves or in defending their conduct. May I ask the Honourable the Leader of the House to give one more day to discuss such an important question as the Round Table Conference.

Mr. President: I thought the Honourable Member was rising to a point of order. The Honourable Member must remember that Members of the Round Table Conference are Members of the Assembly (Hear, hear), and as Members of the Assembly they took part in the debate and were limited in point of time to the same extent as other Honourable Members. There is no point of order.

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad: I made a request to extend the time for debate by one day.

Mr. President: That is not a point of order. I should like to point out to Honourable Members that it is now five minutes to five, and I think the debate has gone on sufficiently long, but if Honourable Members wish to sit till a later hour I will raise no objection. I think however that the House looks tired and may like that I should put the motion to the vote. I should like to know definitely what the wishes of the House are. I will repeat that I am perfectly prepared to sit to a later hour if Honourable Members still wish to continue the debate.

Sir Hari Singh Gour: I think the motion is not to be put to the vote of the House. I think the Leader of the House has simply asked, as it was done in the case of the Public Accounts Committee, that the Parliamentary papers be taken into consideration, and the proceedings, I suppose, will now be sent to the proper quarters for consideration.

Mr. President: The procedure laid down in the Rules and Standing Orders is that if a motion is placed before the House and is debated, one of two courses is open, namely, that the motion is either withdrawn or put to the vote.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: There is a third alternative open to the Chair. The Chair can adjourn the House before the question is put.

Diwan Bahadur A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: On the other question that has been raised regarding sitting till a later hour, I know that there is a very intense desire on the part of some Honourable Members to take part in the debate. If we can sit till six o'clock, I think, it would be doing justice to those Members. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. President: I should like to know what is the general sense of the House. Individuals may desire to sit till six o'clock. I, for one, will bow to any general desire that may be expressed in the House.

Some Honourable Members: Six o'clock.

Some Honourable Members: Half Past Five.

Mr. President: What is your wish? I find it difficult to ascertain.

Some Honourable Members: Six o'clock.

Diwan Bahadur T. Rangachariar: You can ask those who desire to speak to stand in their places. If there are a large number of Members, I think we may agree to sit longer.

Sir Hari Singh Gour: I think the best thing would be to sit till half past five and see whether the number of speakers is not exhausted.

Mr. President: In that case, we can only have three more speakers.

Sir Hari Singh Gour: I think so.

Mr. President: The number is much larger.

Mr. Muhammad Yamin Khan: We can continue till half past five.

Mr. President: I find that the House is divided on the point. I will not therefore sit later than the usual hour, that is five o'clock. The House will now adjourn.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, the 9th March, 1931.