

24th February 1930

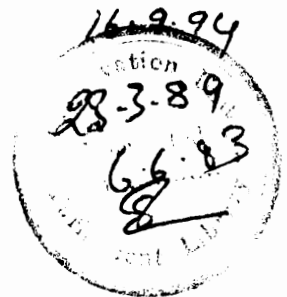
THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES
(Official Report)

Volume I, 1930

(20th January to 24th February, 1930)

SIXTH SESSION
OF THE
THIRD LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 1930

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1930

Legislative Assembly.

President :

THE HONOURABLE MR V. J. PATEL.

Deputy President :

MAULVI MUHAMMAD YAKUB, M.L.A.

Panel of Chairmen :

PANDIT MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA, M.L.A.

MR. M. A. JINNAH, M.L.A.

SIR DARCY LINDSAY, KT., C.B.E., M.L.A.

SIR ZULFIQAR ALI KHAN, KT., C.S.I., M.L.A.

Secretary :

MR. S. C. GUPTA, BAR.-AT-LAW.

Assistant of the Secretary :

RAI SAHIB D. DUTT.

Marshal :

CAPTAIN SURAJ SINGH BAHADUR, I.O.M.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Monday, 24th February, 1930.

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

APPOINTMENT OF PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU TO THE LIBRARY COMMITTEE.

Mr. President: I have to announce that I have appointed Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru to the Library Committee in the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. T. C. Goswami from the Legislative Assembly.

THE INDIAN TARIFF (AMENDMENT) BILL.

PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy (Member for Commerce and Railways): Sir, I present the Report of the Select Committee on the Bill further to amend the Indian Tariff Act, 1894, for certain purposes.

THE STEEL INDUSTRY (PROTECTION) BILL.

PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy (Member for Commerce and Railways): Sir, I present the Report of the Select Committee on the Bill to amend the law relating to the fostering and development of the steel industry in British India for certain purposes.

THE RAILWAY BUDGET—LIST OF DEMANDS.

DEMAND No. 1.—RAILWAY BOARD—*contd.*

Larger Employment of Mussalmans.

Mr. President: Mr. Hayman will now resume his speech on Mr. Ghuznavi's cut on Demand No. 1.

Mr. A. M. Hayman (Railway Board: Nominated Official): Sir, when the House adjourned on Saturday, I had just completed my review of the position as affecting the Muslim representation in our services, so far as it concerned our superior grades, and I had just got on to the subject of Muslim representation in our subordinate services. I said I would approach this question under two headings, firstly, in relation to those employees who draw a rate of salary of Rs. 250 and over and, secondly, all other classes, that is, those who draw salaries less than Rs. 250. Now, Sir, in respect of the latter class, I have some figures before me which compare the representation of Mussalmans on the 31st March, 1926, with that on the 31st March, 1929, and which show the increased percentage that has taken place in regard to Muslims. I will read these figures to the House:

	31st March, 1926.	31st March, 1929.
Europeans	4,920	4,841
Fall in percentage—1·61.		
Hindus	512,666	547,865
Increase in percentage—6·80.		
Muslims	164,185	173,876
Increase in percentage—5·90.		

Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim (Chittagong Division: Muhammadan Rural): These figures include coolies also, who get only 6 annas per day.

Mr. A. M. Hayman: The Honourable Member is right; these figures include all such classes.

	31st March, 1926.	31st March, 1929.
Anglo-Indians	13,559	14,231
Increase in percentage—3·48.		
Total including other classes	721,242	773,888
Increase in percentage—7·30.		

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas (Indian Merchants' Chamber: Indian Commerce): Does the Honourable Member realise that there are no coolies nor scavengers amongst Europeans and Anglo-Indians? Is this a fair comparison to give on this debate in this House?

Mr. A. M. Hayman: I am stating our published figures and I leave it to the Honourable Member to draw his own conclusion.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: I am only pointing out that, by quoting these figures, the Honourable Member does not help to clarify the position. On the contrary, he is making the issue more confused.

Mr. A. M. Hayman: When you have heard me out, Sir, you will change your opinion. (*An Honourable Member:* "But the figures do not indicate that.") These figures, Sir, relate to Class I Railways, that is, the State-managed Railways and the State Railways worked by Companies. A study

of these figures will bear out the fact that, in respect of the totals, the Muslim representation in our services is increasing. It will perhaps help the House if I just quote a comparison of the increases and decreases on particular railways. The increases are as follows:

	Percentage increase.
Assam Bengal Railway	40·5
Bengal and North Western Railway	3·07
Bengal Nagpur Railway	20·6
Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway	0·34
Eastern Bengal Railway	23·21
East Indian Railway	12·1
Great Indian Peninsula Railway	5·13
Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway	4·99
South Indian Railway	6·76

The above figures show the increase in the percentage of Muslim representation. There is only one railway in which there has been a decrease and that is the North Western Railway, where the percentage decrease is 0·98. I am not going to make too much of these figures, and I pass on to the consideration of the first heading, namely, the appointments on salaries of Rs. 250 per mensem and over. I feel quite rightly that, in this case, if the Muslim community is absolutely disappointed with the percentage of their representation, they may take it from me that I am also disappointed.

Mr. Fazal Ibrahim Rahimtulla (Bombay Central Division: Muhamadan Rural): What do you propose to do if you are disappointed?

An Honourable Member: To appoint more Muslims!

Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum (North-West Frontier Province: Nominated Non-Official): He is going to tell us that the Muslims are inefficient.

Mr. A. M. Hayman: I think I had better quote the figures. The following relate to our State-managed Railways.

	Total number of posts.	Number of Muslims.
1926	5,486	198
	Percentage 3·6.	
1927	5,554	227
	Percentage 4·08.	
1928	5,767	263
	Percentage 4·56.	
1929	5,985	291
	Percentage 4·86.	

[Mr. A. M. Hayman.]

The position on our Company-managed railways is worse:

	Total number of posts.	Number of Muslims.
1926	2,687	49
	Percentage 1·82.	
1927	2,744	60
	Percentage 2·18.	
1928	2,719	57
	Percentage 2·09.	
1929	2,772	56
	Percentage 2·02.	

There has been some increase in the percentage on the State railways, but, I am not going to make much of this. But actually in the case of the Company-managed railways the percentage has fallen in 1929. I can quite understand the dissatisfaction of my Honourable friend, Mr. Ghuznavi, with these figures. I am not going to say that he should be less disappointed with them because there has been some increase on the State-managed railways in recent years. The figures are really very low. But, Sir, there are difficulties in the way of increasing them rapidly and I wish to put before the House as frankly as I possibly can what those difficulties are. In the first place, Honourable Members would, I have no doubt, realize that, after all, the total number of posts in these grades is limited.

Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi (Dacca Division: Muhammadan Rural): I have been quoting from figures where you said that a number of appointments had been filled up. That is what you said. You have not taken more Muhammadans there.

Mr. A. M. Hayman: The fact that you have an increased percentage of Muslims on our State-worked railways is a direct answer to that question, Sir.

Maulvi Muhammad Yakub (Rohilkund and Kumaon Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): By how much?

Mr. A. M. Hayman: I will give you the figures. I hope to meet your point if you will just listen to me. I wish just to tell the House that the total number of posts in these grades must necessarily be limited, and the number of Muslims that can be appointed to these posts is therefore necessarily limited. There is one other consideration. It is this, you must have vacancies. And when the number of posts is limited, necessarily the number of vacancies that you get year by year is correspondingly limited. There is also something, Sir, which the Government are not going to do. Government are certainly going to try their very best to remove the defect about which the Honourable Member has complained, but Government are not going to create vacancies in these grades by ousting existing employees, no matter to what community they may belong. (*Interruptions.*) I do not mind the Honourable Members interrupting me. My point is that we cannot oust the existing holders of posts, no matter to what community they belong. We shall not be guilty of that. We shall not

also be guilty of something else, which might bring about quicker promotion of Muslims. We shall not be guilty of superseding the claims of men with long services who are well qualified for promotion.

Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum: Nothing of the sort has been suggested to you.

Mr. A. M. Hayman: It is best that I should explain the difficulties. Now, with the limitation in the number of posts and with the limitation in the number of vacancies and with our desire not to do injustice to our existing employees of all communities, including Muslims, it seems to me that the pace cannot be too rapid, by which we will be able to remove the defect complained of. There is a further suggestion, which is often made to us, to the Agents of Railways and to the Railway Board as to the means by which we really could remove the defect rapidly if we had the heart to do so, and that is by the direct appointment of people of particular communities to the upper subordinate grades. This suggestion has been put forward to us very often. I will ask the House to bear with me a little when I tell them that the duties and responsibilities which we attach to these posts in the upper subordinate grades, that is, posts of Rs. 250 and over, are such that require knowledge, training and experience. Often we are pressed to take in persons direct into the rank of Traffic Inspectors of Railways. Now, Sir, I just give a brief outline of the duties of a Traffic Inspector of Railways. He is required, so far as his jurisdiction is concerned, to see that all trains, passengers and goods run to time table time and to investigate causes of delay. He is expected to take the initiative to put matters right. He is concerned with all matters connected with the working of trains and to bring important defects to the notice of his superior officers. He is expected to make suggestions for the framing of working time tables of railways. He is required to assist the Traffic Officers in getting most out of the wagons during the busy season of a railway. The importance of this duty cannot be over-estimated and it is only a Traffic Inspector with ability and experience that can give his best to the railway in this connection. He is also in charge of the duty of seeing that no unavoidable delay takes place in loading and unloading of wagons at stations. He is required to give close and constant attention to the quick transit of smalls. For this purpose a detailed knowledge of traffic in smalls and a clear conception of working costs and operating conditions generally is essential. I can go on enumerating many more of the duties and responsibilities of a Traffic Inspector, but I do not think I need weary the House any further. I think it is quite clear that, in order to discharge those duties efficiently, we want men of training and of experience. And what, Sir, is true of the duties of a Traffic Inspector of a railway is true, although the degree might differ, sometimes a little more and sometimes a little less, it is true of the duties of all the upper subordinate posts of our railways which carry a salary of Rs. 250 and more. But I can quite understand my Honourable friends who are interested in this question from the point of view of proper Muslim representation and who are absolutely dissatisfied with this low percentage of four, saying, "But what are you going to do, if you are really out to increase this percentage at the quickest possible rate?"

Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum: We do not want an increase. We only want justice to be done to us.

Mr. A. M. Hayman: What we are going to do is this. We have already started training schools some years ago, and we are going to carry out our policy of training our employees with greater vigour and with greater intensity. We are going to see that our subordinates in the lower grades of all classes and communities—particularly the Muslim community, which is not properly represented in the upper grades—are taken into our training schools and given proper technical training so as to fit them, within the quickest possible time, to fill the higher posts that fall vacant. I am hopeful that the rate at which the Muslims will get into these posts will be much faster than hitherto.

Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi: When will you start doing that?

Mr. A. M. Hayman: I should like, in this connection, to read out to the House a passage from a letter that I caused to be written to the Agents of all Railways.

Munshi Iswar Saran (Lucknow Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): What is the date?

Mr. A. M. Hayman: This month.

An Honourable Member: Perhaps yesterday?

Mr. A. M. Hayman: May be. I ought to explain the reasons for not writing this letter two or three months back. It was decided that this subject should be discussed with the Agents of Railways in March when they all come up here for a Conference with the Railway Board. We have placed this subject for discussion before them. There is and was no intention of delaying the matter. The matter could not be discussed earlier. The letter says:

“The Board would be obliged if Agents of Railways would come prepared to discuss also the arrangements in force for training persons already in service to become equipped with knowledge and experience to be able to undertake efficiently the conduct of the duties of the higher paid posts in the subordinate ranks of all departments of the railway. One important aspect of this question is that ample opportunities should be afforded to the Indians in the different lower grades to qualify quickly for promotion to the higher grades. It is the Board's desire that the arrangements should be such that their practical effect will be evident in the figures relating to the number of Indians occupying the upper subordinate posts in the different departments of railways.”

I may add, Sir, that in addition to what is written there, I am going to take up the matter with vigour with the Agents, especially the Agents of the Company-managed railways

Maulvi Muhammad Yakub: The Honourable Member has been telling us things like this for the past four or five years. Agents come and Agents go, but nothing is done and things go on in the usual way.

Mr. A. M. Hayman: The signs are hopeful. It is better that we hold meetings twice a year than once in five or six years.

I now turn for a moment to the observation made by my Honourable friend Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim. He said that two vacancies occurred on the East Indian Railway by the transfer from that Railway of two Mussalman officers to the Railway Board. He wanted to know why we did not take this excellent opportunity offered to us and put two Mussalman officers in their places. I want to explain, for the information of my Honourable friend, that when officers of our services are transferred from one post to

another, it does not mean that we have a vacancy in our services and can recruit people against those vacancies. Our recruitment is made upon the basis of calculating the number of vacancies against our cadre and we rectify the recruitment numbers so arrived at with reference to the number of vacancies that actually occur from year to year and the members of the community that get in are those that come in under our ordinary rules. Now, I must pass on to make a reference . .

Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi: Are those two vacancies then filled up by somebody else? Then there is no vacancy there at all for the Mussalman gentlemen who were brought into the Railway Board?

Mr. A. M. Hayman: Of the two Mussalmans that were brought into the Railway Board, one was brought in to fill a post that had been in existence for a considerable time, and it merely meant that one officer went from here—a European officer went from here—and the Mussalman officer from the East Indian Railway came in his place. There was no real vacancy at all. In the other case, it was a newly created post of Deputy Director of Establishment. Inasmuch as it is a new post, we recruited one more man to fill a vacancy in our services in the ordinary way. I think, Sir, at this stage I ought to refer to the fact that a deputation of Muslim gentlemen,—I think they were all Members of the Assembly and the Council of State,—waited upon Sir George Rainy in September, 1929, and complained of the paucity of Muslims in the Railway services, and instanced the office of the Railway Board, the Audit Department of the Eastern Bengal Railway and the Accounts Department of the East Indian Railway. Sir George Rainy pointed out that the Audit Department of the Eastern Bengal Railway was not under his control, that the Accounts Department of the East Indian Railway was under the Financial Commissioner of Railways and that he understood that the Financial Commissioner had introduced a competitive examination for the recruitment of people in the subordinate services, and that, in accordance with the general declared policy of the Government of India, one-third of the vacancies were reserved for the rectification of communal inequalities. For the rest, he gave me strict instructions that I was to review the position and to see what could be done in order that Muslims should have proper representation.

Mr. Anwar-ul-Aziz: Is it not a fact that this competitive system was introduced very recently?

Mr. A. M. Hayman: Is the Honourable Member talking of the competitive system in the Railway Accounts Department?

Mr. Anwar-ul-Aziz: Yes.

Mr. A. M. Hayman: The Accounts Department is an infant only one year old and therefore the system was very recently introduced.

One of the members of this deputation suggested the issue of a supplementary circular letter to all Agents, drawing attention to the previous orders of Government on the subject of recruitment to the subordinate ranks, and asking that the Agents of Railways should be instructed to observe them very carefully in future. But after some discussion, the deputation agreed with Sir George Rainy that the better course would be for the Railway Board to discuss the question with the representatives of the Railways when they come up in October and to find out from them what

[Mr. A. M. Hayman.]

difficulties they had in obtaining a suitable proportion of Muslims for the subordinate services. The deputation represented that it was possible that we did not get all the Muslims that we wanted because advertisements did not appear in the newspapers which were read by Muslims. We took up that question at once and we wrote to every Agent and told him that he was to pay strict attention to this. Now, Sir, I should like to explain that, when the Agents came for the discussion, I took them over all the figures that I had, and other figures too which they brought with them, and I insisted on the view which I just mentioned, that I was absolutely disappointed with the percentage of Muslims in the upper subordinate ranks, and I asked them to do their best to see that their arrangements were such that the defects were remedied in the quickest possible time. But I think I ought, in fairness to the House, to refer to just one or two passages which the Agents put before me as to their difficulties in getting the number of Muslim candidates that they required. Here is a brief extract from what the Agent of the North Western Railway said. I am not going to say that I entirely agree with all the views of the Agents, but they are in day to day contact with things and we are entitled to hear them.

Maulvi Muhammad Yakub: Did you inquire who wrote this note for the Agent?

Mr. President: Mr. Hayman.

Mr. A. M. Hayman: I do not do that, Sir,

"The great majority are not wanting Railway employment. I imagine a very large proportion of Muslims are at the land. I think it is very difficult to lay down any rule which would ensure our recruiting even the full proportion of Muhammadans."

The Agent of the East Indian Railway gave me certain figures to show that the number of Muhammadans was very low in the upper grades but had doubled itself in the course of four years and he thought that the rate of increase was going to continue until the representation reached a reasonable figure. He informed me that he had pressed upon his Divisional Superintendents and Heads of Departments the desirability of giving Muslims a fair chance, and especially of making appointments to suitable grades. He said that selections were made by selection committees, and he assured me that there was no communal bias of any sort against Muslims. He added:

"Our upper subordinates are recruited from people in the lower grades and all appointments are made from men who come in at the bottom, but when it comes to clerical work, the work of Assistant Station Masters and people of that sort, there is a distinct difficulty in getting Muhammadans. At Asansol for 25 vacancies we examined something like 300 applicants, of whom only 5 were Muhammadans. I was particularly keen on getting in Muhammadans to balance up matters, but they were not putting in applications, and I know that it was not that applications were withheld because all applications were opened by the Staff Superintendent himself who was just as keen as myself to get Muhammadans."

Maulvi Abdul Matin Chaudhury (Assam: Muhammadao): Were the posts advertised in the papers?

Mr. A. M. Hayman: They were advertised; but I will not take the line that they had been properly advertised, because we admit that we did examine this question and gave instructions to the Agents as to how they were to proceed in the matter of advertisements in future.

This is what the Agent of the Eastern Bengal Railway said:

"We have difficulty in getting guards, clerks, storemen, first-class apprentices and train examiners who are Muhammadans. I may say that, while I have had many letters from Hindu gentlemen asking me for jobs for their relatives, I have not had one single letter from a Muhammadan,—direct application to myself I mean. And if you take the case of my Chief Medical Officer who is a Muslim, he had the greatest difficulty in finding one Muslim Assistant Surgeon to accept employment on the Railway."

Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi: I could give him half a dozen if he had asked me.

Mr. A. M. Hayman: I made that remark in order to provoke my friend Mr. Ghuznavi to reply. I am glad he made that statement because I shall be happy to pass it on.

Mr. Richardson, representing the Great Indian Peninsula Railway said:

"Our experience seems to be similar to that of the East Indian Railway. In the ordinary way Muslims do not apply."

I impressed upon all those present, Sir, what I told you I did, and I followed it up by making up our mind that we should discuss this matter again with the Agents when they come up in March on the basis of the figures I have placed before the House today. But there is one other little thing that I ought to mention to show that we are really in earnest in our efforts to accelerate the pace at which Muslims shall get proper representation in our upper subordinate grades. I have felt, not only now but even before I took my present post, that one of the ways by which Muslims would get fair representation was if some of the posts of Staff Officers on our Railways were filled by Muslim officers. It is only a little time ago that, following up this idea, the Railway Board consented to send out a Superintendent of the Office as an officer in the North Western Railway in one of these staff appointments. Very recently again when I wanted a staff appointment on the East Indian Railway, I went out of my way to the Department of Industries and Labour and got a Muslim gentleman from there and put him into the post. Now I am going to follow that up and if I have two Staff Officers in this little time, I shall have a proper proportion of Muslim Staff Officers on our State Railways as quickly as I possibly can; and I think that, if our Staff Officers are Mussalmans, they will, without doing injustice to the other communities,—I make a strong point of this, Sir,—make the Muslim subordinates understand the value of getting better equipped and better trained and becoming more efficient and thus qualifying for the higher posts.

I think, Sir, I can bring my remarks to a close just now. Before I do so, I wish again to emphasise that I am still not satisfied with the representation which the Muslims have in the upper subordinate posts on our railways. But I give my solemn undertaking that I have this question at heart, and I will push it forward with all the energy that I can command. I will be the driving force in this question, and I shall get the Agents of railways to take my view and to rectify the existing defects. But, Sir, I also wish to make it clear that nothing that I or the Agents will do will be done in a way to bring about injustice to any of the other communities.

Sir, I oppose the motion.

Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan (North Punjab: Muhammadan): Sir, such a speech, even if it had come from a Back Bencher of the Nationalist Party, would have been the cause of great disappointment to every fair minded Member of this House. It is a greater disappointment when it comes from such a responsible officer of the Railway Board. He has enumerated certain usual drawbacks which are generally pointed out against a community whose proportion in the services is very unjust and unfair. He has not told us of any specific remedy to remove those defects. He has laid great emphasis on certain things, about which no mention was made by any Member. He has said that the Government would not be guilty of this and that. He has said that they would not be guilty of giving preference to juniors over seniors who are already in the service and have got a long record of service behind them. Nobody has so far brought forward that suggestion or put that suggestion before him. What we wanted was that, subject to efficiency, the representation of each community should be in proportion to its population. Nobody denies that efficiency is absolutely essential for any responsible service. But what we want is that a community which is already backward, even if it satisfies the minimum demands, the minimum qualifications required for that service, should be given preference, even if the members of the other communities happen to hold a few more qualifications by way of getting more marks in the examinations. This is what we want. He has said he has been writing letters to the Agents every year and that Agents have been meeting annually in March with a view to consider whether they can find means and ways of giving more appointments to the minority communities. The result of all these efforts for long years has been that the percentage of the Muslim community still remains at 4 per cent. Whatever his reasons may be, whatever arguments he may have given, however many meetings may have been held, and however many circulars might have issued, the fact remains that the Muhammadans are still 4 per cent., and that percentage remains almost stationary or has remained stationary for a long time. As I have already pointed out, we do not want that the service should suffer on account of inefficiency. We would not insist that a non-technical Muhammadan should be appointed to a technical post if he has not qualified himself for that post. But what we want is that the community should not be deprived of a fair and equal opportunity of getting these appointments, even when we are thoroughly convinced that they have been making rapid progress in education and can produce and supply any number of young men absolutely efficient and able to carry on the duties if they are given a fair opportunity. I am afraid the real trouble is that in all these comparatively unimportant posts, when they fall vacant, it is not the Members of the Railway Board who decide as to who should be appointed to these posts and how these posts should be advertised. It is the men in the office, the Superintendents, the Head Clerks and so on in whose hands lie these appointments mostly. I would not blame them for having communal prejudice. Some of them, I am sure, must be absolutely fair-minded and liberal-minded who do not care for these small communal matters; but it is natural that every human being would like to give preference to one who is related to him in some way, by ties of blood or by friendship or by association.

Now, the fact is this, that a Superintendent who happens to be a Hindu, because as you know a large majority of them are Hindus, receives

a recommendation letter from a friend who has got his son-in-law or some cousin of his son-in-law applying for a post. If Sir Hari Singh Gour's efforts would be successful in getting a Bill through this House for inter-marriages, I think this question would not arise. (Laughter.) But when the Superintendent is determined to appoint one of his own relations or the relation of a friend of his as a clerk, that man must be a Hindu. Under the present circumstances, he cannot be a Muhammadan. That is the real trouble, and unfortunately the subordinates form an idea of the policy of the officers, but not by the circulars which are issued nor by the speeches which are made in this House where the speaker knows fully well that there are at least 20 or 30 people sitting opposite who will have the opportunity of criticising. But they judge from the temperament, from the general habits and nature of that officer as to what he wants. For instance, you issue a circular. In that circular you write that efficiency should be the chief consideration; nobody's interests should suffer; you must not be unjust to any community and so on, and you put down about one dozen qualifications and then down below you write that you are gravely disappointed to find that there are certain communities who have not got a fair proportion of appointments. Your last sentence has got absolutely no value for them. They know that you are doing it just to get up and answer a charge when it is levelled against you that a certain community has a very poor representation. That is the fact that you have to face. Unless you are determined to pass a definite rule that, for a certain service you want a B.A. or M.A., or a man with certain qualifications, and for some years to come you would not entertain any application from any person belonging to the majority community who are already preponderating in that service, unless you make that your definite policy, your attempt would not be successful. But if you make this a point, a definite matter of policy, your attempt next year would not be, when we again start this question, simply to get up and read out half a dozen circulars to us. Unless you make it a definite policy, I think there is absolutely no use, and no person will be satisfied with whatever reasons you may give.

Another point to which my Honourable friend has just now referred—I am glad he has given me an opportunity to say something about that—is that a certain officer was disappointed that, while half a dozen Hindu friends sent introductory letters to him, no Muhammadan sent any and that shows that the Muhammadans are indifferent. Luckily I have got a little bit of personal knowledge of the North Western Railway because I come from that province. In the first instance, I think it is much easier to have an interview with His Excellency the Viceroy for one hour than to see your Agents even for five minutes. (Hear, hear.) It is not an easy process to approach an Agent. The man who wants to see him may have a very important public position and he may want to see the Agent on a matter of public interest, still if I just describe the process he has got to go through, you will all agree with me that no self-respecting man would ever consider to go near him. You go to the office and half a dozen chaprasis come up to you and ask you, "Whom do you want to see?" You say, "Agent". "Yes, all right, you see the Superintendent first." "I have not come to see the Superintendent, but I want to see the Agent. If you want I will see the Agent's Private Secretary." They say "No; if you want to see the Agent's Private Secretary, you have got to see the Superintendent". The Superintendent, if he

[Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan.]

thinks that there are sufficient reasons to give, will recommend your name to the Secretary. Then the Secretary will call you. He will hold another inquiry, and if I satisfy him, he will say, "Yes, there is some legitimate object for which you want to see the Agent". Then he will mention it to the Agent who may send you the word before you get into his room that he could hardly spare three minutes and you must finish your conversation within three minutes.

I can tell you, it is not a story, these are all facts. How can you expect any man who has got any worth among the public to go and even discuss these questions with your Agents? If we were convinced that every responsible officer in the Railway Department was honestly after finding out means to satisfy the legitimate demands of various communities, everyone of us would have given our heartiest support to him and would help him in every possible way. On the other hand, we find that their attitude is most hostile and insulting.

Then another thing which you mentioned to us was that the number of vacancies is limited. I do not think there is any Member of this House who would ask you to increase Budget and to create new post simply to employ Muhammadans. What is the use of your plea? If a man is prosecuted criminally and is before a court for a charge of theft or murder, he goes there and says, "Well I most emphatically deny that I have ever committed a theft, I most emphatically deny that I have ever committed a murder", but that is not going to help him. You say that the Government

Mr. President: Order, order. Owing to his long absence from this Chamber the Honourable Member has perhaps forgotten the rule that he should address the Chair.

Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan: I am much obliged to you, Sir. I am absolutely certain, Sir, that if the Members of the Railway Board, and every responsible officer for the matter of that—we cannot draw any distinction between one Department and another, particularly in the Government of India—almost everywhere they are more busy with higher matters of policy than with these little affairs which do really matter. If the Government of India would persist in this policy, which is more or less one of indifference in communal matters, I am sure unfortunately they will be responsible indirectly for creating trouble. What will be the result? Now, supposing, Sir, after one year, we have got people's representatives sitting on those benches and in charge of the various Departments, and supposing a Muhammadan happens to take the place of the Honourable Sir George Rainy, he would naturally be anxious to see at least that his community is not unjustly treated. No doubt, within one month, Sir, you will find big articles appearing in all the papers that a Muhammadan has been appointed and there is another Aurangzeb who has come to India. But on the other hand, if this policy is really pursued by the Government, of doing justice to the legitimate claims of the Muhammadan community, just as they are situated at present, nobody would blame them for being another Aurangzeb. They are therefore in a better position to satisfy our legitimate demands, and I trust that, instead of making speeches, giving arguments, and trying to

reply to all the points put by the Opposition, they would honestly and earnestly do their best to remove these legitimate grievances.

Maulvi Abdul Matin Chaudhury: Mr. Hayman has told us that he is disappointed with the rate of progress of the employment of Muhammadans in the railway services, but I am very much disappointed, Sir, with the speech he has made. Lord Reading, Sir, laid it down as the policy of the Government that in all Government services one-third of the vacancies should be reserved for minorities for removing communal inequalities. Some years ago the Home Department issued a circular to that effect to all Government Departments. But, Sir, the autocrats of the Railway Board have no respect either for the Home Department circular or the pronouncement of the Viceroy. In the office of the Railway Board, the policy of the Government acquires a new orientation; they absolutely ignore the Home Department's circular and the Viceregal pronouncement. They have got, Sir, a wonderful set of rules, which must have precedence over everything else. Mr. Hayman says that there are few vacancies in the railway services. Mr. Ghuznavi referred to 49 appointments that were made last year in the gazetted rank in State Railways, and searching throughout the length and breadth of India from Kashmir to Cape Comorin, Mr. Hayman could not find more than one single Muhammadan who could satisfy the requirements of his rules. I do not know, Sir, what those wonderful rules are, but whatever his rules may be, I think they are only fit to be thrown into the waste-paper basket, because these rules contravene the policy laid down by the Government of India, by the Viceroy. Then, Sir, Mr. Hayman says that Muhammadans do not stand high up in the examinations. May I inquire, Sir, from Mr. Hayman what is that examination which all the Anglo-Indian boys pass when they get into the railway services in their hundreds? His talk about all these examinations is mere eye-wash. (Interruption.) I do say, Sir, that in making appointments in the railway services, there is nepotism and jobbery. Mr. Hayman himself has quoted what one Agent said, namely, that he received several letters from several Hindu friends for one particular job. Then Mr. Hayman said, in reply to an interruption from Mr. Ghuznavi, that there had been an increase in the percentage of Muhammadans. The increase has been, Sir, from 3.8 to 4 per cent. in one year. I think, Sir, that if we make progress at this magnificent rate, Dr. Ziauddin will be able to calculate if, by the end of this century, we shall be able to reach the one-third percentage! But, Sir, I am not going to make any appeal to the Government to redress the grievances. I know it is absolutely futile. I have no illusions in that respect, Sir. My Honourable friend, Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim, with a very pathetic faith in the sense of justice of the Government, goes on interpellating day after day only to receive the most evasive and most arrogant replies from Mr. Parsons. When I think, Sir, of the attitude of the Government towards Mussalmans, I am reminded of certain lines of Kipling in his ballad "Tommy Atkins" in the "Ballads of the Barrack Room":

"It is Tommy this, and Tommy that,

And Tommy get away. . . .

It is thank you, Mr. Atkins,

When the Band begins to play,

And the Band begins to play,

And the Band begins to play."

[Maulvi Abdul Matin Chaudhury.]

Well, Sir, whenever any nasty job is to be done, when the Simon Commission is to be supported or the Public Safety Bill is to be rushed through, Government remember their dear old friends, the Mussalmans. It is then all fraternisation, all hugs, embraces and kisses, all a case of, "Thank you, Mr. Atkins, I am very much obliged", but when the job is finished, the Government have no use for the Mussalmans. Then the position is, "Get away". I want to say to Mr. Ghuznavi and Mr. Azim that this is the reward of all flirtation that they have been carrying on with the Government for the last three years. The more kisses we bestow, the more kicks our community receives. So, Sir, I am not going to appeal to the Government. I shall address my appeal to my Honourable friend on my right, my own fellow countrymen; I wish to tell them that here is a section of their countrymen who are smarting under a real sense of grievance, and they look to them, Sir, and to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, as Nationalists, as the custodians of the interests of Indians both the Hindus and Muhammadans, to see that their grievances are redressed. We, Sir, do not want any special privilege, we want only bare justice; we want that, having regard to the requirements of efficiency, our community should get their due share. That is all we want. And we shall be satisfied with nothing less.

(Munshi Iswar Saran rose to speak.)

Mr. President: Does the Honourable Member wish to address the House?

Munshi Iswar Saran: It looks like it, Sir.

Mr. President: I hope no heat will be introduced into the debate. Munshi Iswar Saran.

Munshi Iswar Saran: Sir, I am rather surprised that an inoffensive, harmless and cold and cool-headed person like myself should by any stretch of imagination be considered to be guilty, even in his wildest moments, of producing heat.

Sir, I deeply regret that I have to intervene in this debate. I had not the slightest idea of addressing the House on this question, though I have considerable sympathy with the motion of my Honourable friend, Mr. Ghuznavi. My Honourable friend, Raja Ghazanfar Ali, however, has left me no choice but to make the position of the Back Benchers of the Nationalist Party quite clear. May I say, in passing, that this kind of game is one at which two can play? I shall not condescend to cross swords with Raja Ghazanfar Ali over the political attitude of the Back Benchers of the Nationalist Party. I shall only tell him that, only yesterday and the day before, the Back Benchers were discussing this question, and each and every one, without any exception, was in considerable sympathy with the grievance of the Muhammadans that their representation in the railway services was not what it ought to be. But, Sir, a friend of mine, whose name I shall not mention, has told me after Raja Ghazanfar Ali's speech that, in view of the remarks that he has made and the suggestions that he has put forward, the only course left was to remain neutral. I do not know what course we shall ultimately adopt. But I wish to say

Maulvi Sayyid Murtuza Saheb Bahadur (South Madras: Muhammadan): Is that the decision of your party, or your individual opinion?

Munshi Iswar Saran: A Back Benchers' decision, Sir.

Dr. A. Suhrawardy (Burdwan and Presidency Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Back Benchers in rebellion!

Munshi Iswar Saran: Thank God that ours is a party in which the Back Benchers are not in battalions; it is much better than a party which has got no Back Benchers.

There is one very dangerous remark which was made by Mr. Hayman, and I sincerely hope that Sir George Rainy or the Railway Board or the Executive Council will not accept it. What he say is this; appoint some Staff Officers who are Muhammadans and then this difficulty will be removed. No, Sir; do not appoint Staff Officers who are either Hindus, Muhammadans or Parsis or Christians in order to make up the deficiency of their respective communities in this or that service. Appoint Staff Officers who will hold the scales even. You want men who will not allow their judgment to be influenced by the consideration that they belong to this or that community.

Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim: Past story is so very shady.

Munshi Iswar Saran: I have very little acquaintance with shady affairs, Sir, and so I am afraid I cannot express any opinion about them. I do think that the suggestion of Mr. Hayman that the appointment of Staff Officers should be made in order to enable these officers to make up the deficiency of their communities is thoroughly wrong in principle and a strong protest against it is necessary.

Maulvi Muhammad Yakub: Then you will have to remove all the existing Staff Officers.

Munshi Iswar Saran: My Honourable friend, the distinguished Deputy President of this House, hardly does me the honour of following me. I cannot have the impudence to suggest that he has not got the brains to understand my remarks; he has not been gracious enough to follow what I was saying. Have by all means Muhammadans in adequate numbers in the railway services; they should not have a feeling of grievance as indeed no community should have a feeling of grievance. But what I say—and I beg you to consider it seriously—is, do not appoint any Muhammadan or any Hindu in order that that particular officer may be able to appoint more men of his community. That principle is vicious and should be condemned outright.

Maulvi Muhammad Yakub: Therefore I said you will have to remove all the existing officers.

Munshi Iswar Saran: No, because they have not been appointed for this reason, they have not been appointed with the distinct object that they will make up the deficiency of appointments of this community or that.

Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum: But still the result is the same.

Munshi Iswar Saran: My Honourable friends do not realise what they are talking about. If that be so, then they are giving a handle to the other side to say, "If we appoint Hindus, Muhammadans suffer and if we appoint Muhammadans, the Hindus suffer". Where are we going to end then? (An Honourable Member: "That is childish.") (Another Honourable Member: "The Muhammadans have suffered.") My

[Munshi Iswar Saran.]

Honourable friend, Raja Ghazanfar Ali, put forward a suggestion which I think again requires a word of very strong protest, and it is this; he says, make a rule that no one of the majority community should be appointed till the percentage of the Muslim community is completed

Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan: No; of all the minority communities.

Munshi Iswar Saran: Let us pause and consider the matter (*An Honourable Member*: "This was the scheme of Mr. C. R. Das.") It does not lie in the mouth of those who have deserted Mr. C. R. Das to take his name in vain. What I submit is this; if you are trying to lay down a principle like this, you are bound to create more bad blood. I cordially support my friend, Mr. Abdul Matin Chaudhury, in the remarks that he has made. It is a matter which has to be settled by goodwill, by forbearance, by sympathy.

Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan: It is Government's duty as well.

Munshi Iswar Saran: I agree, it is Government's duty as well, and let Government do it, not in the way suggested by Raja Ghazanfar Ali, but in the way which meets with the approval of every sensible, every thoughtful and every patriotic Hindu, Muhammadan, Christian, Parsi or Sikh.

Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan: I agree with the word "sensible".

Munshi Iswar Saran: Sir, I will allow that remark to pass without notice. I wish only to say this; that the motion of Mr. Ghuznavi has considerable force. While I was studying the question of Indianisation only yesterday, I felt myself that the representation of Muhammadans in the railway services was very inadequate and that it did need looking into. There is no doubt about it. I shall discuss this question in detail later on. I shall say only one word to my friends on the other side and then resume my seat. Let them and us unite in putting forward such proposals as will bring them the relief they are entitled to. Let us unite in getting Indianisation and at the same time in getting the share of the Muhammadan, the Hindu, the Sikh, the Parsi and every other community in India; let every one have its due share, but let us unite in order to get the real power. Let us unite so that these services might be Indianised; let us concentrate our attention on Indianisation rather than on proposals which lead to discord. And may I, before I sit down, say that my Honourable friends, like Raja Ghazanfar Ali, should, particularly at this juncture, take great care not to say things which are unnecessarily provocative, because every effort is being made so that such differences as we have may be destroyed and not perpetuated.

Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan (East Central Punjab: Muhammadan): Sir, I did not want to speak on this occasion, as I thought that my proposed cut would give me an opportunity to express my views on this subject, but I am afraid that, at the rate we are progressing, I may never reach my cut, and therefore, Sir, I welcome the occasion which is afforded to me by this proposed cut of my friend, Mr. Ghuznavi. Sir, I do not desire that this debate should degenerate into a purely communal discussion. I do not desire that any communal bitterness should be introduced on this occasion, but I do desire that the just claims of the communities, especially of the minorities, should be conceded, and I

12 Noon.

expect my friends on both sides to consider that, in the matter of giving justice, there should be no question of communities. They must come forward and follow the divine law that justice should be administered without fear or favour

Mr. B. Das (Orissa Division: Non-Muhammadan): Hear, hear, I am with you.

Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan: I know that some Honourable Members on my right and some others on the official Benches are terribly bored on account of the long discussion on this subject, but I would request them to have a little patience and to weigh the question scrupulously and see on which side the justice lies. Sir, no organised community can last long unless it is based on justice and fair play, and if justice is not given, then that community is doomed to failure and destruction. We are now approaching a period when new aspirations will find material expression, I hope very shortly, in the matter of new reforms, and I appeal to my Hindu brethren that they must on this occasion show by their attitude that they can be safely entrusted with the interests of other peoples, and if they do not show that attitude, then India's aspirations will not materialise. It is a great problem, and I hope that they will not, by their attitude, try to destroy the efforts which are made by the whole of India to regain the liberties lost by her.

Mr. M. S. Aney (Berar Representative): Including yourself.

Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan: Sir, in this matter of the employment of Mussalmans in the service of the railways I am very deeply interested, as my community set up a great agitation when they knew that they were very unfairly and unjustly treated, and in response to that agitation the Government issued a circular in 1925, in which they laid down, in categorical terms, that the claims of the minorities must be properly safeguarded, and that 33 per cent. of the appointments should be reserved for redressing communal inequalities, and the remaining 67 per cent. should go to other communities, but the minorities also might be given the benefit of these appointments. The Mussalmans were for the time being satisfied, and they thought that, after all, justice was coming, but experience showed that justice delayed was justice denied. No real amelioration of the conditions of service with regard to Mussalmans took place. The Railway Clearing Accounts Office was established soon after this, and the Muhammadans expected that, as a result of their agitation, the assurance given by Government in 1925 was adequate and that their claims would be properly considered. The Clearing Accounts Office had, as its Director, Mr. Scott, and as Assistant Director, one gentleman called Rai Bahadur Faqir Chand. I need not introduce the Rai Bahadur to the House here, because his notorious activities with regard to ignoring Muhammadan claims are well known, and although articles appeared in the public Press, and questions in the Assembly were asked, no notice was taken of his activities. Not only that. On the contrary, Government tried to justify the high-handed proceedings of this officer, (*An Honourable Member*: "He was promoted.") Yes, as my friend tells me, he was promoted. That was the reward of his notorious activities. Numerous questions were asked in this Assembly demanding that figures might be supplied as to the strength of the staff and the situation of the communities in this office. But Mr. Parsons systematically refused to give this information, and I think his plea was that he did not want to accentuate communal feelings. Well, that was a very honourable and admirable object, but may I ask him, if

[Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan.]

he had supplied us with the figures which were asked for by some of us, would they have caused a greater explosion in this Assembly than when they were supplied by another Department? Why should it have created a conflagration if he had supplied us with the figures which we have been repeatedly asking for? That is a mystery to me and to some other Honourable Members. However, the information leaked out in this way. A Committee was appointed in 1929 under the Chairmanship of Mr. Mitra, whose Report has recently been issued. This fateful Report has given the information which Mr. Parsons refused to supply, and from this it is clear that the injustice done to the Muhammadans is very glaring. I will read out some of the figures. In the officers' cadre, the total number is 11. Out of this, the number of Hindus is 7, Muhammadans nil, Europeans 3, and Sikh 1. Superintendents, total number 9. Of this, Hindus number 8, Mussalmans nil, Europeans nil, Sikh 1. Assistant Superintendents total number 19, Hindus 17, Mussalman 1 (and this unfortunate fellow has proceeded on long leave and a Hindu has been appointed in his place), Europeans nil, Sikh 1. Inspectors and Stenographers total number 9, Hindus 7, Mussalmans nil, Europeans 2, Sikhs nil. Sub-heads total number 74, Hindus 61, Mussalmans 11, Europeans nil, Sikhs 2. Clerks and others total number 1,186, Hindus 996, Mussalmans 142, Europeans 14, Sikhs 34. Total of all these 1,308. Of these Hindus number 1,006, Mussalmans 154, Europeans 19, Sikhs 39.

Now, Sir, however unbiassed we may be, and however we may try to ignore communal claims in pursuance of a larger policy, we cannot deny that these figures reveal a strange stage of affairs. Nobody can deny, whether he is on my right or left, that justice is due to the Muhammadans, and I expect that my friends, especially on the right hand, will support me in this contention. But if they keep silence, the conclusion is clear. They do not want to give justice to the Muhammadans, and the consequences which may ensue from the silence and want of support would find expression among a larger audience outside this Assembly. My friend, Munshi Iswar Saran, in his speech said that he desired that only efficient men might be taken, whether they be Hindus or Muhammadans. The conclusion I drew from his speech was that he wanted the men to be fit to hold the places. If fitness is the only fetish which we must worship, then I must declare that Europeans are certainly more efficient than either Hindus or Muhammadans. (*An Honourable Member*: "Question.") You can get into the world and see, and the question will be silenced. Sitting in this Chamber and lolling in the chair, you can put this question. Then the term Indianisation of the services has no meaning in it. We must worship the fetish of fitness. Why claim Indianisation then, but if Indianisation is to take place, then why oust the Muhammadan and use this catch word that the Muhammadan does not pass the examinations, therefore he must remain out?

Now, Sir, with regard to examinations, I must say that this very Report issued by Mr. Mitra says that, in the examinations held, very few Mussalmans proved successful, and this is generally the line of argument given to explain why Muhammadans are not recruited. This gives food for reflection no doubt, and it is very difficult to reply to this argument, but considering the real situation in the country, I have only one explanation and it is this. The examinations are no doubt in form perfect but the examiners are mostly Hindus and it is said that, if the Muhammadans fail,

it is not the fault of the Hindus, because the names are not put on the answer papers. Therefore a Hindu examiner is not likely to know who the man is whom he is examining, but when producing this argument, we forget that the offices which keep the registers of candidates are practically occupied by the Hindus, and it is not difficult for the Hindus to find out the names and numbers of these candidates and it is easy enough to communicate these names to the examiners. Where is the difficulty then to fail the Mussalmans? Knowing what is happening in the country, knowing the state of inter-communal bitterness, is it difficult to visualise this kind of thing? It is very likely to be the real stage of affairs, and in order to remedy this evil, I would suggest that the register of candidates should be kept in the hands of, say, an European member of the staff, so that neither the Hindu nor the Muhammadan may have access to it. I think that Mr. Hayman, who said that he would try to improve the condition of the Muhammadans, provided no injustice is done to others, should try to do this justice to all the communities. Muhammadans do not want any favour. Muhammadans can stand on their legs. They are intellectual enough, active enough and sensible enough to pass the examinations, but when favours are shown and intrigues are carried on against them, they cannot stand it and must fall victims to these intrigues.

Can you imagine, Sir, that a community which has ruled the world and which is still ruling quite a good part of it and which is making rapid progress in every country of the world, and which will very shortly show that it can stand and withstand the storms of the world, can that community be said to lack in intelligence, in driving power and in other activities? No, certainly not. But when they are systematically confronted with destructive forces and mean intrigues, then certainly they find that these things are too much even for their large-heartedness.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai (Sind: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Is not that too much of an assumption?

Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan: Not at all. These are facts. In fact, I am stating less than facts.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: That also is not justice, when you state less than facts.

Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan: You talk of justice: I do not expect justice at all.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: You want favour and no justice!

Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan: When you begin to intrigue, then the things take a different turn.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: That is exactly the assumption.

Dr. A. Suhrawardy: We want protection against intrigues!

Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan: It is difficult to argue with men of this mentality.

Now, Sir, when this Committee was appointed, Mr. Mitra in his Report said;—I am taking figures from his Report, although later on, I think, the figures improved a little bit,—that the strength of the staff of this office was 1,110. Out of this, 818 were old hands taken from other offices. Out of the remaining 292, 120 were Muhammadans, and out of these 120, 90 were old hands. So only 80 Muhammadans were recruited. From

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these figures you can easily conclude that the silence or the refusal of Mr. Parsons was rather significant. Mr. Mitra has said that 17 men were given rapid promotion, and out of these 17, there was only one Muhammadan. I will show the House how that rapid promotion was given. I will read out the names:

Name.	Qualification.	Date of appointment.	Pay at the time of appointment.	
			Rs.	Pes.
Mr. Kashi Ram	F.A.	April 1926	100	190
Mr. Jodish Ram	Matric.	December 1925	80	120
Mr. Prem Chand	B.Sc.	January 1926	60	160
Mr. Jaswant Rai	B.A.	February 1926	00	170
Mr. Faqir Chand	Matric	Transferred from Audit.	54	146
Mr. Kishori Lal	do.	do.	42-	146
Kunwar Kishor	do.	December 1925	60	115

—Now, comes the list of wretched Muhammadans—

Mr. Abd'l Rahman	B.A.	April 1926	60	76
Mr. Abdur Rashid	F.A.	April 1925	50	62
Mr. Mchammad Hasan	F.A.	April 1925	50	60
Mr. Abdur Rashid	F.Sc.	Transferred from Audit.	60	78
Mr. Saeed	Matric.	July 1927	100	80 plus 20

--It is a sort of degradation--

Mr. Sardar Mchammad	F.A.	May 1926	50	76
Mr. Ahmad Hasan	B.A.	1928	60	60
Mr. Abdul Hamid	B.A., LL.B.	1928	80	80

Well, Sir, from the above list you can easily see how the Muhammadans are being treated. Although the official Benches were doleful and very bored, I cannot help saying that, in spite of their boredom and ennui, they must pay some regard to the claims of the Muhammadans, and I do hope that this voice which is raised in protest against the injustice done to the Muhammadans will carry weight with them and pave the way for the amelioration of the lot of the Muhammadans in the near future.

Colonel J. D. Crawford (Bengal: European): It was not my intention, Sir, to intervene in this debate, but I think we feel very strongly on these Benches that there is every necessity to show the utmost justice to minorities. It may be that we, minorities ourselves, are not active enough in

pushing our way into the various services, but if that is the position, then it seems to me that it is up to Government to go out and make a greater endeavour to secure recruits from communities inadequately represented, rather than leave the position as it is. I recognise that Government on this occasion have made a very reasonable statement to the Muhammadans. Mr. Hayman's speech seems to me to have been thoroughly conciliatory. Still the figures—I think even my Hindu friends will admit—are not satisfactory, and if this sort of proportion is to remain in the services, we are going to have our communal differences extended for a considerable time. The way out of the difficulty, it appears to me, is to go out and see if you cannot find, by special recruitment, sufficient numbers of any particular community to meet your requirements. It is perfectly true that the Muhammadans have not turned their attention adequately to service in the Railway Department, and I admit, therefore, the difficulty of Government, but it might be possible for Government to advertise more freely and make a real effort to see whether they cannot get members of the Muhammadan community suited to their purpose. The actual motion, of course, if passed, would be a motion of censure on Government, and I do not feel that that is justified in view of Mr. Hayman's reply to the House. It seems to me that the debate points to the fact that we all desire Government to continue with its policy of finding equality in the services for the various communities, and if the opinion of my Muhammadan friends is that, I suggest that the debate might be left there by the withdrawal of Mr. Ghuznavi's motion.

Mr. Abdul Haya (East Punjab: Muhammadan): Sir, I want to say only a few words by way of reply to what fell from the lips of my Honourable friend Munshi Iswar Saran. After making certain remarks, towards the end of his speech he appealed to the Muhammadan Members and said, "You make common cause with us in the matter of Indianisation of the services". Well, Sir, I have been in this Assembly for seven years now, and during this period, there has not been a single occasion when a Mussalman Member has stood in the way of Indianisation of the services. We have always lent our unqualified and whole-hearted support to this national claim. But here this morning, I want to say, that even in that matter of Indianisation, my unfortunate community has suffered. Sir, my Honourable friend Mr. Hayman, the spokesman of the Railway Board, when he was on his legs on Saturday afternoon replying to the arguments of my Honourable friend Mr. Ghuznavi, did not dare to come to the point at issue straight. For a pretty long time, he was beating about the bush. He said, "We, Members of the Railway Board, have been very busy with the scheme of Indianisation and we have achieved a great success". He said, "About 75 per cent. of Indianisation has been accomplished and when what remains is also achieved, we shall turn round and see what is due to the Mussalmans. We shall then do something in that direction." This clearly means that, up till now, they have ignored this important community. Sir, his argument reminded me of the robbers and their code of ethics. What do robbers do when they go out to carry out their nefarious trade? They put their heads together and they say, "Here we have to rob other people of their property. At the time when we will commit a dacoity or robbery the time at our disposal would be very short. Let us make the best of the occasion and carry away as much property of our victim as we can. Let us neither quarrel, nor find fault with each other. Do not say, you have taken more than myself, and when we go

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to a place of retreat, we shall divide it equitably". Sir, even the robbers have their code of ethics, and when they go back, they really do justice to one another. But here in this gamble, I am afraid, after the robbery is over, after an alien bureaucracy has been robbed, no Hayman, no Iswar Saran would be able to secure justice for the minority community.

Mr. B. Das: We have all been robbed by the Europeans and the Anglo-Indians.

Mr. Abdul Haya: My Honourable friend Munshi Iswar Saran said that, after the speech of my Honourable friend Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan, somebody whispered into his ears and said, "After hearing this, we have no other alternative but to remain neutral". I am not aware, Sir, of the offending words that were uttered by my Honourable friend to my left. But if the Honourable Members really desire to remain neutral, I will not be surprised. This is not the first occasion when you have left the Mussalmans in the lurch, I perfectly remember that historic day, when the debate on Frontier Reforms was going on in this Assembly, each one of you (with the solitary exception of a gentleman from Bengal) deserted us. If you are going to repeat that mistake, we will not be surprised. We will stand on our own legs. Sir, this morning, I find that Mr. Hayman has every sympathy for us. But I want to inquire what has happened to that letter of the Government of India of 1925 regarding the minority communities' proper share in the services? What has happened to those instructions which said that communal inequalities should be removed at an early date? Does that letter still hold good, or has it been withdrawn by the Government of India? I know that, ever since 1925, your responsible officers, your Staff Officers have trampled that letter under their feet. They have completely ignored it. They have not paid any attention to that letter and the instructions contained therein. The only thing for which I can give any credit to the spokesman of the Railway Board is for what he said towards the end of his speech. I regret that my Honourable friend Munshi Iswar Saran did not realise the significance of the remark made by Mr. Hayman, which clinched the whole argument. Mr. Hayman said, "We have got no other alternative now; we have tried our best, but we have not been able to do anything substantial for the Mussalmans. What I now suggest is that we should appoint some Muhammadan Staff Officers". Before you accuse me or my friends on this side with communal tendencies, I ask the Honourable Member sitting on my right to realise the significance of these remarks, coming from the spokesman of the Railway Board. Does this not mean that, unless and until Muslim Staff Officers are appointed, the claims of this community will continue to be ignored? Does this not mean that the present non-Muslim Staff Officers have not risen equal to the occasion and considered the just claims of the minority communities? Sir, I have no desire to introduce heat into this debate. We want to stand on our legs and claim our rights, and if that offends you, we cannot help it. If I am permitted to put it bluntly I would say, "We want Indianisation of the services; we do not want Hinduisation of the services".

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya (Allahabad and Jhansi Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, without going into all the points that have been raised in the debate, and while regretting many remarks which have been made in the course of it, I whole-heartedly support the motion that

there should be a larger employment of Mussalmans in the railway services. I do not endorse the principle that a certain percentage should be fixed for either the minorities or the majority. I do not wish to discuss, on this occasion, what system of recruitment will be the best to be adopted by us in order to see that justice and full justice is done to every Indian, to whatever community he may belong.

Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayum: Including the untouchables?

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya: Yes, certainly including the untouchables.

I think we shall have to rise a little over our present ideas in regard to these questions of recruitment for the public services; and I hope that the time is not far distant when we should be able to discuss such a question without importing any passion or heat, and without saying things which might unnecessarily cause friction. All that I wish to say on this occasion is that, while I give credit to Mr. Hayman for having endeavoured to make a very reasonable statement, and while I note that he has promised that he will do everything that is in his power to see that a larger percentage of Muslims is employed, I do think that the figures which have been quoted disclose that there is a great deal more to be done, and which should have been done by this time.

I feel, Sir, that there have been some remarks made in the course of the debate which it will be difficult to justify. Particularly do I regret that some of my friends, and especially one of my senior esteemed friends, should have suggested the existence among some railway officers of an amount of dishonesty and cliquishness which to my mind is inconceivable. If there is any head of a Department, Hindu or non-Hindu, who has been guilty of it, I should like the fact to be established, and I should like that a man who has been guilty of such injustice should be turned out of the Government service. I have no mercy, no consideration, for any man who would do injustice to a fellowman simply because he belongs to a different faith or community. A public servant, whether he is a Hindu or a Muhammadan or a Christian or a European, abuses his position, if, taking advantage of that position, he inflicts a wrong and an injustice upon another fellowman; and I should like such cases, if there are any to be put before the Government, and I would request Government, in the interest of justice, to inquire into every single case and to bring to book the head of a Department, Superintendent or any one else, who might have kept back applications of Mussalmans or any other minority community, who might have, without justifiable reasons, passed over the applications of applicants of other communities in order to get a man of his own faith or community into his office. If there are such cases, I think public interest demands that they should be fully inquired into and that justice should be done by punishing the man who may be found to be guilty. When full responsible Government is established in this country, I do hope that any Indian, whatever his creed, who shows a communal prejudice in the discharge of his public duties will be severely dealt with, and will not be allowed to tarnish the fair name of the administration of the Government of India of the future. But, Sir, as I have said, while I very much wish that certain remarks had not been made, I will appeal to my Honourable friends who have been hurt by those remarks to exercise the virtue of toleration and patience. The virtue of toleration, as George Eliot has said, lies with the

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superior nature. Whether we are Hindus or Muhammadans or Christians, if statements are made which we think are unjust and which we think had better not have been made, we need not necessarily reply to them. Let us ignore them and yet see what justice there is at the bottom of the proposal that is put forward. Perhaps in that way we shall be holding up a much better example to our fellow-workers than by attempting to answer and to criticise what we disapprove and hold to be wrong.

Well, Sir, I do not wish to detain the House longer. I feel that there are some steps which may be taken. There is something evidently wrong. The number of Muhammadan young men available in the country is happily now very much larger than it was twenty years ago. Education has made great progress, and Muslim young men are giving a very good account of themselves even in the competitions at the Universities and in their examinations. May it be that want of due publicity of vacancies in these offices or at the requirements of these offices, *i.e.*, want of knowledge among Muslim candidates of these requirements, is responsible for a sufficient number of young men not offering themselves for the services to which reference has been made? In any case I hope that the Government of India and the Universities and other Educational institutions will co-operate to let the student world know what the requirements of particular departments are. And not merely that, but they should give students facilities to qualify themselves for service in those departments in which Muslims may be found to be very deficient in number. I think, Sir, it should be recognised that it is the duty of the Government of the day, whichever Government it may be, that it should inform the youth of the country, without any distinction and without any partiality, of what opportunities there are for them in the public services of the country and afford them facilities to obtain that particular kind of education which may be needed to qualify them for those services. If we introduce such a system, this kind of talk of any possible partiality on communal grounds will become a matter of past history. Sir, I support the motion.

Mr. M. A. Jinnah (Bombay City: Muhammadan Urban): Sir, although the motion before the House involves a very minor issue in itself, it has got a very far-reaching effect on matters of much graver importance both within the House and outside in the country. That, Sir, is my only excuse for taking part in this debate and detaining this House for a little while.

Now, Sir, my Honourable friend, the Leader of the Opposition, just now said that there must be some cause—of course he was not able to define it—for this appalling state of affairs which was disclosed so eloquently, not by language or oratory but by cold print, printed figures, which speak more eloquently than any language or rhetoric or any arguments. The facts have been disclosed from the official records. Now, I think it is admitted and cannot be denied that they disclose a most deplorable state of affairs. The next question is, what have the Government of India been doing, and what have the real authorities been doing. That is the next question. The same story goes on year after year. It is true—and here I can assure my Hindu friends—that some of us feel very keenly, feel very strongly on the subject, and yet we restrain ourselves from questions of this character in this House if we can possibly help it, because we do not desire that there should be created any bitterness or ill-feeling amongst Honourable Members of the position and responsibility that we find in this House. But I have

always wondered, and I wondered when my Honourable friend was speaking as to what is the cause of all this. He said it may be want of due advertisement. It may be due to some causes, something or other. Sir, am I to assume that the Government and the Railway Board are so inefficient or so ignorant and so incapable of understanding a simple question of this character, namely, the recruitment of a particular community on the ground of fairness and justice to that community? Are they so incompetent that they cannot devise methods and measures? Are the Government really so bankrupt that they cannot handle this simple question? And for all those years, you know, Government knows, Sir, that this has been one of the sorest points with the Mussalmans, and we find unfortunately, beggars cannot do anything else except to wait in deputations on the Railway Board and the Government Member and His Excellency the Viceroy when he goes on tour, and every time a very nice reply is given, and we are informed that we are very loyal, and Government are always our friends, Government are always ready to do anything for the Mussalmans particularly, but "what can we do, you are not efficient, you are backward in education, we cannot find men in your community suitable for the various posts". Now, Sir, that is the argument and reason that is advanced. I am really beginning to think—and I am sorry if I am unduly accusing the Government of India—but I really am beginning to think that this is done with some object or policy behind it. I hope I am wrong. I make the statement with great hesitation. I am really beginning to think, Sir, that this is done with some definite policy or object behind it, and that object, it seems to me is this, that Government deliberately—not because of their incompetence or incapacity of realising or appreciating—I refuse to believe that—but they deliberately follow a policy which leaves a very great grievance on the part of the Mussalmans. There are unfortunately some Hindu friends of ours who look upon this question with great resentment, and who say that the Muhammadans are, day in and day out, clamouring for appointments in the services of the Government whether they are efficient or not. The Government take advantage of that sentiment of the Hindus. In view of this sentiment the Government feel that, whenever the question comes up, the Hindus are more likely to stand up and take up this position that in the services nothing but pure merits should count, recruitment should be by competitive examination—in short, survival of the fittest. Government rely upon this attitude and feel sure that some will resort to this argument. Government therefore make use of all the sentiments, feelings and the opinions which are expressed, and know that, whenever the question comes up, the Hindus are not likely to support the Mussalmans, and that therefore the Mussalmans will be provoked, embittered, and thus estranged, they will look to Government for favours and so then steps in the Government and goes on with sweet words and occasionally throws a few crumbs with the definite object that there may not be any good understanding arrived at between the Hindus and the Muhammadans. (Hear, hear.) Now, is that your object?

Sir Hugh Cocke (Bombay: European): Sir, I rise to a point of order. Is the Honourable Member entitled to continue addressing the Government and not the Chair?

Mr. M. A. Jinnah: Sir, Sir Hugh Cocke, I think, will have to learn yet to teach me. I have been in this House much longer than he has been (Hear, hear) and I think his interruption was without any justification whatever and I think he knew it and he probably too felt my

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argument too strong, and he wanted to take me away from that line. I do not think he will succeed in that. (Laughter.)

Therefore, I say, and I appeal to my Hindu friends not to play this game and estrange Mussalmans, and here I want you not to misunderstand me, because, as far as I am concerned, I have from the very start of my career stood for Indianisation, and I certainly will be the last person to advocate that the efficiency of the service should in any way be prejudiced (Hear, hear.), because of communal claims. We do not want incompetent officers or servants, we want competent men. (Hear, hear.) But you must admit that, in getting competent men, in getting qualified men, you must have regard to the interests of the various communities, whether they are Anglo-Indians, whether they are Parsees, or Christians or Muhammadans. (Hear, hear.) I have always stood for Indianisation, from, I think, the days of Dadabhai Naoroji. I have always supported it, and whenever an argument was advanced in favour of efficiency, I have supported it and I think Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya will remember, once the Honourable predecessor of the Home Member, Sir William Vincent, said that if we were going to have a system of competitive examinations, the Mussalmans would suffer tremendously, and he was at that time the champion and the guardian of the interests of the Mussalmans in that particular question. I think, Sir, you were also in that Council and I remember this game being played very often. I think it has been given up now to a certain extent. Perhaps it is finding its roots deeper and becoming more ingenious than the obvious game that used to be played. His game was again to divide the Hindus and Mussalmans over this question because the motion was moved by a Hindu whose opinion was that this particular service in this particular Department should be recruited by competitive examination. And I

remember, Sir, on that occasion I said that I was in favour of efficiency, and that if the competitive test was the only test of efficiency (about which I have my own doubts), I would rather follow that test, even at the expense of Mussalmans. But, Sir, that is not the point. Competition is not really after all, the best test. (Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney: "Hear, hear.") It has been so found not only in this country, but in many other countries—however, I won't go into that matter now, Sir.

I therefore, Sir, whole-heartedly support this motion, and I am very glad—if I may say so, I sincerely congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on giving a correct lead to his community, which I most cordially reciprocate. (Applause.)

Mr. M. K. Acharya (South Arcot *cum* Chingleput: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I just want to make a few remarks, and as usual in my own philosophical way. I will be very brief. I am sure my Muhammadan friends will believe me when I say that, so far as one humble Member of this House can do anything to support this motion, I am whole-heartedly with them. I think it is a duty which I owe to myself, indeed it is a duty which I owe to my Muhammadan fellow countrymen, for whom I have so much love and regard, that I must raise my humble voice in support of what they may consider to be their legitimate share of public appointments. I am, however, a little sorry, Sir, whenever any

of my friends come up with any of these questions as to the larger employment in any inferior services, or for that matter, even in the superior services, on behalf of this particular community or that particular community, and so on. I thought, Sir, that we old-fashioned Brahmins alone were beggars. I am afraid our Muhammadan friends, perhaps by long association with us, have become adepts also in this art of begging. I wish, Sir, that we could forget for a moment the art of begging, and talk of something not of service but of some kind of rule, self-rule. "How many clerks are there in such and such a Department?" I am sorry that these questions are raised constantly and are allowed to turn the course of the debate, and very often allowed too to appeal to our lower natures. That is the feeling that I had when I heard some of the remarks made today. Of course, anybody will say that it is absurd that some very good Muhammadans, clerks in offices, should be started on Rs. 60 and remain on Rs. 70 or Rs. 80 for two or three years, while some other clerks, Hindu or Anglo-Indian or Parsi, who start on Rs. 70 or Rs. 80, within two or three years rise to Rs. 200 or Rs. 270 and so on. That is injustice, and as the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition well put it, I hope such cases will be brought to the notice of the senior officer concerned, who is responsible for dealing with such petty inequalities and injustices, and that he will be dealt with it in a manner that will open the eyes of others and put them on a proper code of justice to their subordinates.

While admitting this, Sir, I will appeal to my Muhammadan friends just to think whether, having been rulers for such a long time in India, it is not rather a little derogatory to themselves that they are constantly bringing up these questions relating to the services, and laying so much stress upon the fact that there are very few Muhammadan clerks here and very few Muhammadan clerks there. Talking for the Hindus, I wish that we were able to yield more places to Muhammadans, or even to get on without Government service for that matter. I often used to tell many a graduate that had come to me, "Even a chauffeur gets Rs. 40 or Rs. 50 and even a cook gets Rs. 30, why do you wish to get a clerkship on Rs. 20 or Rs. 25?" That is my feeling with regard to these services, so let us not make a great mountain of this minor issue. As Mr. Jinnah has said, it is unfortunate that there is a major corollary attached to it. Whether we are Hindus or Mussalmans, we in this country should live in amity and peace and goodwill, and not quarrel on this small question, which is likely to engender communal heat. Let ninety per cent. of all offices be given to my Muhammadan friends rather than that communal heat and communal ill-feeling should be engendered. After all, service is not going to elevate the nation. Service is not going to bring us Swaraj. It is character, it is merit of a different calibre, and not the traits that are being cultivated as clerks in offices that we require in the great national task that lies ahead of us. That is my appeal to my Muhammadans friends. By all means let them get as many clerkships as they wish, and let my Muhammadan friends have no feeling of injustice in their minds; let the Hindus cheerfully give to them as many vacant clerks' places or even officers' places as will satisfy them; but let us stand closer together and not be deflected from the great national work that lies before us, by the consideration of a less number of Muhammadans here or a less number of Muhammadan employees there.

***Maulvi Sayyid Murtuza Saheb Bahadur:** Sir, but for the speech of the last speaker, my Honourable friend, Mr. M. K. Acharya. I would not have intervened in the debate at this moment. Of course, as a philosopher he has placed his philosophic observations before the House. I know what amount of philosophy he has taught to us. But am I to understand, Sir, that he is not in favour of Indianisation because Indians need not care for these appointments? If he is not in favour of Indianisation, he may of course oppose the token cut put forward by my Honourable friend, Mr. Ghuznavi, but, Sir, I do not see any reason why the Mussalman demand for a due share in the services should be ignored altogether. If non-Moslems get their due share, of course, we do not grudge it, but there is no reason why there should be animosity or ill-feeling between the communities. On the other hand, if our Sikh friend, for instance, Sardar Gulab Singh, should move the token cut standing in his name, all Mussalmans will support him. Mr. Acharya says that Mussalmans were rulers once: that is the chief reason why even now they want to rule in each and every department of the public service. Of course, we would not be contented to remain in service. So far as Swaraj is concerned, of course, my Honourable friend, Mr. M. K. Acharya, who comes from my province, knows that we are at once with him in demanding Swaraj, but before we get Swaraj, this kind of Swaraj also is necessary. Along with Indianisation we want our due share.

So far as my Honourable friend, Mr. Hayman, is concerned, he said he had succeeded in achieving the object to a great extent in the matter of Indianisation, but I would ask my Honourable friend as to how it is that, in attending to Indianisation, he has ignored this important minority community. He says, "Let Indianisation go on, afterwards the claims of Mussalmans will be attended to". The same thing is repeated by my Honourable friend, Munshi Iswar Saran. Sir, he also says that Indianisation should be carried out first, and Mussalman claims may therefore be put off. But, so far as I know, Sir, he knows Persian; he cited a Persian couplet the other day. Today I am going to ask whether he knows the other couplet: Are the Muslims to keep waiting till Indianisation is effected? Are they to keep waiting for centuries? That is our case, Sir. (*An Honourable Member:* "This Government will pass away.")

As for another point raised by Munshi Iswar Saran, I have to say this. When he started his speech, he said at the outset that he was in favour of this cut; but after having heard the speech of Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan, he changed his mind; and not only he but all the Back Benchers of his party. I do not know, Sir, how we come to conclusions as regards certain points. Are we not open to conviction? Are we not convinced of the justice of a certain point and then decide as to which way we should vote? Or is it the case that, because Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan or somebody else says something which may be offensive to him, he should change his mind along with other Back Benchers? I am glad that the Leader of the Opposition has come forward and said what the attitude of that party will be. I hope the appeal made by the Leader will find a ready response in all the Members of that party. With these few words, I support the motion.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy (Member for Commerce and Railways): Sir, my Honourable friend, Mr. Hayman, has explained so clearly the attitude of the Government and of the Railway Board in this question and has also explained the action which we are trying to take in order to increase the proportion of Muhammadans in the railway services and I do not think it will be necessary for me to speak at any length. I have listened with the greatest interest to the debate and I should like very specially to acknowledge the words which fell from my Honourable friend, the Leader of the Opposition, and also from my friend, Colonel Crawford, who spoke on behalf of the European Group. I believe that it must be a cause of satisfaction to all Members of the House that a question, which my Honourable friend, Mr. Jinnah, described as small in itself but in its relations by no means small, should have been discussed in a worthy and high-minded spirit.

My Honourable friend, Mr. Jinnah, with some hesitation, expressed a doubt whether the previous action of Government in this matter was not due to some motive. All I shall say, in reply to that, is this: that for nearly three years now this question in one form or another has been before me, and I am not conscious that, on any single occasion, the motive suggested was even indirectly present to my mind as a possible motive which might dictate my line of action; and I do not believe that it has ever been present to the minds of any other Members of the Government. The other alternative is—and this, I admit is a more probable one—that the Government are incompetent

Mr. M. A. Jinnah: That is clear.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: At least we hear it so often from the other side of the House that we almost begin to believe it. Mr. Jinnah has said that, when it was such a simple matter, why did not we get to business and put things right? But, Mr. President, we know that it is not quite as simple as that. There are difficulties. I do not wish to enlarge upon these difficulties, but I must mention one, because it enables me to say something about what fell from my Honourable friend, Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan, on the subject of the Railway Clearing Accounts Office. From the figures he read out to the House, it must have been clear to Members that a very considerable proportion—I think something like four-fifths—of the men in that office are people who have been transferred from other Government or railway offices to the Clearing Accounts Office; and so far as they are concerned, necessarily the communal composition of that section of the office must be determined purely by the people who happened to be in these other offices at the time the transfer took place.

Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan: Because they are all non-Moslems?

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: I merely mean this, that if you find that in the staff of the offices from which these clerks were transferred, there was a certain proportion of a particular community, necessarily after they had been transferred the proportion will still be the same. Now, my Honourable friend, the Financial Commissioner, after the transfer took place, and recognising the great preponderance of the majority community among the men taken over from other accounts offices, undertook to go somewhat beyond the ordinary rule and to give one-third of the vacancies to minority communities, irrespective of the number of appointments these communities might obtain out of the other two-thirds owing to their success

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in the examination. But the difficulty is to find enough candidates from three communities to come forward and get a pass in the examination, because it appears especially in the case of the Muslim community, that those who are in a position to pass can get better appointments elsewhere. Now, I do not want to lay any great stress upon that, but it is a real difficulty. What I wish to lay particular stress on today is the view which Government take. Difficulties there are, but we want to overcome these difficulties.

Maulvi Muhammad Yakub: You have been saying that all these years.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: Where there is a will there is a way, and I hope my Honourable friend, Mr. Hayman, has convinced the House

Maulvi Muhammad Yakub: Not at all.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: That, so far as he is concerned, there is the will, and that he is confident he will find a way, and I hope that the pessimism of my Honourable friend, Maulvi Muhammad Yakub, will not be justified.

One of the ways he proposed to adopt came in for a little criticism from my friend, Munshi Iswar Saran. He suggested that it was wholly improper to select Staff Officers because they belonged to a particular community in the hope that they would recruit large numbers of their own community. Surely that is not quite the position. My Honourable friend, Mr. Hayman, pointed out that he wished to have Muhammadan Staff Officers in the right proportion, to their numbers, in the services. Surely, no one would propose to lay down a bar against the employment of Muhammadans as Staff Officers, and surely when the position is that for one reason or another suitable candidates of the Muslim community do not present themselves for these railway appointments and that if special attention were paid to the matter, suitable candidates would come forward—surely then it is reasonable to employ as Staff Officers people who will take pains to see that they do come forward and that their claims are fairly considered? We are not dealing with a race in which both sides start fair and even. The position we have to deal with, as it is put to us from the Benches on my right, is that the Muhammadan does find great difficulty in getting a fair chance. It seems to me in those circumstances that it is most reasonable that a proper proportion of Muhammadans should be employed as Staff Officers, because if they are so employed then we can really test the assertion that there are plenty of suitable candidates if we only take the trouble to look for them. I will only add one word in conclusion, Mr. President. I have said, and in doing so I echoed the words of my Honourable friend, Mr. Jinnah, that although this particular question may be a small issue in itself it may have very important repercussions. What I wish to add is this, that nothing could give greater relief to Members of the Government than to see this communal question satisfactorily settled not only as regards appointments but everywhere else also.

Mr. President: The question is:

“That the Demand under the head ‘Railway Board’ be reduced by Rs. 100.”

(Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi rose in his place.)

Mr. President: I thought that the Honourable Member rose to reply?

Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi: No, Sir.

Mr. President: Does the Honourable Member wish to withdraw?

Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi: Yes, Sir. After the assurances given by Mr. Hayman, I want the leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

Mr. President: Does the Honourable Member wish to withdraw?

Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi: Yes, Sir.

(Cries of "Yes" and "No" from several parts of the House.)

Khan Bahadur Makhdum Syed Rajan Bakhsh Shah (South-West Punjab: Muhammadan): "Ham log taiyar nahi hain." (We are not prepared to agree.)

Mr. President: What is the wish of the Honourable Member? Does he wish to withdraw?

Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi: Yes, Sir. (Cries of "Yes" and "No" from several sides of the House.)

Mr. President: The question is:

"That leave be given to Mr. Ghuznavi to withdraw his motion."

The Assembly divided:

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad (United Provinces Southern Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, before the Division results are announced, may I raise a point of order?

Mr. President: What is the point of order?

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad: The point of order is this. In the Manual of Business and Procedure supplied to every Member of the House, on page 55, No. 155, it is said:

"Not more than fifteen days shall be allotted by the Governor General for the discussion of the Demands of the Governor General in Council for grants. Of the days so allotted, . . ."

Mr. President: Order, order. Is it in connection with the division?

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad: It is. It may refer to this motion as well, if my point of order is admitted by you. The point is this:

"Of the days so allotted, not more than two days shall be allotted by the Governor General to the discussion of any one demand."

We are on Demand No. 1, and we have taken two days and a half on it. Are we in order according to the rules?

Mr. President: Has the Governor General allotted two days for any one Demand for grant?

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad: That is what I read in the book. I do not know.

Mr. President: Order, order. The result of the voting is Ayes 48, Noes 26.

AYES—43.

Abdul Aziz, Khan Bahadur Mian.
Abdul Qaiyum, Nawab Sir Sahibzada.
Alexander, Mr. W.
Banarji, Mr. Rajnarayan.
Baum, Mr. E. F.
Chambers, Mr. G. W.
Chatterjee, The Revd. J. C.
Cocke, Sir Hugh.
Cosgrave, Mr. W. A.
Crawford, Colonel J. D.
Crerar, The Honourable Sir James.
Crosthwaite, Mr. H. S.
Ferrers, Mr. V. M.
French, Mr. J. O.
Ghuznavi, Mr. A. H.
Gidney, Lieut. Colonel H. A. J.
Gwynne, Mr. C. W.
Hamilton, Mr. K. L. B.
Hayman, Mr. A. M.
Howell, Mr. E. B.
Jawahar Singh, Sardar Bahadur
Sardar.
Lamb, Mr. W. S.

Lindsay, Sir Darcy.
Mitra, The Honourable Sir Bhupendra
Nath.
Mitter, The Honourable Sir Brojendra.
Monteath, Mr. J.
Moore, Mr. Arthur.
Mukherjee, Rai Bahadur S. C.
Noyce, Sir Frank.
Pai, Mr. A. Upendra.
Parsons, Mr. A. A. L.
Rainy, The Honourable Sir George.
Roy, Mr. K. C.
Sahi, Mr. Ram Prashad Narayan.
Sams, Mr. H. A.
Sarma, Mr. R. S.
Schuster, The Honourable Sir George.
Singh, Mr. Adit Prasad.
Slater, Mr. S. H.
Sykes, Mr. E. F.
Tin Tut, Mr.
Yamin Khan, Mr. Muhammad.
Young, Mr. G. M.

NOES—26.

Abdul Haye, Mr.
Abdul Matin Chaudhury, Maulvi.
Abdul lah Haji Kasim, Khan Bahadur
Haji.
Anwar-ul-Aziz, Mr.
Badi-uz-Zaman, Maulvi.
Dakhan, Khan Bahadur W. M. P.
Ghulam Kadir Khan.
Farookhi, Mr. Abdul Latif Saheb.
Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Raja.
Gulab Singh, Sardar.
Haji, Mr. Sarabhai Nemchand.
Ismail Khan, Mr. Muhammad.
Kidwai, Sheikh Mushir Husain.
Mitra, Mr. S. C.

Murtuza Saheb Bahadur, Maulvi
Sayyid.
Neogy, Mr. K. C.
Rahimtulla, Mr. Fazal Ibrahim.
Rajan Bakhsh Shah, Khan Bahadur
Makhdum Syed.
Roy, Mr. B. C.
Shafee Daoodi, Maulvi Mohammad.
Siddiqi, Mr. Abdul Qadir.
Singh, Kumar Rananjaya.
Suhravardiy, Dr. A.
Tirloki Nath, Lal.
Yakub, Maulvi Muhammad.
Ziauddin Ahmad, Dr.
Zulfikar Ali Khan, Sir.

The motion was adopted.

The amendment was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

The Assembly then adjourned for Lunch till a Quarter to Three of the Clock.

The Assembly re-assembled after Lunch at a Quarter to Three of the Clock, Mr. President in the Chair.

Desirability of State Railways running Steamer Services between Important Points in the Railway System.

Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi: Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 100."

I have tabled this motion with a view to discuss the desirability of State Railways running steamer services between important points in the railway system. Sir, developing my point which I raised on Wednesday last as regards the State Railways running steamer services of their own between important connecting points, let me at once disabuse the minds of Honourable Members of the impression, if I have given any, that the State Railways should run inland steamer services in competition with private enterprise. That was far from my mind. I did not mean, Sir, that the State Railways should in any way interfere with the present working of the inland steamship companies. What I meant was that, as the State Railways run their own ferry services across rivers connecting the railways from one side of the river to the other, they should also run their own steamer services connecting the railway system between two important points. For instance, before the Sara Bridge was built, the State Railways had their own passenger service, steamer service, which crosses the Padma River between Damukdia Ghat and Sara Ghat, thus connecting the Eastern Bengal Railway with the Northern Bengal Railway. This service was abolished, after the Hardinge Sara Bridge was constructed. Now, when the State Railways were running their own ferry steamers, there existed two inland steamship companies, and they had their own steamer services running along the Padma, carrying passengers and goods from the stations on either side of the river, including Damukdia Ghat and Sara Ghat. I may inform Honourable Members that those steamship companies in spite of the State Railway having their bridge and in spite of the State Railway discontinuing their steamer services, have still their steamer service running along the Padma river. Similarly, the Eastern Bengal State Railway, even up to now, runs its steamer ferry, Fulchhari and Bahadurabad, connecting the Eastern Bengal Railway and the Northern Bengal Railway at those two important points. Here also the two steamship companies ply their steamers, and have their stations at both these places, and they are continuing to ply even now.

Sir, in 1864, when the State acquired the Eastern Bengal Guaranteed Company Railway, they had their own steamer service connecting the two important points, namely, the railway termini at Goalundo and Narayanganj. But at the same time these two inland steamship companies plied their own steamers between Goalundo and Narayanganj all the same. Then, Sir, the Eastern Bengal Railway had their own steamer service between Goalundo and Sirajganj and so had these two inland steamship companies theirs. And though, after the Sara-Sirajganj Railway line was opened, the passengers from the Calcutta side do not travel by the new circuitous way, namely, *via* Goalundo, the steamer companies all the same are maintaining their services and evidently without suffering any loss. All that we want is that there should be no break in the link, that is, the railways should connect their lines where they have their termini and where a steamer service is necessary, steamer services should be run by them, as otherwise there will remain a break in the through communication of railways, in consequence of which the railways will not have full and efficient control over the entire route. At the same time this House is deprived of that control. It can by no means lead to any competition with private enterprise, whereas the railway services will be more useful and efficient. I have already said that the railways had their own steamer services between Goalundo and Narayanganj. At that time two steamer companies ran their services in competition with each other, with the

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result that the rates were fair and the conveniences of the travelling public were looked into.

We have at present the two inland steamer companies, the R.S.N. and the I.G.S.N. As far as my information goes both are now the properties of the Inchcape group. Now, Sir, these two steamer companies, somewhere in 1885 or 1886, approached Government, and the Government agreed that their State Railways would abolish their own steamer services, with the result that the two steamer companies combined and they now enjoy an absolute monopoly. Since then the fares have gone up by leaps and bounds, concessions such as reduced fares for return journeys are practically denied, and they have now an absolute monopoly in the jute traffic. Finding that they have no other companies competing with them, finding that the State Railways have abandoned their own steamer services, they have fixed the freight between Goalundo and Narayanganj terribly high. That freight is to my mind out of all proportion to their prevailing rates elsewhere, where they find that the Railways have also similar lines which they run. Sir, had these Railways continued their steamship services, had they been in existence now, it would have served as a check on their high-handed action. When my Honourable friend, Mr. Neogy, introduced his Inland Steam Vessels Bill, he did, I must say, a distinct service to us who come from Bengal. After the introduction of that Bill the steamer companies realised that trouble was ahead. Formerly, when the Railways were running their own steamers, they had their first-class cabins, second class, intermediate and third class. And even when the Railways abandoned their own steamer services, but these steamer companies had not combined, they also gave various facilities to the passengers. But when they felt absolutely secure, they combined, and what was the result? The steamers that plied between Goalundo and Narayanganj had only first class cabins, and the most rotten arrangements that could exist, because they found that there was no competitors in the field and the Railways had given up their own services. Then, again, what they did was this. The Eastern Bengal State Railway could carry the jute traffic from Goalundo to Calcutta, Calcutta being the centre where this jute of Eastern Bengal has a market. But to bring that jute from Eastern Bengal one has to go further beyond Goalundo. In order to carry the jute from Narayanganj to Calcutta one will have to go to the steamer companies to book their jute so as to take it as far as Goalundo, because they have no State Railway service. Now, these steamer companies increased their rate of freight between Narayanganj and Goalundo in order to cover the loss of freight that they incurred in not being able to capture the full freight from Goalundo to Calcutta, and thereby deprived the State Railways from having their legitimate freight from Goalundo to Calcutta. I think I have made it clear.

Sir, the railway freight between Goalundo and Calcutta, a distance of 154 miles, was much cheaper than the steamer freight for taking their jute or any other commodity by the steamer route from Goalundo to Calcutta. But the steamship company made their profit from exorbitant freight between Goalundo and Narayanganj, and to deprive the State Railway from earning their legitimate charges from Goalundo to Calcutta, they reduced their freights by the steamer route from Goalundo to Calcutta to such an extent that no trader would think of sending his commodity by rail unless that particular commodity was urgently required at Calcutta,

and only because he could get it to Calcutta in a shorter time. That is the reason why I say that, in connecting two important State Railways or two Railways, one managed by the Company and the other by the State, the important links should be served by the State and not by private enterprise. I have no quarrel with the present steamship companies. They can run their own steamships as they are doing now. What I want is that the Honourable the Railway Member should consider whether or not, in the interests of the State, the railways should have a service connecting the important points between two railways, either Company-managed or State-managed. Sir, I move.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: Sir, I do not wish to speak at any length upon this motion today. My Honourable friend, the Mover, has stated that he had no wish to see the State Railways, engaging in competition with private enterprise, and as I understood his argument, he drew attention to various cases where the Railway had its own ferry service from a point on one bank of the river to a point on the opposite bank and where nevertheless the Indian steamship companies had their own service running up and down the river and calling at these opposite points.

Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi: The State Railways were running a steamer service between Goalundo and Calcutta and at the same time the steamship companies were running too.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: If my Honourable friend will give me a little time, I think I was actually reproducing what he said. It is the earlier part of his speech. Then he went on to say and he drew attention, quite correctly, to the fact that formerly there used to be State Railway steamers between Goalundo and Narayanganj. It was long ago, but I have no doubt it was so, and he expressed the view that, if we were to revive this service, there would be no real competition with private enterprise. I do not know what the steamship companies would say about that; but I know what I should say. As soon as I revived the service, I would find that the inland steamship companies would be competing with me, and the effect of the competition would certainly be that both the services would be carried on at a loss. That may be a very good thing for the travelling public and for the merchants.

Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi: But you are suffering a tremendous loss. You are not allowed to carry on, because the steamship companies have reduced the rate to such an extent between Calcutta and Goalundo that they do not allow the railways to get the freight.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: I am afraid there is no particular bearing on the point I was dealing with at the moment. The position would be very pleasant no doubt for the public and for the merchants, but would not perhaps be so attractive to those who are responsible for the financial results of the State Railways. After all, that particular route between Goalundo and Narayanganj is the most important inland water route in the whole of India, excluding Burma, which is in a different category, and I think it is quite clear that, if we were to undertake that service, we should be letting ourselves in for a great deal more than what might appear at first sight. It will be a somewhat expensive service, and would involve a certain amount of capital expenditure of various kinds, and just at the present juncture, I am by no means anxious to extend our activities in any

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new direction which would mean a heavier burden on the capital programme. We have got rather more at present on our hands than we can find money to deal with adequately. Therefore, I feel that the present juncture is peculiarly inopportune for a revival of the inland steamship service run by the railways, apart from the purely ferry service, and if a connection run by the railways is wanted between Narayanganj and Goalundo, I would much rather spend the money to secure it by building the Dacca-Aricha Railway, than by starting a new steamer service. I may point out that, if I spend the money on the steamer service, I may have less money for building that particular railway. Apart from that, the House will remember that, when I spoke on, I think it was on a Resolution moved by my Honourable friend, Mr. Neogy, I mentioned that the Agent of the Eastern Bengal Railway was about to approach the inland steamship companies in order to discuss a number of important matters in which he considered that the existing arrangements were unfair and unsatisfactory to the railways. If the Assembly were, by passing this motion, to express the view that we ought boldly to advance into the sphere which they regard as their own, I do not think it would do anything to promote the success of the negotiations that are pending, and apart from anything else, I think on that ground my Honourable friend will not press his motion.

Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi: In view of the statement that has been made by my Honourable friend, Sir George Rainy, I beg leave to withdraw my motion.

The motion was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

The Dacca-Aricha Railway Project.

Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi: Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Sir, before I go into the details, I should like to place before this House the various statements that have been made from time to time regarding the progress of the Dacca-Aricha Railway. On the 1st February, 1928, in answer to my question, my Honourable friend, Mr. Parsons, made this statement on the floor of this House. I asked:

"Will Government be pleased to state if it is a fact that the Dacca-Aricha Railway scheme will be kept in abeyance now? If so, will Government be pleased to state the reason therefor and also when they propose to take it up?"

The answer of my friend was:

"(a) and (b). The report and estimates have been just received from the Agent, Eastern Bengal Railway and are under examination by the Railway Board. Government have no intention"

—I again repeat the answer, Sir,—

"Government have no intention of keeping the scheme in abeyance if the results of the survey are satisfactory."

Sir, the result of the survey was very satisfactory. On the 4th September, 1928, in answer to my question, my Honourable friend, Mr. Parsons, said:

"The Railway Board have considered the report and estimates of the Dacca-Aricha Railway and the Government of India have addressed the Secretary of State on the subject."

Sir, again, on the 28th January, 1929, my Honourable friend, Mr. Parsons, replied to my question:

"The project has been sanctioned by the Secretary of State and it is hoped to provide funds for the inception of the construction next year"

—that is, in 1930. Then, Sir, in the Railway Board's Administration Report for the year 1928-29, discussing this Dacca-Aricha Railway, they say—Sir, with your permission I will read out what that Report says:

"Dacca-Aricha Railway: Rajbari-Naraingunge: construction of a broad-gauge line, about 64 miles in length from Rajbari to Naraingunge, including a wagon ferry across the Padma river between Goalundo and Aricha, was sanctioned in January, 1929. The line will provide railway communication to the large tract of country in the Dacca district situated between Aricha on the left bank of Padma river and Dacca. The present means of transport in the area traversed by the Railway is mainly by water. The time taken for the railway and the river journey between Calcutta and Dacca is about 19 hours."

Sir, here I will just pause for a moment. The distance between Calcutta and Goalundo is 154 miles, and the distance between Goalundo and Dacca is about 110 miles. The speed of the present railway which takes us from Calcutta to Goalundo—before the advent of Mr. Maffin, the present Agent,—was that of a fast bullock cart, and even now the Railway Board themselves admit that it takes 19 hours to carry passengers from Calcutta to Dacca, a distance of about 260 miles. (Inter-ruption.) This is what they say in their Report, and they say that, after construction of this line, that 19 hours will be reduced to 12. Still the Honourable the Railway Member will not give us the railway.

Colonel J. D. Crawford: What is the cost?

Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi: According to their own Report, it will make 6 per cent. but according to private calculations it will make 10 per cent. The whole project will cost about Rs. 1 crore and 84 lakhs, but we do not want the whole of the money this year

Colonel J. D. Crawford: If you substitute a road for a railway, what would be the cost of the road?

Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi: Sir, as Honourable Members may be aware, Dacca, which was once the capital of Eastern Bengal and Assam, is linked with the west and the north of Bengal by the Eastern Bengal Railway. The Eastern Bengal Railway run trains between Calcutta and Goalundo, and the two inland steamer companies run their steamer services between Goalundo and Narayanganj, and again from Narayanganj the Eastern Bengal Railway run their trains to Dacca, and from Dacca to Mymensing, a district perhaps much larger than the Delhi province itself, and from Mymensing the Eastern Bengal Railway proceeds to Juggannathganj and Bahadurabad, thus serving the interior of two districts of Bengal, Dacca and Mymensing, and connecting Eastern Bengal with West and Northern Bengal. I will just take Honourable Members to the prior history of the Eastern Bengal Railway. The Eastern Bengal Railway Company, which was a guaranteed company, was started in the year 1857, and on the 1st July, 1884, the State acquired this Company with which the Northern Bengal State Railway and the Calcutta and South Eastern Railways were amalgamated for working by the State as one undertaking, under the name of the Eastern Bengal Railway. Sir, ever since the acquisition by

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the State of the Eastern Bengal Guaranteed Railway, it was found desirable and necessary, in the interests of the State Railway which then comprised, as I have already shown, three railways, the Eastern Bengal, the North and South Bengal Railways, that this amalgamated railway should do away with steamer journeys and should connect the line between Aricha and Dacca, thus establishing a through railway communication all over the province which would not only give this particular railway much more income than it is now making, but would be of very great convenience to those who have to travel through that part of the country. But, Sir, the steamer services between Goalundo and Narayanganj were a standing block in the way of the accomplishment of this very useful project. Honourable Members are aware that Bengal holds the world's monopoly in jute. Let me tell Honourable Members that the jute is mainly grown in Eastern Bengal and that the percentage of jute growing districts—I myself have been in the jute trade ever since my childhood and Honourable Members can rely on the statements I am making so far as the jute trade is concerned—in Northern Bengal is about 40 per cent., in West Bengal it is less than 10 per cent., and the rest of it comes from Eastern Bengal, which is known as the hessian jute, or the fine quality jute which is mostly grown in Eastern Bengal. My Honourable friend, Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, was complaining the other day as to why the Honourable the Railway Member had not treated agricultural produce in the same manner as coal.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: I hope you agree with me.

Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi: Certainly. Was it, he asked, because the agricultural interests were not so vocal as the coal interests? Sir, today I ask the same question. Why is it, I ask, that the Government have not constructed the Dacca-Aricha Railway for so long? Is it because it would break the practical monopoly of the steamer companies in the transit of jute from East Bengal to Calcutta, as it would then enable the cultivators to export their jute to Calcutta at a much cheaper figure than the one they are compelled to pay to the steamer companies at the present moment?

Sir, the House will be shocked to hear something more about this matter. There are some Indian companies, apart from these two inland steamer companies. They can also carry, and they do carry, a portion of this commodity at much cheaper rates than these two steamer companies charge. But, Sir, do you know why those Indian companies cannot carry jute and these commodities? Do you know, Sir, that, if they want to send their commodities through these Indian steamer companies; they cannot do so? Do you know the reason? The reason is that the English banks refuse to pay the advance 90 per cent. on the bill of lading. If you bring your jute—I wonder where my friend Mr. Haji is today—by other than these two steamer companies, the banks refuse to pay or advance 90 per cent. on their bills of lading. And not only that, Sir. The jute mills say, "We will not advance a pice unless you bring your jute through these two favoured companies." And still the Honourable the Railway Member thinks that the Dacca-Aricha Railway is not such an urgent project and that it can be shelved, and the Finance Member came to his aid! I will say this, Sir, that this shelving of this railway on account of the stringency of the money market is not true. That is not the reason behind it. It is something more. For, after all, what did we want this year? Nothing more than the amount required for the acquisition of the land. You have provided that amount in this Budget; but still, there was a belated reply to

a letter which the Chamber of Commerce wrote asking the Honourable the Railway Member to withhold his hand from going on with this scheme—a letter which was addressed to him on the 4th of June, 1929,—and no reply was vouchsafed to this letter for ten months and it was only on the 10th February, 1930, that the Honourable the Railway Member gave them a very long reply—and what does he say in that reply? He says, "We do not agree with you; we have investigated the whole thing. We will continue the construction of the railway. But—there came the 'but'—since we cannot go on this year owing to financial stringency, we will reopen the whole question again." As I said already, the financial stringency was not standing in the way, because we did not want more than a couple of lakhs of rupees in the present year. But what was the real trouble? The real trouble was the Inchoape twin was in the way, and that was the trouble of the Honourable Member. He dare not go against the interests of the Siamese twin, the steamer companies. Sir, with your permission I will just deal with that letter. After stating what the Bengal Chamber had said, it is stated in the letter: "We find that the railway will be useful. We find that all the arguments that you adduce in favour of the abandonment of the scheme are of no use. We also find that the Bengal Government is with us". This is very interesting, and I should like to read it to the House:

"The Government of Bengal, to whom a copy of your letter was forwarded, have stated that their support of the project is not affected by the representation of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. In the ordinary course, therefore, the construction of the line would have proceeded. But, owing to financial circumstances, it is impossible to allot funds in 1930-31 for the commencement of the actual work of construction."

Surely, you cannot commence the actual work of construction before you have acquired the lands, and the acquisition of land will at least take you one year. You had no business to stop the acquisition of the lands; you have got the necessary money provided in the present year's Budget, and as late as the 15th January, 1930, when you were holding a meeting of the Railway Standing Finance Committee, I asked my Honourable friend, Mr. Parsons, whether the scheme of the Dacca-Aricha Railway was a settled fact. He said it was. He also said that the money that was required, so far at least as this railway was concerned, was provided in this year's Budget.

Then comes the letter of 10th February, 1930. What does it say? That letter says this:

"But, owing to financial circumstances it is impossible to allot funds in 1930-31 for the commencement of actual work of construction and an opportunity has thus presented itself to make sure, and as your Committee suggest, in a project of such magnitude this was in any case desirable, that the construction and traffic estimates are as accurate as they can be made."

Does the Honourable the Railway Member want to tell us that, when he presented the scheme before the Railway Standing Finance Committee, the matter was not fully gone into, and those estimates which had been already prepared were not correct? Or had he any doubts about those estimates which had been prepared already? If that be the case, I should say that, whatever estimates are produced before the Standing Finance Committee for Railways are a mere sham. Does he mean to say when he went up to the Secretary of State for sanction, he had not got a correct estimate on which he wanted sanction? Why is it necessary for the Honourable Member again to have a correct estimate? Is it contended that the estimate you have already prepared is not correct? Is that the

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practice you have with regard to all the other railway estimates which you present before the Standing Finance Committee for Railways? Certainly, if the estimate which you had already prepared was not a correct estimate, what business had you to put it before the Standing Finance Committee for Railways and get their sanction? Not only that, Sir. The Railway Department has got the sanction of this House to construct the line, and so you have no business now to come forward and say that we are going to reconsider the whole question again.

Then further on in that letter my Honourable friend, the Railway Member, says this, because he does not intend to go on with this Railway. This is what he says: "The total estimates are at present under preparation". Good Heavens! We thought that the total estimates were made long ago and placed before the Railway Standing Finance Committee. We also thought that you had got the sanction of this House and you then went up to the Secretary of State. But he says that the total estimates are at present under preparation, and they have apparently instructed the Agent of the Eastern Bengal Railway to go on with another estimate and perhaps to carry on the working out of the estimate for a couple of years so that the money allotted for this year need not be spent. But the Honourable Member for Railways does not want to say that in so many words. (Laughter.) He merely refers to the money trouble, but it is not the fact. I know the real reason. I have my own suspicions. I can tell the House that the visit of Sir George Schuster to England had perhaps something to do with it. I can tell the House quite plainly, that is the principal reason. (*An Honourable Member*: "You have got Sir George Schuster on your brain.") His return to India as late as December last has got something to do with this affair. Something must have been put in his ears by the Incheape people in London. That is the whole thing, but the Railway Board want some camouflage to hoodwink the House; they want some ostensible reason to put before the House as to why they did not start the work of this railway after getting the sanction of the Secretary of State, especially when we were given to understand by a responsible Member that, though the financial stringency existed generally, it did not exist so far as this railway line was concerned, because we wanted only two lakhs which had already been provided in this year's Budget.

Now, Sir, whatever I have said so far will be confirmed by this letter from which I was reading out. They want to shelve the whole scheme absolutely for the present, and so they say that they want further material. The present Agent, Mr. Maffin, who is in favour of this railway scheme will be going away shortly, say on the 1st of April, and the permanent incumbent, Mr. Pearse, will be in his place, but Mr. Pearse has been dead against this scheme from the very beginning, and the Railway Board want that the reconsideration of the scheme should not be started when the present Agent, Mr. Maffin, who is favourably inclined towards this, is in office, but they want the scheme to be examined by his successor who, it is well known, is opposed to this project. This will be clear from the fact that when he had no authority to make any statement, in the year 1928, Mr. Pearse made a statement in Dacca, I call it a very prophetic statement, as if he was the Finance Member of the Government of India and knew all about the finances. He said in effect "What rubbish are you talking about this railway? The Government of India have got no money to provide for this scheme, and so this scheme cannot go on". This is what he said.

Mr. M. S. Aney: Is that speech printed somewhere?

Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi: Yes, it is not with me just now, but I will give it to you tomorrow. Of course, my friend Mr. Neogy immediately wrote to Mr. Parsons, and he too was surprised. This is what I understood from my friend, Mr. Neogy. Mr. Parsons seems to have said, "How on earth could he (Mr. Pearse) make such a statement; he was not the Finance Member". Of course, it was contradicted. He says: "Detailed estimates of the work are at present under preparation"—we know they will be under preparation till Mr. Pearse returns from leave—"and the only expenditure to be incurred"—this is a camouflage—"in 1929-30 and 1930-31, is in connection with the final location and its acquisition of land". In order that Members may not think that the whole thing is shelved, how nicely the whole wording has been put! They say we will go on with the acquisition. Then the letter says "The Agent of the Eastern Bengal Railway has been instructed that, in preparing the detailed estimates"—as if no detailed estimates were prepared before—"no pains must be spared"—as if pains were spared on the former occasion—"certainly no pains will be spared"—because Lord Inchcape is there—"in ascertaining the probable cost of the line," and he has also been asked to review carefully the traffic estimates, including the jute and coal traffic "about which your Committee are specially concerned". His special attention has been directed to the difficulties "your Committee anticipate in the working of the Padma Wagon Ferry," and the doubts they expressed regarding the bridge over the Dhaleshwari River. Lest we should think that the scheme will be shelved, there is again this assurance: "I am, however, to add that the information at the disposal of the Railway Board as regards the working of other wagon ferries does not lead them to endorse the views of your Committee on the former point". A sort of assurance is still given to the effect that your information is not so accurate as to enable us to abandon the railway. All that we want is a little time, so that the whole thing can be shelved and nothing will be heard of it afterwards! Sir, I will not take more of the time of the House. I shall add only one word, and that is, that unless the Honourable Member gives us an assurance on the floor of this House, we shall give him no peace. Sir, I move.

Mr. K. C. Neogy (Dacca Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): There has not been one other topic during recent times in which public opinion in Bengal has been so unanimous as in regard to this question. I do not want this House to be misled into thinking that, in so far as it relates to a small tract in Eastern Bengal, this particular scheme is absolutely of local importance and nothing more. If Honourable Members have studied the Railway Board's reply to the letter of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, they must have seen that the Railway Board itself mentions that, apart from the fact that this particular railway will serve the local needs of the district of Dacca, it will form a very important link in the chain of communication between Eastern and Western Bengal. Indeed, this small length of railway line, if built, will provide an all-rail route from Western Bengal to Eastern Bengal and also connect Assam with Bengal by an all-rail route. Now, Sir, apart from the question of its local importance and the position it is going to occupy in the future in regard to communication in Eastern Bengal and Assam, this question merits the serious attention of this House. It has already been pointed out in the letter of the Railway Board that, having regard to the development in railway traffic in Eastern Bengal, which is at present cut off

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from Western Bengal by a very wide stretch of water, and having regard also to the development of railway facilities in Assam, if Eastern Bengal and Assam be linked up with the rest of India by an all-rail route, the revenues of the railways generally are likely to go up considerably. Therefore the merits of this particular line are not to be judged merely from the probable income which it will yield as a local feeder service. So much for the financial prospects of the line.

Then, Sir, with regard to the urgency of it from the point of view of the locality which it is going to serve I do not know whether it is at all known to this House that there is a tract in the Indian Empire where it sometimes takes about thirty hours to traverse a distance of 40 or 50 miles for the purpose of going from the headquarters of a district to certain places in its sub-divisional areas. But this is exactly what happens during the dry period when there is lack of communication between the town of Dacca and the sub-division of Manickgunje. Sir, even the Chamber of Commerce in their letter admit,—I am quoting from the letter itself,—

“In the past, the lack of water has compelled the closure of steamer service above Manickgunje during the dry season.”

And they go on to express the hope that things will improve in the future and that there may be more water in the river in future than there has been in the past. It is a very cautious admission, so far as it goes. They admit that there is no regular steamer service beyond Manickgunje, but what about the steamer service between Dacca and Manickgunje? I happen to come from the particular area which lies between Dacca and Manickgunje and I may tell this House that through steamer service is not always possible to be maintained between Dacca and Manickgunje for more than four or five months in the year. During the remaining months passengers have to get down midway between the two stations and they have sometimes got to wait for long till arrangements for transshipment are made. The rivers are drying up very fast, and the speed at which the steamers travel in this tract exceeds the average speed of a fast bullock cart by very little, even when there is a steamer service. Now, Sir, having regard to these facts, the Government of Bengal have, for the last few years, been insisting upon the Railway Board undertaking the construction of this line, because even from the administrative point of view, the want of suitable communication between important sub-divisional areas and the district headquarters has been leading to very great difficulties. My Honourable friend, the Member in charge of Industries and Labour, if he were to make inquiries, would find out what difficulties the Postal Department have got to undergo in order to carry on the mail service between Dacca and Manickgunje. They never depend upon the steamer services. If the steamer service was really so very satisfactory as the Bengal Chamber of Commerce want to make it out to be, there should have been no reason for the Postal Department not to avail themselves of the facilities thus offered by the steamer companies. Then again, Sir, I remember to have seen a report of an economic inquiry made at the instance of the district authorities of Dacca some years ago, in which it was pointed out that, as a result of the lack of communication between the sub-division of Manickgunje and the rest of the world, there was sometimes an appreciable difference in the

prices of things that rule in that particular area which is so unfortunately situated. It was also commented upon in that Report as to how far this affected the economic condition of the people living in the Manickgunje sub-division. It is no wonder, therefore, that the people of Eastern Bengal have for the last half a century—fifty years, Sir—been pressing for the construction of this particular line. No Viceroy has visited Dacca, no one Governor has ever visited Dacca, but has not been told, in the addresses of welcome presented to him, as to what importance the people of that locality attach to this particular line; but for a very long time the Government were not disposed to pay any heed to this public demand. For some years past, however, the Government of Bengal have taken up, I am glad to say, the cause of the public in this matter. It is the practice of every Local Government to submit a list of railway schemes, on which they are keen, for the consideration of the Railway Board every year, and I am sure, I will be borne out by the Honourable Member in charge that the Government of Bengal have been placing this project, if not always at the top of the list, at least very high up in the list successively for the last few years, and yet the Government of India would not relent. About six years back they said, "Well, we are not very keen on constructing this line for you, unless you guarantee to refund to us the cost that will be involved in carrying out a survey". The Government of Bengal meekly agreed to that proposition, because they were so very sure about the financial prospects of this line. Then, the Government of India undertook an inquiry, and once they went into the matter, they found what great possibilities this particular line had before it. They are now fully convinced that this is going to be one of the most paying propositions in the whole of India so far as railway extensions go. I know that that estimate—I mean the estimate of earnings—which has been placed before this House and the Standing Finance Committee is considered to be an unduly modest one indeed by responsible Members of the Railway Board themselves. Now, Sir, the Railway Board having completed the survey and having satisfied themselves that the line will be a very paying one, submitted its proposals to the Secretary of State, because the total amount involved in this scheme would exceed the financial limit of the Government of India's authority for sanction, and therefore as a matter of formality, the scheme had to go up to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State sanctioned this scheme, and thereafter it was placed before the Standing Finance Committee, and the Standing Finance Committee sanctioned it, and then the scheme was included in the budget proposals of the Railway Board, and this House, without any division and without any dissentient voice, agreed to this scheme being undertaken. And here may I pause for a minute just for the purpose of pointing out that although at all these various stages this scheme has been before this House continuously during the last five years, and although this was included in the budget proposals of the Government during the last year, and the year before last, and although the interests of the Chamber of Commerce are fully represented in this House as also, in the other, nobody ever thought of raising his voice of protest against the construction of this line. (Hear, hear.) Perhaps the steamer companies thought that, after all, the Honourable Sir George Rainy would not have the courage to undertake the construction of this line in view of the interests of the steamer companies that are involved. However, Sir, when it was found that the scheme was about to be undertaken for

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construction, the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, like the spoilt child that it is, sent up a protest to the Government of India asking them peremptorily to stay their hands. Now, I should like to know whether the Government would tolerate this sort of language from any other public body. The Bengal Chamber say, "This has been engaging the serious attention of the Chamber and they request that until their views have been received by the Board, any action committing the Government definitely to the construction of the line should be suspended". Well, long before that the Government had definitely committed themselves to the construction of this line.

Then again, Sir, towards the close of this letter, the Committee hope that they may be informed at an early date that it has been
 4 P. M. decided to withhold any further action as regards the scheme until an enquiry such as they have asked for has taken place. I should like to know from the Honourable Member in charge as to whether he would stand this kind of hectoring language from any other public body. (Laughter.) Now, Sir, Government received this letter in June, 1929, and they sent out their reply only in February, 1930. When a letter like that came from the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, all the five Members of the Railway Board began to quake in all their five pairs of shoes, and when that process of quaking was over, they sat down to compose a suitable reply to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. So far as the reply goes, I have nothing to complain with regard to the first portion of it, which very satisfactorily meets every point made by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. But it seems to me that two hands were employed for the purpose of drafting this letter. The first portion was drafted, I imagine, by an honest railwayman, and for the purpose of drafting the second portion, I think my Honourable friend requisitioned the services of Mr. Howell, the Foreign Secretary, in order to give it a proper diplomatic touch. (Laughter.) Now, Sir, in the concluding paragraph of the Bengal Chamber's letter they have condensed many inaccuracies,—I was going to say downright falsehoods. It is difficult to imagine that it could be possible even for the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to condense so much of misstatement in so short a compass. They first of all say that this is not a matter of urgency. That is a statement which I deny. It is an absolute and deliberate lie. I understand there is an Honourable gentleman here who represents the interests of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. I may tell him that I am prepared to repeat all that I am saying now outside this House so as to give him an opportunity of taking any action he likes against me. Then the second lie is this: "The traffic is already adequately provided for by the inland steamer companies". The third lie is that it "is little needed", and the fourth lie is that, "Opportunity was not given to the public to express their views on the scheme".

The scheme has been before the public of Bengal for the last half a century, and before this House at least for the last five years.

My Honourable friend, Colonel Crawford, made a very generous offer. He said, "I am prepared to make a present of a road to you, will you accept it?". I do not know whether my Honourable friend holds the portfolio of the Public Works Department in the Government of Bengal,

because as far as I understand the constitutional position, none but the Government of Bengal have got any authority with regard to the construction of roads within the provincial boundaries.

An Honourable Member: What about the Roads Committee?

Mr. K. C. Neogy: The Roads Committee can only say as to whether they are going to find money for a particular scheme or not. It is not for them to dictate which particular road is to be taken up.

Now, Sir, when Dacca was the capital of the Eastern Bengal and Assam Government, I know that that Government, finding that the Government of India were adamant in this matter, themselves wanted to investigate the possibilities of a motor road over this area, and I am told that the estimates which they got were absolutely prohibitive; and if my Honourable friend Colonel Crawford were to make inquiries from the Government of Bengal, he would at once understand the absurdity of his suggestion. Moreover, there is certainly a good deal of difference between a railway and a motor road. The Government proposal is to construct this bit of railway on the broad-gauge system. I may tell Honourable Members of this House who may know this fact that, in Eastern Bengal and Assam, there is not one inch of broad-gauge line at the present moment. The intention of Government has been to construct this line on the broad-gauge system with a view to making it possible for goods waggons to travel right from Peshawar down to Eastern Bengal with loads of merchandise; and I think it is also conceivable that in future, when traffic develops, they would convert the metre-gauge sections of the Eastern Bengal and the Assam Bengal Railways into broad-gauge, so that a time may come when it would be possible for a broad-gauge wagon to travel right from the North-West Frontier of India to the North-Eastern Frontier.

In this connection, Sir, I want to emphasise the importance of the wagon ferry, because without a wagon ferry, the utility of this broad-gauge system would suffer considerably; and if there is a broad-gauge ferry between Goalundo and Aricha and this line is constructed on a broad-gauge basis, it will be possible for coal to be transported from the coalfields of Western Bengal and Bihar right down to Eastern Bengal, apart from merchandise of other kinds. This would be a very important development in railway transport in Eastern Bengal, and surely all these facilities could never be supplied by the construction of a motor road between Dacca and Aricha.

Now, Sir, I beg this House not to consider this question as a parochial one. I have already indicated the importance of this line in the railway system of India, and I have also shown how, at different stages, this House has committed itself to the construction of this line. And if it does not materialise, whatever reasons may be put forward by the Government in support of their action, I may tell the Honourable Member that the conviction will go deep down in the hearts of the people of Bengal that, when it comes to a question of taking an action which is likely to prejudice the interests of the British commercial people, the Government of India have absolutely no nerves left in them to stand up and say, "We are going to do this because we think it is the right thing and we are not going to listen to your interested cries of opposition".

Sir, one of the things stated in the letter of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce amused me very much, because I do not remember to have come across a more comical thing in my experience. They say that this line is

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likely to affect the sanitation of the country. Since when did the Bengal Chamber of Commerce come to feel such a great concern in the sanitation of the country? Sir, there is a Bengali saying that if a woman pretends to love a child more than its mother, that woman is surely a witch.

Sir Darcy Lindsay (Bengal: European): Sir, my Honourable friends Mr. Neogy and Mr. Ghuznavi have brought considerable heat into this discussion, which was aimed at the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, and also Mr. Ghuznavi's friend Lord Inchcape. Sir, I would like to inform the House straightaway that I have had no word whatsoever from the Bengal Chamber, and so I am not talking as their spokesman. But I do feel, coming from Bengal, coming from Calcutta, that Mr. Neogy has been a little hard. He has, I think, no less than five times given them the lie direct.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Yes, and I am prepared to repeat them outside this House if you want it.

Sir Darcy Lindsay: I do not propose to take him up on those particular points, but I would like to assure him, Sir, and the House that the Bengal Chamber, when they put forward the letter they did about this line, did so with the best of intentions and in the interests of the country. They, like all of us, are aware that money at the moment is not readily available and they felt that the money that was going to be expended on this project would be better expended elsewhere.

Dr. A. Suhrawardy (Burdwan and Presidency Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): On sanitation?

Sir Darcy Lindsay: Sanitation I thought was a provincial subject.

My Honourable friend, Mr. Ghuznavi, has even challenged the honesty of Sir George Schuster. I am ashamed of you, Sir. He insinuated that Sir George Schuster had, during his sojourn in London, been influenced by Lord Inchcape and he came out here again and blocked this proposition. I would like, if it was possible, to take up a small bet with my Honourable friend, Mr. Ghuznavi, that there was no truth in it.

Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi: I do not go to the races unfortunately.

Sir Darcy Lindsay: Now, Sir, in my view, the Railway Board, if they had wished to listen to the demands of the Bengal Chamber or the views of the Bengal Chamber in the way my Honourable friend Mr. Neogy, indicated, would have answered that letter at once. No; they did not do so because their intention was to go on with the railway. At a later stage, they found that a shortage of money prevented them from going on with the scheme, and I do not think it is unreasonable to adopt the course they propose adopting and the course that they have outlined in their reply to the Bengal Chamber which implies, "You have made certain statements as regards the line not being required or the line not giving as full a return as we think it will do. As we cannot go on with the construction immediately, we are quite prepared to look further into the question that you raised". I am quite convinced, Sir, knowing the Railway Board as I do, and their Financial Commissioner, that if this line offered the prospects, the golden prospects, that my Honourable friend, Mr. Neogy, has portrayed, it would

be the very first project the Railway Board would enter into. Much has been made of the vested interests. I deny that the Chamber, the Bengal Chamber, had any such thought when they put forward this letter. All they did was to point out that there was no immediate urgency for the line. The trade in jute down and the trade in coal up was efficiently provided for by the steamer services and therefore there was no real urgency for the line.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Have you been over that section?

Sir Darcy Lindsay: I have not, but I am only putting forward the view, as I see it, as put forward by the Bengal Chamber. I do protest at these unkind inferences that have been brought in by the two Honourable Members I have mentioned.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: I am prepared to give the Honourable Member an opportunity of suing me in a proper court of law for stating what I have done on the present occasion. Why does not my friend take that opportunity? There is no use of complaining like this.

(Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad rose in his place.)

Mr. President: Is the Honourable Member going to take long?

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad: No, Sir, only a few minutes.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: Will not the Government Member reply?

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad: I thank Mr. Ghuznavi and Mr. Neogy for the illuminating information they have given us this afternoon. They have established beyond doubt five points which I will just mention. In the first place they have proved that the estimates prepared by the Railway Board are not reliable. I gave four illustrations day before yesterday and now another illustration is added today. The estimates are not very reliable and the Railway Board themselves are doubtful at every stage. The second point, which is equally important, is that they cannot make up their minds about the order in which the capital works ought to be undertaken. They had money for building a railway station at Cawnpore, and a railway station at Lucknow, in which they can have no profit whatsoever, but they had no money to build this very important line, which would have given an income from 6 to 10 per cent. The third very important point is that the Railway Board have saved 90 crores of rupees in the Reserve Fund and the Depreciation Fund. Now where is this money invested? Is it not possible to invest this amount in building a new railway which would have yielded an income of from 6 to 10 per cent.? The fourth point, which is also equally important, is that these steamer companies are exceedingly inefficient. I wonder whether any Member of the Railway Board has travelled by these steamers. I had the opportunity to travel by them and I found that they were all old steamers, probably purchased from some Rhine company long ago, where they were ordered to be dismantled. Probably the companies purchased them second-hand at very cheap prices. They certainly would not have been allowed to be used in any river in a European country. It is very desirable that this monopoly should be ended as early as possible.

The last point which Mr. Neogy brought out—it is really very important—is the fact that the Railway Board set aside their decision or the wishes of the Assembly on account of the single letter from the Chamber

[Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad.]

of Commerce. It is a practical proof that to the Railway Board the Chamber of Commerce is much more important than the Assembly. Today I very much sympathise with the people who have left the Assembly on account of the fact that it was a waste of time and waste of energy when it had not even got the status which the Chamber of Commerce at Calcutta enjoys. Their authority is manifested from the language which the Chamber of Commerce uses in addressing the Railway Board. I would ask you, Sir, whether you would permit a Member to move a motion in the Assembly in the words used by the Chamber of Commerce: "That this Assembly hopes that it would be informed by the Government of India at an early date that they have decided to take such and such an action". The Resolution which we are permitted to move is only in the shape of a request, and I think the Assembly is not permitted to use language which the Chamber of Commerce has used in laying their grievances, or I should say orders, before the Government.

The Honourable Member from Calcutta has just said that money was not available and any money that was available had been spent elsewhere. Of course, what is the meaning of "elsewhere"? Probably another railway station at Jhansi or some other place. . . . (Interruption.) I would not like to make definite suggestions: I withheld my suggestions the last time, as I understood definitely from Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas that a sub-committee was sitting to consider all these matters and we would like to have the report of that sub-committee before the next Session of the Assembly.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: I am not sure that I can congratulate the last speaker on his intervention in this debate, for I was unable to see the bearing of most of what he said upon the construction of the Dacca-Aricha Railway, which after all is the matter raised on this particular motion. Now, Mr. President, my Honourable friend Mr. Neogy asked me why was it that I stood "this sort of language from the Bengal Chamber of Commerce", and he evidently thought that I ought at once to have taken my tomahawk and gone for their scalps. Well, I am a man of peace, Mr. President, and I do not know that I am very much moved by people using strong language and I have never felt myself that a case gains in strength by the violence of the language in which it is expressed. Now, as regards the question of the Dacca-Aricha Railway, I should like to make certain things clear. In the first place, the Railway Board and the Government of India are quite satisfied that this railway is needed, and that it is a matter of urgency and that it should be constructed as soon as possible. There is no question at all about that. It is explained very clearly in our reply to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. It is not only, as my Honourable friend Mr. Neogy put it, as a means of local communication that it is important, but much more as an essential link in a trunk system of through communication. I believe that, in the future, it will be quite an important line. That is why we propose to construct the line on the broad gauge.

Now there have been dark surmises, and even definite assertions, that the one thing which weighs with the Railway Board and the Government of India is the letter from the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. I have never been very much afraid of that very eminent and respectable body, and in this matter I do not see any reason why I should be afraid. No doubt the Bengal Chamber of Commerce rightly and naturally regard it as part of

their business to see that private enterprise gets a fair show, and naturally they approach this question as one in which the inland steamship companies are interested. It seems to me that, in the nature of things, they must do so. Now, while I have indicated more than once in this House that I am not very much in favour of the railways leaving the solid ground and embarking on the rivers to compete with steamship companies, I am very much in favour of the proposition that, where there are good grounds for constructing a railway line, we should enter into competition with the steamship companies in our own sphere, and the fact that the construction of the Dacca-Aricha Railway may bring about a reduction in the rates and fares charged by the steamship companies is, to my mind, a very strong argument for the construction of the line. I should like to make that point perfectly clear. But I have been asked why then, when we found that we could not provide funds this year or the next to construct the line, we said that, in connection with the preparation of the detailed estimates, certain questions would be re-examined. Well, if I had not the fear of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce before me, I had at least a salutary respect for the views of another body, namely, the Public Accounts Committee, I think my Honourable friend Mr. Neogy will agree with me, that the Committee were not altogether satisfied with the procedure sometimes adopted in recent years of starting work on important projects before the preparation of detailed estimates. In any case, in this case we shall have the detailed estimates before us before we start construction, and when admittedly it is an expensive line, it is certainly desirable that we should have these estimates. In essence what we said to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce was this, that we were prepared to re-examine two things. The first was this. Supposing the detailed estimates revealed that the line was going to cost a great deal more than the original estimate, surely we should have to reconsider the matter, unless indeed our revised estimates of traffic showed that the traffic was likely to be a great deal larger than we originally estimated. It seems to me that, in the nature of the case, you cannot say, "I don't care what figures are revealed in the detailed estimates, I shall refuse to reconsider the matter". That is an attitude which no responsible authority can adopt. The other matter is the question of the effect that the construction of the line might have upon river conservancy and the public health. Now, as my Honourable friend Colonel Crawford in an interjection at an earlier stage of the debate asked, "Why not have a road", I would like to point out that the effect of a road, both on river conservancy and on public health, would be exactly the same as the effect of a railway, for unless it was an embanked road, it would be under water for about four months in the year, and if it is an embanked road, then you have to face the complicated questions of the adequacy of the water-ways, the obstruction to drainage and so on. In the letter to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce it was mentioned that these matters would be re-examined, because it is always at the stage of the detailed estimates that these matters come up for final settlement. When we get the final location survey as it is called, it is at that stage that the size of the water-ways to be provided is settled in consultation with the Local Government, and also all points in which the construction of the line might have a direct bearing upon river conservancy. As far as I can see,—I am not an expert in these matters—there is no real danger that the line will seriously interfere with these interests, but naturally the experts on these subjects must have their chance. It is the Government of Bengal who are specially charged with responsibility in these matters, but whatever be the opinions, the views or

[Sir George Rainy.]

the figures we receive at the time of the submission of the detailed estimates, the Railway Board and the Government of India will approach them from this point of view, namely, that they regard the line as very necessary and urgent and one which they would desire to construct at the earliest possible date.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: Sir, I am not intimate with the area about which the discussion is on, but I am very much interested, after hearing what has been revealed to us, to know exactly why the Government of India and the Railway Board have put off the construction of this line for which experienced non-officials and officials from Bengal have repeatedly said that there is the greatest necessity. It is not usual, Sir, to make any remarks when an Honourable Member is presenting a Budget, either the Railway or the General Budget to this House, but for once, this year, when the Honourable the Railway Member was presenting the Budget and he came to the point giving some information about the postponement of this line, my Honourable friend Mr. Neogy used rather a strongish expression, which, I felt at that moment was indiscreet. But after hearing what I have heard from both my Honourable friends, Mr. Ghuznavi and Mr. Neogy, even though one may agree with what has fallen from my Honourable friend Sir Darcy Lindsay, I would very much like Sir Darcy Lindsay to appreciate that the remarks made by my two Honourable friends on both sides can justifiably be forgiven as being due to their exasperation at the way in which the Government of India seem to have played with this scheme.

Sir, it is comparatively easy to preach patience to people when one is not hurt himself; and my friends in the European group have always been in that happy position of getting up and asking us to be moderate and modest and to have patience. I feel strongly that if my friends on those Benches were in half the position in which Mr. Ghuznavi and Mr. Neogy are today, pleading for this railway line, they would have used not only similar language, but perhaps stronger methods of asserting their views and their wishes. All that I can say is that, bearing in mind the history of this line, as given in this letter of the Railway Board dated the 10th February, 1930, the people of Bengal in that district appear to me to have patience which can almost be said to be angelic.

Now, Sir, what is the history of this project? For fifty years the people of Bengal have asked for this Railway. Since 1920 the Government of Bengal actively pressed for it. The Government of Bengal—and surely they cannot be said to be partial in this connection—have offered to pay for the expenses of survey, and they have even offered the Railway Board that if there should be a deficit in the minimum earnings required from this line, they would pay it out of the provincial revenues. Apart from any other views which have been expressed by my two friends in the course of this debate, may I venture to ask the Honourable Member what justification the Railway Board had in not taking up this line when there was such solicitude shown by the Government of Bengal, and when there was this offer of the Government of Bengal? This is a plain question which will require a good deal of explanation. It is not necessary to give us assurances of the *bona fides* of this Chamber or of the Government of India. What we want to know is, how is the Railway Board justified in putting off the construction of this line when they undertook the construction of other lines—

The only reply and the only inference that can be justifiably drawn, especially by non-officials who are not in the know of what is noted in Government files, is that the influence of some person or somebody may have helped to put this scheme off till now. It need not necessarily all have happened in the time of my Honourable friend, Sir George Rainy. But if one reads the history, as given by the Railway Board themselves in this letter, the inference is perfectly justified that the scheme has been delayed in spite of such great pressure from the Bengal Government, and even in spite of that Government's offer to make good any deficit in the return on this line, in order to please some one or satisfy some interest. It is no good giving us mere assertions and saying that that is not so; we want to see the proof of it; and surely unless the Railway Board are prepared to say that the Bengal Government were also led away by the enthusiasm with which Mr. Ghuznavi and Mr. Neogy put forward their case, only then can the Railway Board say that the pressure that is now being brought to bear upon the Railway Department by Members in this House is unjustified.

Sir, a good deal has been said about the money part of this scheme being somewhat prohibitive at this juncture. I am one of those who feel that at this particular juncture all avoidable expenditure should be put off. But on the admission of the Railway Board itself, this line, to use their own words, "will more than pay its way". Further on they say:

"I am to explain that the traffic estimates of the new line assume that only a small proportion of the jute traffic will be transferred from the inland steam vessels to the railway."

In addition, Sir, as I have said, the Bengal Government offered to make good any deficit, should there be a deficit in the minimum return on this line. All this is not enough to make the Railway Board move in the direction which will give an assurance to the people of that locality that they are going to get the railway; for what is it that has really frightened andasperated my two friends, so far as this reply is concerned? The question of re-survey and fresh estimates. Now, I think they are justified in suspecting

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: May I point out, Sir, that the re-survey and the detailed estimates were inevitable in any case?

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: They may have been; why not then start acquiring land as my friend, Mr. Ghuznavi, said? Can the Honourable Member give any reasons?

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: I would only point out that it is better for you acquire any land to decide whether it is that particular land which you really want to acquire—that is the object of the final location survey.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: How long do Government think it will take them to make up their minds about it? Perhaps the Honourable Member might oblige me with a reply now by interrupting me; I will wait for his reply.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: We shall make up our minds when we receive the detailed estimates.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: How long does it take Government to receive detailed estimates in this sort of matter? I wait for a reply. (There was no reply.) Surely, the Honourable Member can interrupt me completely now and give me a complete reply so that we may know what the exact situation is.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: May I say, Sir, that I am very sorry if I have in any way inconvenienced the Honourable Member. I think the House will bear me out when I say that I do not very often interrupt; but I am afraid I did so on this occasion and I am very sorry I inconvenienced the Honourable Member, particularly as my interruption may have seemed discourteous.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: I thought the Honourable Member was going to elucidate a point of view which very much required elucidation. I welcome the Honourable Member's interruption, but I see the Honourable Member is not prepared to give me further replies in order to clear up the matter. However, Sir, I will not press that point of view. The Honourable Member is invariably most courteous to everybody in this House.

My point therefore is that I think the Members on the Treasury Benches and my Honourable friend, Sir Darcy Lindsay, and my friends on the European Benches should fully realise the feelings of my two friends. They feel that, if the Government think that it is inevitable to have re-estimates made, by all means do so. But why not go on with the acquisition of land and why not indicate to the House in this debate that the period required for that purpose will be two, four, six or eight months? For, Sir, it has not been unusual to have re-estimates which may give a set-back to a scheme. And my friends, Mr. Neogy and Mr. Ghuznavi, say, "We have been clamouring for this line for fifty years; we came almost to the point of getting it and here comes the Bengal Chamber to tell you, 'Do not go ahead until you have heard from us; we would like you to modify it' ". I feel, Sir, that there is a great deal of justification for most of what has been said, although I very much wish that a few somewhat heated words which were used had not been used. The omission of some allegations would have improved the case of this side of the House.

Sir, I cannot help feeling that if the Government of India really wish to assure the House that they are looking after the interests of the agriculturists this is a case where we want proof of it. I am told—in fact the Honourable Member in the course of his remarks admitted it—that the construction of the railway will have a beneficial effect by bringing about a lowering of the steamer freight rates. And what is it that is being transported on these steamers? The most substantial part of the revenue comes from the transport of cultivators' raw produce. What better investment can the Government of India have? They have the opportunity of killing more than the proverbial two birds with one stone; they are serving the best interests of the cultivator and meeting with what has been a popular clamour, both from the people of Bengal and from the Government of Bengal. I believe, Sir, that it was the Acworth Committee which said that the construction of railway branch lines with private capital should not be encouraged. In fact it was after that Committee's Report that the Railway Board stopped all construction of

branch line railways with private capital. I myself then believed in that and I still believe that private capital brought in with State capital side by side does cause some complication. Unfortunately, we have now come to a stage where the Government of India can plead that they are unable to borrow with normal ease. We know the reasons for it,—one need not go into them here,—but the Government of India cannot have things both ways. They cannot hold up a most useful project on the ground that they have not the money or the credit with which to raise money. If they feel that they cannot raise the necessary money easily, I would like to ask the Honourable the Railway Member whether the Government would like to entrust this to private enterprise. I realise fully that it means going past a very important decision taken by the Railway Board on the unanimous recommendation of a Committee, but in the case of a line like this the construction of which has been hanging fire for the last fifty years, I would strongly suggest to the Government of India that they may, as a very last resort, even try this method of entrusting the raising of the capital to private enterprise if they feel that they cannot get money on their own. Sir, I very greatly sympathise with the motion moved by my friend Mr. Ghuznavi, and would ask the House to support it.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons (Financial Commissioner, Railways): Sir, I should not have risen today except for the remarks which have fallen from my Honourable friend Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas. He suggested in his speech that the Railway Board had played with this scheme. That is not so. I have, I regret to say, not got all the papers with me, but I am practically certain that this scheme has taken less time to get through than most of the larger schemes for the construction of railways which we have had before us in recent years. The position is briefly this, Sir. Up to 1924, and before we had opened up or decided to open up a good deal of the area served by the Assam Bengal Railway, there was very little chance of the Dacca-Aricha Railway being a paying proposition, either on the broad gauge or on the metre gauge. In 1924 the Bengal Government again asked us to re-investigate this scheme, and—this is the date I am sorry not to have in my memory—I think we began the re-investigation and survey in the winter of 1925. But I am not quite certain on that point. In any case, a survey can only ordinarily be done in the cold weather, and I am quite certain that, when we got the results of the survey, it took us no unreasonable time to examine the scheme, considering that it raised the very big question whether the line should be built on the broad gauge or the metre gauge. That does require very careful consideration when you are proposing to build an important new railway in a tract which is partially served by the broad gauge and partially by the metre gauge. I am certain that there was no delay, after the Railway Board had dealt with the scheme, in obtaining the sanction of the Government of India or the sanction of the Secretary of State, or in placing it before the Standing Finance Committee for Railways; and as soon as it was passed by the Standing Finance Committee, we placed the money for the scheme in this year's Budget. The amount was actually 27 lakhs. Except for the beginning of the final location and preliminary steps in regard to acquisition of land, we should not in any case have been able to spend any money on the construction of the Dacca-Aricha Railway until this cold weather; and by this cold weather it was known that the financial position next year was such that we could not put down any large sum for the continuation of the construction. Obviously,

[Mr. A. A. L. Parsons.]

if we could not continue the actual construction next year, it would have been a waste of money to spend say 5 or 10 lakhs this year on starting the construction, because all that money would remain idle. Therefore, what we did was to ask the Agent of the Eastern Bengal Railway how much he wanted for these preliminary steps, the final location, the acquisition of land and so on, and we have actually given him this year rather more than at first he expected to need for those purposes. I may add to that, on a point which Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas raised, that I do not know the exact date on which the detailed estimates and the re-survey of the traffic prospects of the line will be completed; but they ought not to take long. The final location can only, I think, be carried out either before or after the rains; but as a whole these proceedings ought not to take more than eight months, though it may not be the immediate eight months from now, because the rains will possibly intervene. It is however quite easy to discover by what time the Agent of the Railway expects to be able to complete these proceedings.

We do intend to continue with scheme. It is the one scheme for which we have continued to put the money in the Budget for which the Agent asked. The sum is 2 lakhs now; the Agent originally asked for 3, but now expects to be able to spend a lakh more this year.

It is no use my asseverating that there are no malign influence behind the Railway Board in the action which they have taken over this scheme, for Sir Purshotamdas has already stated that he will not accept such an asseveration: I can only say that personally I have had a lot to do with this project, and no one among my various friends in the Bengal Chamber of Commerce or in business in Calcutta has ever mentioned it to me. It is only from certain Honourable Members of this House that I heard of any idea that the inland steamer companies were opposing the construction of this line.

The Railway Board's view is quite definitely this, that of the lines at present in prospect on the East of India, the Dacca-Aricha Railway is the most important. They have no special reason to believe that the existing estimate of the scheme, which is about 186 lakhs, will be largely exceeded in the detailed estimates, though they are prepared for the possibility of a variation from the original abstract estimates, because of the large amount of bridge work in the scheme. On the other hand, I have never hidden from my friends on the other side my personal belief that the traffic estimates of the scheme are perhaps even more cautious than our usual traffic estimates, and it is because we wish to be certain as to the exact prospects of the scheme, and because we do not necessarily wish to drop the scheme; merely if the detailed estimates show some increase in the cost, that we have decided to re-survey the traffic prospects of the line at the same time as the detailed estimates of cost are prepared.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the Demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 100."

The motion was negatived.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, the 25th February, 1930.