
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

SATURDAY, 17th JANUARY, 1931

Vol. I—No. 4

OFFICIAL REPORT



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Saturday, 17th January, 1931.

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber of the Council House at Eleven of the Clock, Mr. R. K. Shanmukham Chetty in the Chair.

MEMBER SWORN:

Lala Brij Kishore, M.L.A. (Lucknow Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural).

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT.

Mr. Chairman: In accordance with the provisions of rule 5-A of the Indian Legislative Rules, the House will now proceed to elect a President by ballot. In compliance with the provisions of sub-rule (3) of that rule, I have to announce that I received before noon yesterday 16 notices, duly signed, nominating the following four candidates for election to the office of President, namely:—

1. Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola,
2. Sir Hari Singh Gour,
3. Maulvi Muhammad Yakub, and
4. Dr. A. Suhrawardy.

Since then, Dr. A. Suhrawardy has intimated to me that he withdraws his candidature. The names of the proposers and seconders of the remaining candidates are as follows:

For Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola:

Proposers . . . { Mr. Arthur Moore,
Mian Muhammad Shah Nawaz,
Mr. M. Maswood,
Mr. Muhammad Anwar-ul-Azim,
Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon,
Mr. Muhammad Yamin Khan,
Nawab Major Malik Talib Mehdi Khan.

Seconders . . . { Mr. W. Alexander,
Shaikh Fazal Haq Piracha,
Maulvi Muhammad Shafee Daoodi,
Mr. Muhammad Muazzam Sahib
Bahadur,
Mr. Abdul Matin Chaudhury,
Maulvi Sayyid Murtuza Saheb Bahadur,
Mr. D. K. Lahiri Chaudhury,
Nawab Naharsingji Ishwarsingji.

[Mr. Chairman.]

For Sir Hari Singh Gour:

Proposers	}	Mr. S. C. Shahani,
		Sardar G. N. Mujumdar,
Seconders	}	Mr. N. N. Anklesaria.
		Rai Sahib Pandit Hari Das,
		Mr. Amar Nath Dutt,
		Nawab Naharsingji Ishwarsingji.

For Maulvi Muhammad Yakub:

Proposer	Mr. B. Sitaramaraju.
Seconder	Mr. Uppi Saheb Bahadur.

Honourable Members will now come up to the table and receive the ballot papers from the Secretary in the order in which I call their names; and in order better to preserve the secrecy of the ballot, I would invite Honourable Members, on taking the ballot paper, to come behind my chair, where a table is provided for them, and after recording their votes to hand the ballot papers to the Secretary at the table.

Maulvi Muhammad Yakub (Rohilkund and Kumaon Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I hope you will excuse me for making a statement at this late hour. Just as I was entering the House, I was approached by Sir Abdur Rahim, Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola and several other members of my community asking me to withdraw from this contest. Well, having in view the reverence which I have for these elder members of my community, I think I have got no alternative but to withdraw. I declare, therefore, Sir, that I am not in the field now.

(The ballot was then taken.)

Mr. Chairman: I have now to declare that Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola has secured 76 votes and Dr. Sir Hari Singh Gour 36 votes. I therefore declare Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola to be duly elected by the Assembly as its President. All that is necessary now is to secure the approval of His Excellency the Governor General required by sub-section (1) of section 63-C of the Government of India Act. In order that the requisite approval may be obtained and communicated to the House before His Excellency addresses this House this afternoon, the House will re-assemble at a quarter to one today, until which time the House now stands adjourned.

The Assembly then adjourned till a Quarter to One of the Clock.

The Assembly re-assembled at a Quarter to One of the Clock, Mr. R. K. Shanmukham Chetty in the Chair.

Mr. Chairman: I have received a Message from His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General. The Message is as follows:

(The Message was received by the Assembly standing.)

"In pursuance of the provisions of sub-section (1) of section 63-C of the Government of India Act, I, Edward Frederick Lindley, Baron Irwin, hereby signify that I approve the election by the Legislative Assembly of Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola, K.C.S.I., C.I.E., as President of the said Assembly.

(Signed) IRWIN,

Viceroy and Governor General."

NEW DELHI:

The 17th January, 1931.

Mr President, the Message I have just read from His Excellency the Governor General now authorises you to come and occupy this Chair. Mr. President, though you are a new-comer to this Legislative Assembly, your fame has preceded you. You have a record of public life of which anyone in this country might feel proud (Applause), and though you are new to this Assembly, you have, in another place practised the art of chairmanship with success, and the way in which you conducted the proceedings of the Bombay Legislative Council justifies us in the expectation that you will conduct the proceedings of this House with dignity, and that you will ever guard jealously the rights and privileges of this House. (Hear, hear.) It is now my pleasure and privilege, Mr. President, to invite you to come and occupy the Chair. (Applause.)

(Mr. Chairman then vacated the Chair, which was occupied by the Honourable Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola amidst applause.)

The Honourable Sir George Rainy (Leader of the House): It is my good fortune, Mr. President, to be the first, after our Chairman, to felicitate you on the signal distinction which the House has conferred upon you, and also the House itself on the choice which it has made. The duties of the Chair are arduous and important, and its occupant wields a wide influence for good or evil. By electing you to be its presiding officer, the House has shown its belief that you have the capacity to grapple with and overcome any difficulties that may arise, its confidence in your impartiality and fairness, and its sense that you will preside worthily over its deliberations. (Applause.) You will, I am sure, be the first to recognize, Mr. President, that if the President of the Assembly is to discharge the duties of the post to his own satisfaction, he must receive the constant co-operation and support of the House. I feel confident, Sir, that you will receive such support in an abundant measure from every quarter of the House, and not the least from those of our number who at one time or another have been candidates for the Chair. (Applause.) With all of us, I am sure, the interests of the House rank far above any personal considerations, and I think the House may congratulate itself on the public spirit of those who, from a sense of public duty and in order to avoid a long, complicated contest, withdrew their candidature. (Applause.) Let me at any rate, Mr. President, assure you that it will be the desire of myself and my colleagues to give you all the support in our power and to uphold in all respects the dignity and authority of the Chair. (Applause.) We believe that you will be faithful to the best traditions of your high office; we have full confidence in your fairness and impartiality, and we believe that you will add distinction to the presidency of the Assembly. I desire, on behalf of the Government Benches, to congratulate you heartily on your elevation and to wish that your tenure of the Chair may in every respect be happy and successful. (Loud applause.)

Dewan Bahadur T. Rangachariar (South Arcot *cum* Chingleput: Non-Muhammadan Rural): It is my peculiar good fortune that I should be in a position to congratulate you, Sir, on the very high distinction you have attained after a very long career—a career marked by patriotic fervour, and marked by a sense of duty as an Indian. Your public career, your public services in all your career are well known to us, Sir, and I have known them a sufficiently long time to be able to bear a personal testimony to them. Sir, you have always put India first and community

[Dewan Bahadur T. Rangachariar.]

next. That, Sir, is the proper spirit in which we Indians have to co-operate in building up a future great India, and I daresay—it is really unnecessary for me to say it—that in the discharge of the high office which you have assumed, you will act, as you have always done, in fear of God and without fear or favour of man. (Hear, hear.) The Chair is above all politics; the Chair is above all communities; the Chair is above all parties. You command the entire confidence of the whole House whatever contest there may have been or may have been threatened. But it is all a friendly contest. These are high places for which everyone is entitled to fight and fight reasonably and fairly. You have won after a fair fight, and now the fight is over. All of us unite in felicitating you on the distinction you have obtained.

Sir, it is not an easy seat you are occupying. Having experience of this House, I can say that problems will often arise for your decision which will require your most careful attention on the spot. You have ever to be alive to what is going on about you and when you have to decide, I daresay you will give your decision according to the best of your lights, uncontrolled and uninfluenced by either the right or the left. The minorities require your personal attention. Sometimes there may be noisy scenes trying to put down a speaker, attempting to give expression to unpopular views. Such a person is entitled to claim protection at your hands. The House may be in a temper and may not be willing to listen to speakers who want to speak out their mind. In such circumstances, a great deal of tact and ability will be required. With your long experience as a public man, I am sure you will be able to discharge those responsible and very strenuous functions in a most satisfactory manner. You have had predecessors in the Chair who have set an example and whose example you will try to follow according to your best judgment as the occasion arises. Some conventions have been established in this young House; we have not got a long history of conventions. We have to make the conventions as we go on; and I do hope, with the assistance of the House, which, I am sure, it will accord in a full spirit of co-operation, we will be able to build up more and more healthy conventions as we go on. We hope and trust you will be spared to us for the Chair for a long time to come. I wish you, Sir, not only on my own behalf but on behalf of the friends behind me, a long and bright career in the Chair which you have now occupied.

Sir Hari Singh Gour (Central Provinces Hindi Divisions: Non-Muhamadan): Mr. President, I rise to congratulate you on your elevation to the Chair. In doing so, I need hardly remind you of what would be your duties because every body knows that you are an experienced *ex-President* of the Bombay Legislative Council. And, though you are new to this House, you are not new to the rules and practice which obtain in this House as well as in all the Local Councils, over one of which you have had the rare distinction of presiding. Sir, I am perfectly certain that in your exalted place as President of the Legislative Assembly you will show the same characteristics which have made your name so famous throughout the length and breadth of the country. Your duty to this House and your duty as a custodian of the rights and privileges of this House is clear, and I am certain that all of us in this House will co-operate with you in every possible way to assist you in the discharge of

those onerous duties. Sir, I associate myself entirely with what has fallen from the Honourable the Leader of the House, and I wish you a long and prosperous career in your new office.

Maulvi Muhammad Yakub (Rohilkund and Kumaon Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I also rise to offer you my humble and sincere congratulations on your elevation to the presidentship of this august Assembly. Sir, Honourable Members who have preceded me reminded you that you are new to this House, but as we all know, you are not new to the public life of this country, because for over 25 years you occupied a most distinguished and prominent position in the public life of India. You began your life as a member of the Corporation of Bombay, then as a member of the Bombay Council, and the old Imperial Council and afterwards as President of the Bombay Council, as well as a member of the Bombay Government, and also acted as a member of many committees and commissions. You thus possess such an amount of varied experience of public life, as, I can say without any fear of contradiction, none of us in this House can claim to his credit. (Applause.) And in all these capacities you have discharged your duties in such a manner as has won for you both the appreciation of the Government and the approval of the country. You are also, Sir, as we all know, one of the most distinguished leaders of the Muslim community now living in India, and, as such, you have received the proof of the approbation of your community by having been elected as a President of the All-India Muslim League, and more than once, as a President of the All-India Muslim Educational Conference, and also as a President of the All-India Muslim Conference. You occupy in this respect a unique position, a position which probably none of your distinguished predecessors of this House occupied before.

Sir, my Honourable friends who have just spoken have assured you of the co-operation of the non-official Members of this House. I also wish to assure you that the non-official Members of this House have never lagged behind in giving their united and strong support to the custodian of the honour and the prestige of their Assembly; but we also expect and hope that you will try your best to keep up the high traditions of the occupants of the Chair which you are now occupying. I am sure that you will succeed in maintaining the dignity and the honour of this House. I wish you, Sir, good luck and I hope that your career will be as successful as that of any of your predecessors, in the office of the President of the Assembly.

Mr. Arthur Moore (Bengal: European): Sir, it gives me very great pleasure to join in this chorus of congratulations to you upon your attainment to this high office. You come to us with all the prestige of your distinguished record in public life and with behind you in particular a record in the Chair of the Legislative Council in your own province. Sir, I feel that a particularly pleasing feature of your accession to the Chair is the magnanimous way in which distinguished candidates withdrew their candidature in order that we should be able to secure that large measure of unanimity which has characterised the election. And further I think that we can congratulate ourselves particularly on the three speeches we have just listened to. My Honourable friends, Dewan Bahadur Rangachariar, Sir Hari Singh Gour and Maulvi Muhammad Yakub, have all in the past rendered very great services to the growth of constitutional practice and

[Mr. Arthur Moore.]

parliamentary practice in this country, and I feel that in the three speeches that we have just listened to, they have all of them added signally to those services. (Hear, hear.) My Honourable friend, Dewan Bahadur Rangachariar, made a point, which it was in my mind to make, and that is that the traditions that surround the Chair of this Assembly are not yet fixed or completed because this House has not yet been in existence even ten years. We feel that we may leave the building, or rather the further building of those traditions in your experienced hands with the greatest confidence, and we here assure you of all our respect and that at all times we will endeavour to support the dignity and the position of the Chair.

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

Sir, I rise to congratulate you on your elevation to the Chair. I do not wish to repeat what has already been said by so many speakers, except to say this, that I associate myself with every word that has fallen from the mouth of the different speakers about you. I wish to assure you that you will receive full co-operation from all Members coming from the United Provinces, whether Muslims or Hindus, elected or nominated Members. With this assurance, I again wish you a long career in this Chair and a brilliant one.

Mian Muhammad Shah Nawaz (West Central Punjab: Muhammadan):

Sir, I have great pleasure in associating myself with the previous speakers who have paid tributes to your high qualities. Sir, I warmly congratulate you on your election to the high office of the President of the Fourth Assembly. You have a brilliant record of which any one could be proud, and we all know that you possess tact and good judgment. You know how to be firm and independent. You will need these qualities in the performance of your onerous duties and need them in a greater measure. We are perfectly confident that you will perform the responsible duties of your high office with dignity, courage, ability and wise impartiality. On behalf of my party, I assure you of our support and we shall never be wanting in upholding the dignity of the Chair and I have every hope that you will maintain the rights and privileges of this House. Sir, I wish you success.

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad (United Provinces Southern Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, on behalf of the members of the Independent Party. I offer our sincere congratulations, and we associate ourselves with the sentiments expressed by previous speakers. Sir, though you may be new to the mazes of this Assembly Chamber, yet certainly you are not new to the Indian Legislature. You have already been a Member of the Indian Legislature for five years from 1913-1918 and during this period you have associated yourself with many important Resolutions and Acts passed by the Central Legislature. You have been associated continuously with the Legislature for a period of 27 years, and there is no other Indian who can boast of a longer service in the working of the Legislatures than yourself. You are not also new to presiding over the deliberations of the Assembly. You have guided such deliberations in your own province for three years and any one who has followed the proceedings of the Bombay Legislative Council will admire the way and admire the tact which you used in guiding its deliberations. You have taken a very great interest not only in presiding

*Speech not revised by the Honourable Member.

over Moslem Conferences, but you have also guided very successfully the proceedings of other conferences, such as the Commercial and Industrial Conference, which was held at Madras in the year 1922. We, on this side, are confident that you will guide the destinies of this Assembly very tactfully and guard the prestige of this House in the same manner as your predecessor has done. In the end, I congratulate you once more on behalf of the Independent Party.

Mr. S. G. Jog (Berar Representative): Sir, I think I hold a very queer position in this House, for I am both elected as well as nominated, and it is a very queer position so far as I can understand, and I think times may change when probably the situation will improve. As the sole representative of Berar, I rise to pay my respects and offer my congratulations to the Chair, not on behalf of myself, but on behalf of the province to which I have the honour to belong. I entirely associate myself with the remarks and observations made by the previous speakers about your merits and about your services. Sir, you have come to this House with a record of very distinguished services, with a reputation for impartiality and of having a bright vision and broad outlook. You have always put the nation first and regarded all other considerations as subordinate. You have rendered very valuable services in old days to the Indian National Congress. You have worked as a Municipal Councillor of Bombay, but that was an honour bestowed on you by that city. You have also worked as Mayor of the Bombay Corporation. That may be a little bit higher honour. You have also worked as an Executive Councillor of the Bombay Government. That was an honour entirely in the gift of Government, and howsoever important it might be, I do not attach much importance to it. You have also occupied the Chair of the Bombay Legislative Council with great credit, but even that is an honour which was restricted and confined to one Presidency only. The honour that we have done today to you is far more important than all the honours put together. We have bestowed on you the highest honour that was possible and that was in the gift of the people. Sir, I am sure this election will set at rest the doubts expressed by the Members of the Round Table Conference about the solution of the communal question, and we can tell them that when the time arises, we can settle all our differences, without regard to community, but with special reference to merits. Sir, I have no doubt that you are worthy of the confidence that has been reposed in you by this House and that you will discharge your duties to the satisfaction of all concerned. You came, you saw, and you tactfully captured us, not by fraud or by force, but by persuasive manners, amiable nature and by the record of your distinguished services in the Bombay Presidency and your general career in public life. Sir, I wish you a happy career and I hope that you will properly guide and lead us in all our proceedings.

***Mr. S. C. Shahani** (Sind: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I rise to congratulate you most warmly on your elevation to the Presidentship of this House. You come from the Presidency to which I belong and I have had ample opportunities of watching your career with care. I have not the slightest doubt that you will not only show your rare knowledge of men and things in the discharge of the duties that have devolved upon

*Speech not revised by the Honourable Member.

[Mr. S. C. Shahani.]

you now, but that you will hold the scales even between the different sections in this House. I wish you most cordially the rarest of success in the discharge of your functions.

***Mr. N. N. Anklesaria** (Bombay Northern Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, while entirely associating myself with what has fallen from the previous distinguished speakers, I rejoice as a man coming from Bombay at the very high honour done to my Presidency. It is an honour, I say, which is unique in its uniqueness. In the course of the life of this Assembly, it has chosen its President four times and on three occasions a Bombay man has been chosen. Sir, the result of the voting shows that you have been elected President of this House, not only by all castes and creeds, but also by all schools of political thought in this House. Sir, you can also be proud of the particular circumstances in which you are elected. It has been said on previous occasions on the floor of this House that a constitutional precedent or convention has been established here to the effect that if the ex-Speaker chose re-election he should be usually elected. In disregarding that convention, Sir, the House has done you an unique honour of which any man can be proud.

Sir, your election as President of this House will be particularly welcome to the Press Gallery and the reporters, for under your Presidentship that odious creature, the political bore, with his unending speeches will tend slowly but surely to disappear. Sir, as I see other speakers on tenter-hooks to pour their meed of tribute and congratulations out to you, I shall conclude by sincerely congratulating you on the high position to which the House has called you today and wishing you a very long, successful and honourable career.

Before I resume my seat, I must speak one word of reference to the noble sacrifice of Dewan Bahadur Rangachariar and Maulvi Muhammad Yakub who have withdrawn their candidature and saved mutual friends from an extremely awkward position.

[**Mr. N. R. Gunjal** (Bombay Central Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural) then delivered a speech in Marathi, a translation of which will be printed later as an Appendix to these proceedings.]

Mr. President: Honourable Members will excuse me if I am unable to give adequate expression to all that I feel on the present occasion when I have been asked to occupy the high position of President of this Assembly. I cordially welcome the offer which has been made from all parts of the House of help and co-operation. I realise to the full the extreme necessity of that co-operation and help. No President can discharge his onerous duties successfully without such co-operation from his Honourable colleagues. I am most grateful for that offer. I hope that, in the discharge of our duty in the service of India, we will all co-operate together in the best spirit (Cheers) and in peace and harmony. Much has been said about my humble services in the past. I have always tried to serve the cause of India to the best of my ability. If I have attained success to some extent, it has been always due to the friendly co-operation of fellow-workers, and it is in that firm conviction that I offered myself for election to the Chair. No one realises more than I do how

*Speech not revised by the Honourable Member.

difficult this task is. I can only tell you that I will do my best to discharge these onerous duties to the satisfaction of every section and every interest in the House. I shall try to be a staunch custodian of the rights and privileges of the House, (Hear, hear) and I need not assure you that I shall yield to none in maintaining the traditions and the dignity of this august Assembly. When I was called to the Chair of the Bombay Legislative Council, I stated that I would keep before me the motto of judicial impartiality. (Hear, hear.) I tried to discharge my duties there in that spirit, and I assure you that I will keep that motto before me here to be judicially impartial on each and every occasion. While I occupy the Chair I cease to belong to any interest whatsoever outside this House. Honourable Members will, I hope, excuse me if I do not detain them any longer. It will be a matter of satisfaction to me only when the time comes to lay down my office, that I may receive some appreciation from my colleagues as to the manner in which I may have discharged my duties. We are told that during the whole of one's life-time one is a student. Well, I appear before you as a student aspiring to honours marks, but will be quite content if at the end of my career you can give me at least pass marks. (Chéers.)

Before I adjourn the House, I should like to inform Honourable Members that His Excellency the Governor General will address the Members of the Assembly in this Chamber this afternoon at 2-45 P. M. instead of at 2-30 as previously arranged and therefore Members are requested to take their seats before 2-30 P. M.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, the 19th January, 1931.

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY TO THE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

His Excellency the Viceroy: Gentlemen, it is my privilege today to welcome Members of this House to the opening session of the fourth Legislative Assembly. Among them are many who have already made their names in public life, and, if we regret, as we must, the absence of some who have hitherto been frequent participants in our debates, we are glad to see again many, who are well known to the Assembly, along with others of proved quality in other fields, who have come forward to serve their country in this sphere.

My first duty is to offer my sincere congratulations to your President on his election to his responsible and honourable office. He brings to his duties a wide experience of public affairs and of legislative procedure, and I am confident that he will discharge his important functions with dignity and with wise impartiality. Though the election has on this occasion been contested, I have no doubt, that, now the decision of the House has been taken the President will on all occasions be able to count upon the loyal support of all parties and persons in it.

I would have wished that this Assembly might have been convened for its first meeting at such a date as would have enabled those of its members, who have attended the Round Table Conference, to be in their places at the beginning of the session. There are however certain fixed dates and certain requirements of procedure which have limited my choice in this

[H. E. the Viceroy.]

matter. The Railway Budget must be completed in time to permit us to bring the second-half of the general Budget before the House at the beginning of March. Moreover, on the occasion of a new Assembly, the Standing Finance Committee and the Railway Standing Finance Committee, which at other times complete the greater part of their task before the beginning of the session, have to be reconstituted. There are also important measures of legislation, to which I must presently refer, and for which it was clearly essential to give ample time for discussion. These were all reasons which would have made delay inconvenient.

On this particular occasion too I was anxious that the work of the session should be completed before I laid down my office, and, as the date of my departure from India was uncertain until a week or two ago, I felt it desirable if possible to conclude our business by about the third week in March. For these reasons I decided to summon the House in the middle of January, and I trust that this may not have exposed Honourable Members to inconvenience. It has meant, I fear, the absence today of certain prominent members from their places, but, while regretting this, I trust I have made plain the reasons that appeared to preclude the adoption of any other course.

The same considerations of urgency did not apply to the Council of State, and, as their session will not open until February, I have had to forego the pleasure of addressing them on this occasion. I shall hope, however, towards the close of the session to ask the Members of both Houses to give me an opportunity of taking my formal farewell of the Central Legislature.

For myself this occasion must necessarily be tinged with regret. For it marks the opening of the last session of the Legislature with which I shall be concerned, and it brings nearer the day when I shall have to say good-bye to many friends in India, amongst whom I am fortunate to count large numbers, who are and who have been Members of this House. I am however happy to think that, when the time comes for me to lay down the responsibilities of my present charge, I shall hand them over to one, well known to India, who is singularly well qualified to guide her destinies at this particular juncture, and who has during a long and distinguished period of Indian public service already assured for himself a place in the esteem and friendship of very many of India's people.

Before I speak of the legislative and other business which will come before the House this session, there are certain important matters of more than departmental interest, which deserve mention.

Our relations with Foreign States along the whole of our great land frontier continue to be of a cordial character. On the North-West Frontier the disturbances, which marred the spring and summer months of last year, have subsided, and, except in our relations with the Afridis, normal conditions may be said now to have been generally restored. As a result of two unprovoked invasions of the Peshawar District during the summer by lashkars of certain sections of the Afridi tribe, it was decided by my Government, with the concurrence of His Majesty's Government, to take measures for the protection of Peshawar against this danger, by preventing hostile concentrations from again using the Khajuri and Aka Khel plain, on the western border of the Peshawar District, as a base for such attacks.

In pursuance of this decision some miles of road have been or are being constructed to link up the plain with adjoining areas in which communications have been developed, and portions of the plain have been occupied by troops with negligible opposition. A considerable number of troops have been employed under very severe climatic conditions in these operations, and have carried out their duties with the cheerfulness and efficiency that is always characteristic of the Army in India.

The situation created by the Afridi incursions compelled my Government, in the interest of the public safety, to impose Martial Law in the Peshawar District. The Chief Commissioner was appointed Chief Administrator of Martial Law, and made every effort to ensure that there should be as little interference as possible with the ordinary administration. In this he was successful, and now that provision has been made otherwise for the continuance of certain emergency powers under a public Safety Regulation, the Martial Law Ordinance is being withdrawn.

With the approval of my Government, the Chief Commissioner in July last gave an undertaking that the administration of the five districts of the Province would be scrutinised, and if, on comparison with the adjoining districts of the Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province administration appeared to be in any way deficient, especially in its beneficent activities, steps would be taken, as funds admitted, to remedy the defects. The Chief Commissioner's proposals in fulfilment of this undertaking are now under consideration. Among other measures, the reassessment which was recently made of the Peshawar District has been revised to bring it into accord with the Punjab Land Revenue Amendment Act, with the result that the total assessment was reduced by some Rs. 60,000.

Questions affecting Indians overseas have as always claimed the special attention of my Government. When I last addressed this House, I referred briefly to the Land Tenure Bill introduced in the Assembly of the Union of South Africa, which had caused considerable alarm among Indians in the Transvaal. My Government sought counsel from the Standing Committee on Emigration on the far-reaching provisions of this measure, and received from them valuable advice to guide them in their line of approach to this difficult and delicate problem. We fully recognise the serious implications of the Bill, and in particular the effect it must have on the trading and business interests of the Indian community in the Transvaal. We are aware too of the feelings of deep concern which the Bill has aroused amongst those whose interests are threatened, and of the sympathy which is felt for them by their compatriots in South Africa and in this country. I have given this question much anxious thought and personal attention. Every opportunity has been taken of representing the Indian point of view, and as our Agent—Sir Kurma Reddi—announced at the recent conference of the South African Indian Congress, our views will be communicated to the Union Government. It is unnecessary to assure the House that we are making every endeavour, in co-operation with the Union Government, to secure an equitable solution, and I earnestly hope that the negotiations to be conducted by our representative will result, after full and frank discussion, in an agreement satisfactory to both sides.

Turning to East Africa, Honourable Members will remember that the conclusions of His Majesty's Government have now been referred to a Joint Select Committee of Parliament. My Government are not ignorant of how widespread is the anxiety on the several questions that are involved,

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and they have submitted their views to this Committee through His Majesty's Secretary of State for India. We have further requested permission to present our case through a representative from India. I am glad to inform the House that, in the event of that request being accepted, it is hoped that our spokesman will be the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri, whose readiness to undertake any duty in the service of his country has ever been so conspicuous a characteristic of his public career, and who is shortly returning from the Conference to resume his seat on the Royal Commission on Labour under the Chairmanship of the Right Honourable Mr. Whitley. That Commission, after sparing no pains to see for themselves the labour conditions of India and to hear all shades of opinion, are now engaged in drafting their report, and Honourable Members, who will be grateful to them for the manner in which they have prosecuted their enquiry, will also be glad to hear that they expect to be able to complete their work next March.

I turn now to the main items of the business which will claim the attention of Honourable Members. It will be part of your task to consider the measures for maintaining the financial position of India, which will be placed before you in due course by my Government, and I venture to say that there can have been no period in the history of the country when financial problems have needed not only so much earnest consideration but also the co-operation of all the forces in India, which have power to help the situation. In using these words I have in mind not merely the needs created by the present economic crisis, but the task of finding adequate financial resources to give the new constitution now under discussion a favourable start.

India, like the rest of the world, has suffered seriously from an almost universal trade depression, and in the nature of things has felt the full weight of the collapse in world prices of agricultural products. The troubles, arising from this state of affairs, as I recently had cause to point out, are being seriously aggravated by the disturbances resulting from the civil disobedience movement. I do not wish to dwell at length on this aspect of that movement today, nor indeed is it profitable to indulge in recriminations about the past. What concerns us is the present and the future, and I would ask all Honourable Members to ponder deeply on the injury which the present dissensions are causing to the economic life of the country.

If only distrust and attempts to paralyse Government could be replaced by a spirit of mutual confidence and co-operation, then even in spite of the world crisis we might see the dawn of a new optimism in India, and the opening of new ways for the recuperation and development of her economic strength.

There are in particular two aspects of the civil disobedience movement to which I must invite the attention of Honourable Members.

A little less than a month ago, I felt it my duty to have recourse again to the special powers, which I took last year for the better control of the Press and of unauthorised news-sheets and newspapers, and for dealing with persons who may instigate others to refuse the fulfilment of certain lawful obligations. In doing so I expressed my regret that the urgent nature of the emergency, which necessitated the promulgation of these

Ordinances, had not allowed me to await the meeting of the Central Legislature, but I indicated the intention of my Government to bring these matters before this House at the earliest opportunity. That intention we now propose to carry into effect by introducing legislation on these two subjects forthwith, and I must therefore briefly review the main factors which have led us to this decision.

A political movement must be judged and dealt with, not according to the professions of those who initiate it or carry it into effect, but in the light of practical results. Whatever may be, or have been, the true object underlying the present civil disobedience movement, Government still sees in many parts of India determined efforts to substitute another authority for its own and to interfere with the maintenance of law and order, of which Government is the constituted guardian. I need not at this stage detail the several forms which such activities have taken. But none I think is more pernicious, or more cruel to those whom it endeavours to mislead, than the pressure put upon payers of land revenue and other liabilities, to withhold payments that they are legally bound to make. In certain parts of the country those responsible for this movement have successfully instigated the withholding of such payments, and in other parts vigorous efforts are being made to this end. It is very easy to see how such a programme can be put forward in attractive guise, especially at a time when the low prices of agricultural products have unhappily created a situation of great gravity. I would once more make it very plain that the special powers taken by Government are in no way intended to modify the usual policy, followed by Local Governments, of granting suspension or remission of land revenue, when economic circumstances demand it. Indeed, while the necessity of combating these insidious and dangerous attempts to cripple the administration constrained me to take these powers, I attach great importance to them as a means by which the small agriculturists may be saved from the effects of such propaganda by people, who themselves have little to lose, but who are callously ready to involve the small landholder in the risks of legal processes and even forfeiture of his land. Legislation on this subject will accordingly be laid before you.

We also propose to ask this House to give legislative sanction for a limited period to the provisions contained in the Press Ordinance issued a few weeks ago. Apart from the activities of the kind to which I have just referred, and which in themselves constitute so grave a menace to the public tranquillity, we have lately witnessed a disturbing increase in those crimes of violence, which have deeply stained the fair name of India and which, I know, are as abhorrent to the Members of this House as they are to all other reasonable persons.

The experience of the past few months leaves no doubt as to the existence of an organisation, whose insane objective it is to promote the overthrow of established Government by the deliberate creation of a state of terrorism. I know that the vast majority of Indians deplore the growth of a movement wholly foreign to their traditions and instincts, and I see in the wide condemnation of outrages, and in particular in the indignation evoked by the attack on His Excellency the Governor of the Punjab, a growing recognition of the urgent and paramount need of removing this

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malignant cancer in the life of India. I desire to express my deep sympathy with the relatives of all who have fallen victims at the hands of assassins, and I gladly pay a high tribute to the skill and courage of those, who at the constant risk of their lives are engaged in the detection and prevention of terrorist plans. The devotion to duty of the officers, high and low, of every department of Government, in difficult and often dangerous circumstances, has been a feature of the past year of which all branches of the service may well feel proud. I and my Government in our sphere shall spare no effort to protect our officers and the public; but, whatever action Government may take in this matter, it cannot achieve complete success, unless it is assisted by the whole-hearted determination of every citizen to stamp out so evil a thing from their society. I earnestly appeal to all, who have at heart India's good name, to show by action and words, which will admit of no doubt or reservation, that they regard the terrorist movement with repugnance, and those who are actively engaged in it, or extend to it their sympathy or support, as the worst enemies of India.

Among other influences which have undoubtedly tended to the encouragement of such revolutionary methods and violent crime, are certain sections of the Press, whose reiterated laudation of false sentiment and of distorted patriotism lead all too often to the injection of deadly poison into a certain type of mind. Fair criticism of the administration or of our constitutional proposals I do not fear; I rather welcome it. But, when the great power of the Press is diverted from its true functions to dangerous and destructive doctrine, Government can no longer stand aside.

I am very well aware that the two projects of legislation to which I have referred must excite keen discussion and perhaps controversy, and I would gladly have avoided controversy at this time had I felt it to be possible. Profoundly hoping as I do that the outcome of the Round Table Conference may be to assist the speedy restoration of normal conditions, I should have preferred, if I could, to suspend action, and await the advent of a situation in which special powers would no longer be required. But, so far as the terrorist movement is concerned, there is little ground for supposing that those who direct it are likely to be deterred from their course by constitutional agreements that may be reached, and, for the rest, it is not possible for Government to play the rôle of benevolent spectators, so long as those, who have been endeavouring to destroy its foundations at every point, show no sign of abating their activities. It therefore seemed clear to my Government that, in the face of these facts, it would be a dereliction of our duty to refrain from taking the necessary protective action, and it also seemed clear to them that on such vital issues the Members of this House had both the right and the duty to express their views. I am confident that, when they examine our proposals, they will do so with a deep sense of the responsibility, which they share with Government, for preserving the peace and stability of the country.

I have never concealed my view that action of this kind, necessary as it is, will not of itself give us the remedy that we seek for present discontents. And, during the past two months, the thoughts of all, who have believed that honourable agreement is not beyond our grasp, have been focussed upon the proceedings of the Conference in London. There

were those, both in India and Great Britain, who openly scorned its meeting, and, both before and since it met, have made scant concealment of their hope that it would fail, little mindful of the gravity of the times, and of the need for their redemption on both sides by practical and courageous statesmanship. From the outset, there were many among the delegates from India who must have been conscious of the fact that their own faith in the efficiency of constitutional methods was not shared by many of their compatriots. In these circumstances, it demanded from them no small degree of political courage to disregard the powerful pressure to which they were exposed, and men of every opinion can well afford to recognise the sense of public duty, which impelled them to do what they deemed right in the face of much bitter contumely. Of those who went to England, there is one to whom I must make a special reference, for I feel assured that we should all wish to join in an expression of deep sorrow that one of the most notable personalities of the Conference should not have been permitted to witness the outcome of the labours, to which, as it proved, he gave his last days of life.

The Conference, graciously opened by His Majesty the King-Emperor, is now about to conclude its labours, and we await with eager interest the announcement to be made by the Prime Minister in the next few days. Pending that announcement I content myself with pointing to certain things, which already stand out in sharp relief.

The first undoubtedly is the recognition by the Indian States of the essential unity of all India, and their readiness to take their full share in designing the instruments of Government, through which that conception of unity may gain concrete expression and effect. I do not underrate the difficulties that still have to be surmounted before these aspirations can be realised in their entirety. But those need not blind us to the far-reaching and deep significance of the step taken by the States' representatives in London. I scarcely think I exaggerate when I say that the historian a hundred years hence, commenting on these times, will find in it the turning point of the constitutional history of India.

The Conference has had two further results that seem to me of incalculable value. At the time of its convention the atmosphere was clouded with misunderstandings on both sides. Opinion in Great Britain was ill-informed of the realities of thought in India; opinion in India, even in circles where so-called moderate views prevailed, was suspicious and sceptical of the purpose of Great Britain. If ignorance and suspicion still linger, they represent the rear-guard and no longer the main body of opinion in the two countries. Great Britain has realised, as she has heard it at first-hand from all sections of the Indian delegation, something of the new forces that are animating the political thought of India, while India, feeling no longer that she is misunderstood, is better prepared to recognise that British statesmen have approached the problem, not indeed ignoring real difficulties, but with a single will to find means by which they may be speedily and securely resolved.

And thus it might appear that all, who have longed to see the Conference bear fruit for the true healing of the nations, may take new hope. The London discussions have revealed a genuine desire on all sides to find practical means, by which speedy and substantial recognition may be given to the natural claims of Indian political thought. There is no one who will not deplore the fact that the work of the Conference should have been so gravely impeded by that problem, which continues to occupy so

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pre-eminent and unfortunate a place in the domestic life of India. Any constitution that is to work smoothly must obviously command the confidence of all communities, and in this matter India can help herself more than anybody else can help her. I would most earnestly trust that leaders of all communities would once more come together, resolved no longer to allow the constitutional progress of India to be impeded by this cause, or India herself to lie under this reproach of internal discord and mistrust. Apart from this, it is evident that to many of those participating in the Conference, the influence of personal contact with men of differing views, along with the inspiration of the new and wider vision of a United India that the Conference has unfolded, has had the effect of presenting an old problem in new guise, and of leading them to revise some of their earlier views upon it. That way lies the best possibility for both countries of return to the conditions of peace and harmony that we all desire.

Many times during the last twelve months thoughtful men and women must have pondered deeply over what has been one of their most poignant and perplexing features. However mistaken any man may think him to be, and however deplorable may appear the results of the policy associated with his name, no one can fail to recognise the spiritual force, which impels Mr. Gandhi to count no sacrifice too great in the cause, as he believes, of the India that he loves. And I fancy that, though he on his side too thinks those who differ from him to be the victims of a false philosophy, Mr. Gandhi would not be unwilling to say that men of my race, who are today responsible for Government in India, were sincere in their attempt to serve her. It has been one of the tragedies of this time that where ultimate purposes have perhaps differed little, if at all, the methods employed by some should have been, as I conceive, far more calculated to impede than to assist the accomplishment of that largely common end. And, deeply as I crave to see the dawn of a happier day in India, I am bound, so long as a movement designed to undermine and sap the foundations of Government holds the front place in the programme of the great Congress organisation, to resist it to the uttermost of my strength. Is it not now possible, I would ask, for those responsible for this policy to try another course that, in the light on the one hand of sinister events in India, and on the other of the encouragement offered to India by the progress of the Conference in England, would seem to be the more excellent way? A great deal remains to be done, for it has long been generally recognised that, if and when the broad lines of constitutional revision could be drawn, much subsequent detailed thought would be required for its adjustment to the particular circumstances of India. Quite evidently it would be for the good of India that all the best elements both here and in Great Britain should join hands in the work of elaborating and bringing to fruition the undertaking so well begun in London, and thus place the seal of friendship once again upon the relations of two peoples, whom unhappy circumstances have latterly estranged. On the wide basis of friendship and mutual respect alone can we confidently build the structure of a strong and self-reliant India, one within herself and one with the other partners in the British Commonwealth. I feel confident that I can count on every Member of this House to lend at all times such assistance as may be in his power to the furtherance of a work, so fraught with consequence to the welfare of India, of Great Britain, and of that Empire, in which I very earnestly pray India may for all time be proud to take her place.