

Thursday, 10th September, 1931

THE
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OF THE

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 10th September, 1931.

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

MEMBER SWORN.

Mr. Rahimtoola M. Chinoy, M.L.A. (Bombay City : Muhammadan Urban).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

DETENTION UNDER REGULATION III OF 1818 OF MR. AZIZ HINDI OF AMRITSAR.

100. *Sardar Sant Singh : (a) Will Government be pleased to state the number of persons detained under Regulation III of 1818 ; the period of detention undergone, and the allowance granted to these detenees and their families ?

(b) When do Government intend to release each of these detenees ?

(c) Is it a fact that one Mr. Aziz Hindi of Amritsar is being detained under this Regulation in Multan Jail ?

(d) If so, will Government be pleased to state the charge against Mr. Aziz Hindi ?

(e) Is it a fact that Mr. Aziz Hindi was the only earning member of his family ? If so, how many members of his family depended on his earnings ?

(f) What is the allowance sanctioned for Mr. Aziz Hindi and what is the amount sanctioned for his family ? Has this allowance been paid and accepted by the detenee and his family ? If not, why not ?

(g) Is it a fact that since Mr. Aziz Hindi's detention his family has been compelled to sell two houses for their family expenses ?

(h) Is it a fact that Government's offer of Rs. 60 per month has been declined by the detenee and his family ? How much allowance Mr. Aziz Hindi gets in Jail for his expenses from his family ?

(i) Do Government propose to increase his allowance ?

(j) Is it a fact that a Police Inspector sits close to the ladies when they go to visit Aziz Hindi in Jail ? Is it a fact that these ladies observe purdah and feel inconvenienced in these interviews ? Are Government prepared to issue necessary instructions to stop this intrusion ?

(k) Is it a fact that these prisoners are not permitted to read books of their choice ? If so, why is this restriction imposed ?

The Honourable Sir James Crerar : (a) I lay on the table a statement giving the particulars required.

(b) They will be released as soon as Government are satisfied that their detention is no longer essential in the interests of public safety.

(c) and (d). I would refer the Honourable Member to the reply given by me in this House on the 27th January, 1931, to Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh's question No. 43.

(e) Yes. Nine. Details are given in the statement I have laid on the table.

(f) The Honourable Member is referred to the statement mentioned above. The allowance sanctioned by Government for the State prisoner himself is being duly paid to and accepted by him. The dependents of the State prisoner have not drawn the allowances sanctioned for them from the treasury.

(g) The Government of India have no information to that effect.

(h) The dependents of Ghulam Muhammad have failed to draw from the treasury an allowance of Rs. 110 per mensem which has been sanctioned for them. The State prisoner does not, so far as the Government of India are aware, receive any monetary assistance in jail from his family.

(i) The allowances hitherto sanctioned were granted after due enquiry, and are considered sufficient.

(j) Under the rules a police officer has to be present at all interviews and I am afraid there are insuperable objections to any change in this procedure.

(k) The approval of the Superintendent of the jail is necessary to the introduction of books for the use of prisoners within the jail. The restriction is imposed lest books should be introduced which are open to grave objection.

Statement of persons detained in Jail under Regulation III of 1818.

Name of State Prisoner.	Date from which detained.	Allowances sanctioned for	
		Prisoner.	Family.
Abdul Waris <i>alias</i> Bashir Ahmed.	28th August 1930.	} Rs. 1-6-0 per diem for diet. Rs. 32 per month for current expenses. Rs. 60 for initial expenses on first admission to jail.	No dependents.
Fazal Elahi <i>alias</i> Qurban	Do.		Do.
Ghulam Mohammad <i>alias</i> Aziz Hindi.	Do.		Monthly for
			Rs.
			1. Wife 30
			2. Mother 15
			3. Eldest son 15
			4. Second son 5
			5. Daughter aged 13 .. 5
			6. Daughter aged 7 .. 5
			7. Daughter aged 5 .. 5
			8. Widowed sister .. 15
			9. Son of widowed sister 15
			Total 110
Karam Singh	21st May 1931.	Do.	No dependents.
Harjap Singh	14th April 1931.	Do.	Wife Rs. 15 a month.
Ihsan Elahi	9th February 1931.	Do.	No dependents.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh : May I take it that it is not contemplated to consider the question of increasing the allowance ?

The Honourable Sir James Crerar : The allowances were fixed on a lower scale in the first instance. After further inquiries they have been fixed at a somewhat higher scale and there is no intention of modifying that scale which was fixed after a very full inquiry.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh : It has already been fixed on a higher scale after reconsideration ?

The Honourable Sir James Crerar : Yes.

Kunwar Haji Ismail Ali Khan : May I know why Government are not trying his case in the open court ?

The Honourable Sir James Crerar : I would refer the Honourable Member to the answer which I have just now given.

Sardar Sant Singh : Does the answer to part (a) include the case of the Maharaja of Nabha ?

The Honourable Sir James Crerar : No. It does not include persons who were interned on the grounds arising in that case.

Sardar Sant Singh : Has the case of Aziz Hindi been examined by any Sessions Judge ?

The Honourable Sir James Crerar : The case of two of these prisoners were examined by two Sessions Judges. The other cases fall under a different category.

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad : Have the Government framed any definite charges against Aziz Hindi ?

The Honourable Sir James Crerar : Definite charges were framed in the case of the two prisoners whose cases were submitted to two Sessions Judges.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh : Were they allowed to appear before the Sessions Judge when the case was considered ?

The Honourable Sir James Crerar : No, Sir. There is no provision in the rules for that.

Sardar Sant Singh : Did the Government pay the travelling allowances of the members of the family of Aziz Hindi when they went to interview him in Multan ?

The Honourable Sir James Crerar : I must ask the Honourable Member for notice of that question.

ILL-HEALTH OF IHSAN ILAHI, A PRISONER IN THE CENTRAL JAIL, LAHORE.

101. ***Sardar Sant Singh :** Are Government aware that Ihsan Ilahi of Lahore is keeping bad health in the Central Jail, Lahore ? Is it a fact that a medical man of his choice was not permitted to examine him ? If so, why ?

The Honourable Sir James Crerar : No. As recently as the 1st September, his health was certified to be good, and no application appears to have been made by him asking to be treated by a medical man of his own choice. There is, of course, a qualified Medical Officer attached to the jail.

ARREST AND DETENTION OF MR. VIR INDER UNDER REGULATION III OF 1818.

102. *Sardar Sant Singh : (a) Is it a fact that Mr. Vir Inder was arrested under Regulation III of 1818 ? Is it a fact that he has been released now ? If so, how has his release been brought about ?

(b) Is it a fact that he has been found to be innocent of the charges laid by the police against him ?

(c) How long was Mr. Vir Inder detained in custody ?

(d) Have Government granted any compensation to Mr. Vir Inder ? If not, why not ?

The Honourable Sir James Crerar : (a) and (b). I would refer the Honourable Member to the answer given by me in this House on the 2nd March 1931, to clauses (b) and (h), (c) and (d) of Mr. Jagan Nath Aggarwal's question No. 783. In accordance with the undertaking given there, the case of Vir Inder was placed before two Sessions Judges. After considering the report submitted by them, the Government of India decided that Vir Inder should be released and issued orders accordingly.

(c) He was arrested on the 10th February 1931, and released before noon on the 2nd June 1931.

(d) Government did not consider that there was a case for the grant of compensation.

LENGTHY RETENTION OF THE POST OF SUPERINTENDENT OF POST OFFICES, MADRAS CIRCLE, BY RAO BAHADUR G. NARASIMHA NAIDU.

103. *Sardar Sant Singh : (a) Will Government be pleased to state if the Director-General, Posts and Telegraphs, has issued orders to the effect that the total tenure of Superintendents of Post Offices in different appointments in the same station should not, under any circumstances, exceed eight years ?

(b) Was not this order issued with a view to prevent any particular officer from monopolising the same station by favouritism to the exclusion of other aspirants for the same place ?

(c) Is it a fact that in the Madras Circle Rao Bahadur G. Narasimha Naidu remained in Madras for over thirteen years, of which eight years were spent continuously ?

(d) Is it a fact that the present Postmaster General in Madras has reposed Rao Bahadur G. Narasimha Naidu to Madras as R. M. S. Superintendent for giving him training ?

(e) Is this R. M. S. training absolutely necessary and is it prescribed for every officer ; and, if so, is there no other station where Rao Bahadur Narasimha Naidu could be posted ?

(f) Is it a fact that an opportunity for the R. M. S. training was offered to Rao Bahadur G. Narasimha Naidu in 1928 and that he declined to avail himself of it ?

(g) Is it a fact that several Superintendents in the Madras Circle have applied for appointments in the Madras city ?

(h) Has not the Director-General, Posts and Telegraphs, issued orders prohibiting transfer this year in the interest of economy ?

(i) Is it a fact that if now Rao Bahadur G. Narasimha Naidu is posted to Madras apparently for R. M. S. training, he would be ousting Mr. Hamid Khan, Superintendent of Post Offices, from Madras ?

(j) Is it a fact that if Mr. Hamid Khan is transferred from Madras city, there will not be a single Muhammadan Superintendent in Madras city ?

(k) Is it a fact that the present Postmaster General's predecessor in Madras in pursuance of the orders of the Director-General, Posts and Telegraphs, transferred Rao Bahadur G. Narasimha Naidu to Guntur, that the Rao Bahadur took long leave after working for a very short period and has not so far rejoined Guntur ?

Sir Hubert Sams : (a) Instructions were issued deprecating but not absolutely forbidding the retention of an officer in the same locality for more than 8 years at a time.

(b) The object was to prevent an officer being in the same locality for an inordinately long period, subject to the requirements of the service.

(c) As a permanent Superintendent of Post Offices the officer actually worked in Madras for a total period of a little over 10 years, of which approximately 4 years were continuous.

(d) The officer was posted as Superintendent, Railway Mail Service, " M " Division, under the rule which requires that every Superintendent of Post Offices should hold charge of a Railway Mail Service Division for at least three years.

(e) The reply to the first part is in the affirmative. With respect to the second part, postings are made by Heads of Circles according to the exigencies of the service.

(f) The Honourable Member is referred to the second sentence of the reply to (e).

(g) Yes.

(h) No, Sir.

(i) The officer was posted as stated in the reply to (d). There is no question of ousting any officer.

(j) Yes, but postings are not made on communal considerations.

(k) Yes. The officer was granted leave on medical grounds.

APPOINTMENT OF SIKHS ON THE NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.

104. ***Sardar Sant Singh :** (a) Will Government be pleased to state the number of total appointments, and the appointments held by the Sikhs in the following cadres on the North Western Railway :

(i) superior gazetted service (senior scale officers),

(ii) lower gazetted service (junior scale officers),

(iii) senior subordinates,

(iv) junior subordinates,

(v) ministerial services :

(1) Clerks in the 4th and 5th classes.

(2) Clerks in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd classes ?

(b) Do Government propose to take immediate steps to remove the obvious paucity of the Sikhs, a very important minority community, and to safeguard their interests in the upper services of the North Western Railway ?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state the total number of appointments carrying Rs. 250 or above *per mensem* and the number of such appointments held by Sikhs on the North Western Railway ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : (a) (i) and (ii). The strength of the superior services is 231, and 6 posts in it are held by Sikhs. The strength of the lower gazetted service is 74, and 5 posts in it are held by Sikhs.

(a), (iii), (iv) and (v). The Honourable Member will find the available information in the Classified List of Subordinates employed on the North Western Railway, corrected up to the 30th September 1930, copies of which are in the Library.

(b) Under the rules of recruitment, one-third of the vacancies are reserved to redress marked communal inequalities in the railway services. The operation of these rules should secure the interests of the Sikh community.

(c) I would refer the Honourable Member to the statistics given in Appendix ' F ' of the Report by the Railway Board on Indian Railways for the year 1929-30, Volume I, copies of which are in the Library.

Sardar Harbans Singh : What proportion of this one-third reserved for minority communities is reserved for the Sikhs ? Does minority community only mean Muhammadans ? In practice we find that ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : There is no special reservation for Sikhs.

APPOINTMENT OF SIKHS ON THE NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.

105. ***Sardar Sant Singh :** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether it is a fact that some subordinates of the North Western Railway have been recommended for appointments in the lower gazetted service ?

(b) Is it a fact that not a single Sikh subordinate has been included in the list of those recommended ?

(c) Is it a fact that almost all the Sikh upper subordinates possess superior educational qualifications than those recommended ?

(d) Is it a fact that some representations were made to the North Western Railway and the Railway Board to give an adequate share of appointments to the Sikhs in the lower gazetted service, in particular, and other upper services in general ?

(e) What action has been taken on those representations ?

(f) Are Government now prepared to take immediate steps to give the Sikhs their due share in the lower gazetted service and other upper subordinate services ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : (a) Yes.

(b) Yes.

(c) No.

(d), (e) and (f): Appointments to the lower gazetted service are, as a rule, made by promotions of selected subordinates, and the policy of Government is to make promotions on the basis of merit, having due regard to seniority, irrespective of communal considerations. A representation on the subject was received from the Sikh Rights Protection Society in June last and replied to accordingly.

ABOLITION OF THE RAILWAY MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.

106. ***Sardar Sant Singh :** (a) Will Government be pleased to state when the Medical Department (Railway) was created? What has been the annual cost of the Department on each State Railway?

(b) Are Government aware that the lower staff of North Western Railway is dissatisfied with this Department? If so, do Government propose to abolish it in the interests of the taxpayer?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : (a) Most of the Companies' Railways, including the East Indian, Great Indian Peninsula and Burma Railways recently transferred to the control of the State have for a long time had a Medical Department of their own. The older State Railways had generally a system under which Civil Surgeons held medical charge of railway employees in addition to their civil duties. Since 1928, this system is being gradually replaced by the organization of a self-contained Medical Department on each railway and the re-organisation is now complete on the Eastern Bengal Railway and on the Oudh and Rohilkhand section of the East Indian Railway. It is still in progress on the North Western Railway.

The cost of the Medical Department on each State Railway for the year 1929-30 was as follows :

	Rs.
Eastern Bengal Railway ..	4,21,969
East Indian Railway ..	8,30,316
Great Indian Peninsula Railway ..	6,81,535
North Western Railway ..	8,40,400
Burma Railways ..	3,30,611

(b) The answer to the first part is in the negative; the second part does not arise.

THE PRICE OF WHEAT.

107. ***Sardar Sant Singh :** Has the attention of Government been drawn to a letter published in the *Tribune* of Lahore, dated the 19th June, 1931, under the heading "The wheat problem: The price should be forced up"? If so, will Government be pleased to state whether they have any intention of forcing up the price of wheat?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : Government have seen the letter in question. The suggestions made therein

are impracticable and it is unsound to take any action to force the price of wheat in India above world parity.

SHOOTING OF SARDAR GANGA SINGH'S SONS AND WIFE.

108. *Sardar Sant Singh : Will Government be pleased to lay on the table the *communiqué* issued by the Chief Commissioner of the North West Frontier Province relating to the shooting of Sardar Ganga Singh's sons and wife ? Was any inquiry held later on ? Will Government kindly lay on the table the report published as the result of the inquiry ?

(b) Is it a fact that Sardar Ganga Singh was to be compensated ? If so, has any compensation been paid to him ? If so, what ? If not, why not ? What was the amount of the compensation offered ?

(c) Is it a fact that Sardar Ganga Singh has declined to accept any compensation ? If so, what reasons have been given by him ?

Mr. E. B. Howell : (a) I would invite the Honourable Member's attention to the replies given to Mr. S. C. Mitra's question No. 94 and Sardar Gulab Singh's unstarred question No. 139, dated the 15th and 18th July, 1930, respectively, on the subject of this most unfortunate occurrence. A copy of the judgment of the Magistrate who tried the case was placed in the Library on the 15th July, 1930, a copy of the Chief Commissioner's *communiqué* is now placed on the table.

(b) No monetary compensation was offered to Sardar Ganga Singh as Government could not accept liability for the accident.

(c) Does not arise.

Communiqué.

TELEGRAM No. 519|P., DATED THE 31ST MAY, 1930.

From—N.-W. F. P., Peshawar,

To—Associated Press, Simla. (Repeated to Home Department, Simla.)

Chief Commissioner, North West Frontier Province, regrets to announce that at 9 A.M. this morning at the Kabuli Gate of Peshawar City a rifle was accidentally discharged by a Lance Corporal belonging to the Detachment on duty at the Gate. The Lance Corporal is reported to have been cleaning the rifle which on being discharged unfortunately hit the passengers in a tonga passing down the street. No less than three persons were struck by the bullet, namely the wife and two children of Sardar Ganga Singh, Supervisor of the Peshawar Military Dairy Farm. The children were killed instantaneously and the lady was severely wounded. She was immediately taken to the Lady Reading Hospital for treatment where her condition is reported to be serious.

In a Notice published in the city to-day in English and Urdu the Chief Commissioner explained briefly the nature of the accident and expressed his profound regret and sincere sympathy with Sardar Ganga Singh adding that any reparation in his power would be made. An investigation by the City Magistrate was held this afternoon.

The sad event caused much excitement in Peshawar City and large crowds which collected round the Kabuli Gate had to be dispersed by the police and military. One round was fired without inflicting casualties. The Qissa Khani Bazar was cleared and nothing further occurred till about 11 A.M., when a large crowd of several thousand persons collected at the Gor Khatri. As a military patrol passed up the Gor Khatri street the crowd attempted to snatch their rifles from the hands of the troops who were compelled to fire 17 rounds in self-defence. The number of casualties has not yet been accurately ascertained but the wounded persons are receiving treatment in the Lady Reading Hospital and it is rumoured that three persons were killed and their bodies carried away. Shops were closed in the business quarters of the city but there have been no further disturbances.

REPRESENTATION OF HINDUS AND SIKHS ON THE PESHAWAR MUNICIPALITY.

109. *Sardar Sant Singh : (a) Is it a fact that the seats in the Peshawar Municipality have been distributed among Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs ? What is the respective voting strength of the various communities in the Municipality ? What is the proportion of distribution of seats ? Is it a fact that Hindus and Sikhs constitute important minorities in the North-West Frontier Province ? If so, what steps have been taken to safeguard their civic interests ?

(b) Is it a fact that the Hindus and Sikhs are dissatisfied with the distribution ? Have Government received any representation from these communities expressing their strong resentment ? If so, what steps do Government propose to take to protect their interests ? Has the attention of Government been drawn to this grievance of the Sikhs by the Sikh Rights Protection Society, Lahore ? If so, will Government be pleased to lay the correspondence on the table ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : (a) It is proposed to raise the total number of members of the Peshawar Municipal Committee from 20 to 34, of whom 17 will be elected. The voting strength of the various communities according to the tentative electoral rolls recently prepared is as follows :

Muslims	..	..	..	..	10,723
Hindus	..	..	..	..	2,880
Sikhs	..	..	..	..	1,173
Others	..	..	..	..	122
				Total	.. 14,848

Of the 17 elected seats on the reconstituted Committee, it is proposed to allot 13 seats to Muslims, 3 to Hindus and 1 to Sikhs. The Hindus represent between 1/6th and 1/7th of the population of Peshawar and the Sikhs less than 1/20th. In the proposed allotment of seats regard has been paid not only to the population of the various communities but also to their voting strength.

(b) Representations have been received from members of the Hindu and Sikh communities expressing dissatisfaction at the proposed distribution of elected seats. Government have seen the correspondence between the Sikh Rights Protection Society, Lahore, and the North West Frontier Province Administration. A copy of the correspondence is laid on the table of the House.

Correspondence.

To

The Revenue Commissioner,
North West Frontier Province,
Peshawar.

Sir,

We the Hindu and Sikh Members of the Peshawar Municipal Committee beg to approach you with the following humble representation in connection with the proposed changes in the constitution of the Committee.

From the information laid before the house on Tuesday, the 31st March, 1931, it was learnt that the Deputy Commissioner made certain recommendations in the matter. We have nothing to say against the proposed larger number of members but we have learnt with great concern that the proportion of seats reserved for different communities is proposed for no adequate reasons to undergo a marked change to the clear detriment of the minority communities, i.e., Hindus and Sikhs.

Since the constitution of the Committee till 1929, the Hindus and Sikhs of Feabawar City representing the most important civic interests of the advanced intellectual communities, consisting largely of traders and capitalists with vested interests in the town were given a due representation of 50 per cent. by nomination.

In 1929, when partial elections were introduced for the first time, the following proportion of representation was arrived at presumably in view of the importance of the minorities and in consideration of their vested interests. 5 Muhammadan members, as against 2 Hindus and one Sikh member, by election : and 4 Muhammadan against 3 Hindus and one Sikh by nomination.

Less than 18 months have yet passed since those revised proportions were settled, and it is inconceivable why now when the only question before the house is that of increase in its strength, the controversial and knotty question of a further revision of the proportion of communal representation should at all be taken up.

The only feasible and fair procedure under the circumstances will be to allot seats to the different communities on the basis of the existing proportion. This works out as under if the number of elected seats is doubled from 8 to 16.

- 10 Muhammadans,
- 4 Hindus, and
- 2 Sikhs.

As however the proposed number of elected members is 17, the only point worth considering in this matter is to which community should go the seventeenth seat.

In 1929 the Muslims had 75 per cent. voting strength as against 25 per cent. of that of the Hindus and Sikhs (who interse had a proportion of 2 to 1 respectively). In 1931 the Hindus show an increase of 2.5 per cent. in their voting strength, while the Muslims now have only 73 per cent. ; thus showing a decrease of 2 per cent. This would not justify any increase in Muhammadan representation ; but on the contrary would be a strong ground for the seventeenth seat to go to the Hindus and Sikh group, who now show a voting strength of 27 per cent., as against 25 per cent. of the year 1929.

The Deputy Commissioner on the other hand proposed the proportion of communal representation in election as follows :

- 13 Muhammadans,
- 3 Hindus, and
- 1 Sikh.

This he avers to do on the basis of the mean proportion worked from the population figures of 1921 and the voting strength of 1931 of the different communities.

This novel principle which is possibly meant to aim at some moderation in the political powers and ascendancy claimable by the numerically larger Muhammadan community on pure population basis, has hardly any merit as it on the other hand works out most unfairly to the interests of the important Hindu and Sikh minorities, which deserve to be adequately safeguarded.

The unjustifiableness of this proposal is clearly shown by the fact that if it is accepted, the Muslims will get 1 seat for every 825 votes, Hindus get one seat for 943 votes, and Sikhs 1 seat for as many as 1,173 votes. This, it will be granted, is neither fair nor just.

It goes without saying, as observed in the representation of N.-W. F. P. Hindu Sabha, dated 25th February, 1929, that representation on population basis with separate electorates is definitely unfair in view of the importance of Hindu and Sikh communities, in this premier city of the Province. The legitimate trading and educational interest of these minority communities cannot receive adequate protection against communal aggression of the larger community, unless due regard is paid to voting strength on some high basis, with additional safeguards to counter-balance the larger number of Muhammadan members including the official element. From this point of view the unequal proportion of two Hindus and one Sikh constituency as

against 5 Muhammadan constituencies even in 1929 gave rise to a serious grievance on the part of the Hindu and Sikh inhabitants of Peshawar City, but this was partly redressed by some balance of power maintained by keeping the nominated members half and half as before.

We are not fully aware what adequate grounds for modifying the 1929 proportion have been advocated by the author of this original scheme, but your humble petitioners have no doubt that double the number of members of 1929 scheme with an additional seat for the communities, which show increased voting strength, would be the only fair proposition to make.

It is submitted that in view of the above, 10 Muhammadans and 7 Hindus and Sikhs would be the more appropriate numbers and taken together with the official element the Muhammadans of Peshawar City cannot be possibly said to be labouring under any disadvantage of civic representation in Municipal matters.

We have, etc.

KARAM CHAND,
MEHR CHAND KHANNA,
ETC., ETC.

PESHAWAR CITY,

Dated the 9th April 1931.

COPY OF LETTER, DATED THE 22ND APRIL, 1931, FROM THE PRESIDENT, THE SIKH RIGHTS PROTECTION SOCIETY, LAHORE, TO THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER, N.-W. F. PROVINCE.

SUBJECT :—*Sikh Seats in the Peshawar Municipal Committee.*

The attention of my committee has been invited with regard to the proportion of seats reserved for different communities in the Peshawar Municipality.

My committee recall to the reforms that were introduced in 1929 under which the seats were allotted as under :

(a) Election—

Mohamedans	5 seats.
Hindus	2 seats.
Sikhs	1 seat.

(b) Nomination—

Mohamedans	4 seats.
Hindus	3 seats.
Sikhs	1 seat.

Now after the lapse of 18 months this proportion is going to be disturbed and therefore my community naturally feel perturbed and it is alleged that following proportion has been recommended :

10 Mohamedans.
4 Hindus.
2 Sikhs.
1 Unallotted.

17 seats.

My community is not in favour of communal electorates either in Legislative Councils or Municipal Committees, but they expect weightage as an important minority community who ruled Peshawar before the advent of British Rule.

The Sikhs in addition to weightage as a minority community as the Mohamedans desire in the Provinces where they are in the same position, expect that they may be allowed to contest additional seats in general electorates which must be common for Mohamedans, Hindus and Sikhs so that elected members must feel responsibility to all of them. The Muslims at their recent conference held at Lucknow passed a resolution

of joint electorates and those who attended the conference by common consent are the popular leaders of the Mohamedan community.

My Committee trust that the Government of the Hon'ble the Chief Commissioner will give special consideration to the claims of the gallant Sikh community and they shall be thankful if you throw some light in the matter in order to pacify the feeling of my community both in N.-W. F. P. and in the Punjab.

COPY OF A MEMORANDUM, No. 1058-L.F., DATED THE 8TH MAY, 1931, FROM THE REVENUE COMMISSIONER, N.-W. F. P., TO THE PRESIDENT, THE SIKH RIGHTS PROTECTION SOCIETY, 10|2, NISBAT ROAD, LAHORE.

SUBJECT :—*Sikh seats in the Peshawar Municipal Committee.*

Reference your letter, dated the 22nd April, 1931, to the address of the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, North West Frontier Province, on the subject noted above.

2. It has been decided that electorates in the Peshawar Municipality will be communal and that the distribution of the seventeen elected seats on the committee will be as follows :

Muslims	..	..	..	..	..	..	13
Hindus	..	..	..	..	..	..	3
Sikhs	..	..	..	..	..	..	1

3. The decision regarding communal electorates has been arrived at in deference to the expressed wishes of Hindu and Sikh communities of Peshawar.

4. As regards the distribution of the elected seats, the proposed distribution is based on the "Punjab formula", which has been adopted for application throughout this province, that is, the proportion of seats is calculated on the average of what each community is entitled to on the basis of population and voting strength. It may be added that no weightage has been, or is proposed to be, given to any community in elected seats in any municipal committee in the N.-W. F. Province, and that if necessary the interests of the minorities including the Sikhs will be safeguarded by nomination.

No. S. R.-9|9.

OFFICE,
THE SIKH RIGHTS PROTECTION SOCIETY,
10|2, NISBAT ROAD, LAHORE,

2nd June, 1931.

From

Sardar Harbhajan Singh Balhaya,
Hon. Secretary, The Sikh Rights Protection Society,
Lahore.

To

The Revenue Commissioner,
North West Frontier Province,
Peshawar.

SUBJECT :—*Sikh seats in the Peshawar Municipal Committee.*

DEAR SIR,

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, No. 1058-L.F., dated 8th May, 1931, which received a careful consideration of my committee and they have directed me to address you again on this question of great importance to my gallant community.

2. My Committee note that the Government have decided that the electorates will be on communal basis on the express desire of the Hindus and Sikhs and that the distribution of the seventeen elected seats on the Committee will be as follows :

Muslims	..	..	..	..	..	..	13
Hindus	..	..	..	..	..	..	3
Sikhs	..	..	..	..	..	..	1

But the proportion fixed by the Government it seems, is against the interests of both Hindus and Sikhs as my committee note from their joint representation, dated 9th April, 1931, to you. The approximate population and voting strength of the

different communities in Peshawar City as my Committee has been able to gather is as under :

			<i>Approximate population. Voting strength.</i>	
Mohamedans	..	..	78,000	10,723
Hindus	..	..	10,000	2,830
Sikhs	..	..	5,000	1,173

In accordance with the principle adopted by your Government the Mohamedans will get one seat to 825 votes, Hindus one for 943 and Sikhs one for 1,173. From this you will be pleased to observe at a glance that no special representation to the minorities have been granted and the position of the Sikh representation is not only unfair but ridiculous. The Sikhs in Peshawar have traditions behind them as ex-rulers of the Province and even now they form a compact and highly educated community and as most of its members are businessmen with very large stakes, therefore their interests require adequate safeguard from the Government.

3. The position of the Sikhs in the North-West Frontier Province is practically same as those of Muslims in the Madras Presidency therefore the " Punjab Formula " of representation is besides the point and cannot be taken into consideration. My Committee are strongly of opinion that the Sikhs should be allowed nothing short of 15 per cent. representation as the Muslims claim in the Madras Presidency and they must concede to others what they demand in the Province where they are in minority.

4. I am further directed to request you that the Sikh seats arrived at on the basis of 15 per cent. representation should be opened to them by election only and the antediluvian system of nomination should be dispensed with altogether and therefore they are obliged to disagree with your views that the interests of the minorities including the Sikhs will be safeguarded by nomination, *vide* paragraph 4 of your letter.

5. I am asked to impress upon you and through you to the Government of India that the Sikhs are not communalists and they would prefer joint electorates with reservation of seats so that the Muslim majority may feel sense of responsibility to Hindu and Sikh voters, otherwise the system enunciated by you will bring in a permanent Muslim rule in the Local Self-Government. My Committee invite your special attention of the Lahore Municipal Committee's Administration which on account of Muslim preponderance and irresponsibility, brought an unscathing criticism both from the ex-Muslim Commissioner of Lahore and ex-Muslim Minister for Local Self-Government. This must be an eye-opener to the Government of your Province before launching any scheme of reforms in which such state of affair will not be allowed. The views of the Sikhs of the Frontier Province are in perfect accord with those of my Committee and even the Sikh Conference at Kohat has expressed similar views in unequivocal terms.

6. My Committee trust that the Frontier Government will consider this letter in an equitable and just manner so that my community may not suffer in this present transitional state of affairs and they shall be glad to hear from you the steps the Government will be pleased to take after reviewing the whole situation.

I am,

DEAR SIR,

Yours faithfully,

(Sd.) H. S. BALHAYA,

Honorary Secretary,

The Sikh Rights Protection Society, Lahore.

No. S. R.-9/10, DATED THE 2ND JUNE, 1931.

Copy of the above to the Secretary to the Government of India, Political Department, Simla, for favour of information and immediate action to safeguard the interests of the Sikh in the Frontier Province.

(Sd.) H. S. BALHAYA,

**Honorary Secretary,*

The Sikh Rights Protection Society, Lahore.

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad : Is it not a fact that the non-official elected members are in a minority in the Peshawar Municipality, and, is it not a fact that the Government promised definitely last year that they would increase the non-officials, at least in the proportion of two-thirds ? Are Government going to reconsider the matter ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : 17 out of 34 will not be a minority, Sir ?

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad : And what about the official Chairman ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : The official Chairman would certainly have a casting vote when a dispute arose.

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad : Therefore, Government is in a majority ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : Only when there is a dispute, Sir.

THE PRICE OF WHEAT.

110. ***Sardar Sant Singh :** (a) Have the Government seen the note on the wheat problem as published on page 2 of the *Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, in its issue of the 26th June, 1931 ? If so, what steps do Government propose to take to raise the level of the agricultural products of Northern India in order to prevent agrarian trouble from breaking out ?

(b) Have Government received any communication from the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Lahore, with regard to the price of wheat ? If so, will Government state what steps they intend to take with regard to the various suggestions made therein ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : (a) Yes. Government do not agree with the contents of the note referred to, which is based on an incorrect statement of facts. In this connection, the attention of the Honourable Member is invited to the Honourable Sir George Rainy's speeches in the Legislative Assembly, on the 31st March, 1931, on the Wheat (Import Duty) Bill, explaining that any action that could be taken would not have the effect of raising the level of prices of agricultural products in India.

(b) Yes. The Chamber's suggestions with reference to the price of wheat related to reduction of railway freight, and prohibition of imports of foreign wheat. As regards the first matter, it is open to the Chamber to make any representation they desire to the Railway Administration concerned for a reduction in freight rates supported by any evidence they may have to indicate that the incidence of railway freight rates precludes the free movement of agricultural produce from the Punjab to other parts of India.

As regards the second matter, I would refer the Honourable Member to the answer which I have given to part (a) of his question.

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad : What action have Government taken to prohibit the importation of foreign wheat ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : The Honourable Member must remember that there was actually a Wheat Import Duty Bill passed by this Assembly at the last Delhi Session.

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad : Is it not a fact that by Government giving a time-allowance the importers have imported more wheat than would otherwise have been the case, within the year ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : Am I to understand that the Honourable Member questions the wisdom of the Assembly in doing so ?

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad : The wisdom of the Government.

BENEFIT SECURED BY INDIA UNDER THE HOOVER MORATORIUM.

111. *Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh : Will Government kindly state if India is in any way benefited by the Hoover Moratorium ? And if so, how ; and to what extent ?

The Honourable Sir George Schuster : I would invite the attention of the Honourable Member to the Press communiqué issued by the Government of India on the 26th June, 1931, a copy of which is laid on the table of the House.

Press Communiqué.

On the 24th June, 1931, in the course of a statement in Parliament with regard to the policy of His Majesty's Government regarding President Hoover's proposal about war debts moratorium the Chancellor of the Exchequer said :

“ Although His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom do not regard President Hoover's proposal as directly affecting the war obligations of the Dominions and of India to the United Kingdom which are a matter for discussion and settlement between those of His Majesty's Governments concerned, we felt that we should be interpreting the wishes of the country in deciding freely to offer to the Dominions and India the same concession as is proposed for foreign countries under the same conditions.

Accordingly, when inviting the assent of the Dominion Governments and the Government of India to the suspension of German payments so far as regards the share to which they are entitled, we intimated that on the same principle we would readily give them the option of postponing the whole amount of their war debt payments to the United Kingdom for a period of one year from July 1st, 1931, if they so desire.”

The Government of India have agreed to the proposals of His Majesty's Government. The effect of the proposal in regard to India is that, provided President Hoover's proposal is adopted the Government of India may suspend both capital and interest payments in respect of the outstanding war loan liability for one year beginning the 1st July, 1931. On the other hand, the Government of India will forego receipts from reparations during the same period. The total amount of the outstanding war loan liability on the 31st March, 1931, was £16,721,000. The total war loan liability till 1929-30 was being discharged by making such annual payments of capital as would lead to the extinction of the liability by about 1946-47. In 1929-30 and 1930-31, however, no capital repayment was made to His Majesty's Government and similarly the budget for 1931-32 does not include any amount for capital repayment of the war loan liability. The amount of interest payable by the Government of India to His Majesty's Government on the outstanding amount of the war loan liability is £836,000 per annum which is payable in two half-yearly instalments. As the moratorium year runs from 1st July, 1931 to the 30th June, 1932, the relief to the Indian budget on this account during the current year will be £418,000. The remaining half of the benefit will fall within the next year's budget. The total amount of reparation receipts due to the Government of India under the Young plan during 1931-32 and 1932-33 is approximately £228,300 per annum, which is payable monthly. Under the proposals of His Majesty's Government, the Government of India will forego these receipts for nine months in the current year (1st July to 31st March), amounting to about £172,000 and for three months (1st April to 30th June) in the next year amounting to about £57,000. The net relief to the budget of the Government of India will thus be £248,000 in the current year and £361,000 in the next year.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT,
Simla, the 26th June, 1931.

**PROTEST BY INDIAN EMPLOYERS' DELEGATES AT THE INTERNATIONAL
LABOUR CONFERENCE AT GENEVA.**

112. ***Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh** : (a) Will Government kindly explain the circumstances under which Messrs. **Walechand Hirachand, Ghosh, and Bagla**, the Indian Employers' delegates to the International Labour Conference at Geneva, walked out of the Conference Hall in protest ?

(b) Who is **Mr. Tarlton** ; to what nationality does he belong ; who nominated him to represent India ; and what are his antecedents and qualifications in this respect ?

(c) Is it not a fact that the organisations which nominated **Mr. Tarlton** have a membership, 88 per cent. of which is incorporated in, controlled from, or belongs to Great Britain ?

Mr. J. A. Shillidy : (a) The gentlemen named are reported to have walked out of the Conference Hall as a protest against the action of the International Labour Conference in accepting the credentials of **Mr. E. S. Tarlton** as Adviser to the Indian employers' delegate.

(b) At the time of his nomination **Mr. Tarlton** was the Chairman of the Indian Mining Association. He is a British subject and was nominated by the Government of India in conformity with the provisions of Article 389 of the Treaty of Versailles. The nomination was upheld by the Credentials Committee and the Conference.

(c) Exact information is not available, but the answer to the question, as I understand it, is almost certainly in the negative.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh : What is the strength of the organization which nominated **Mr. Tarlton** ?

Mr. J. A. Shillidy : I did not catch the question.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh : With regard to (c), I should like to know how many Indians are on the organization which nominated **Mr. Tarlton**.

Mr. J. A. Shillidy : I cannot say quite how many Indians there are. I have not got the exact information ; but the answer to the question is almost certainly in the negative.

Sirdar Harbans Singh Brar : Did the Honourable Member try to get the exact information ?

Mr. J. A. Shillidy : No ; I am afraid we cannot get the information.

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN THE PROVISION OF ELECTRIC FANS IN JAILS.

113. ***Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh** : (a) With reference to the announcement of Government eliminating the policy of racial discrimination in jails, and the classification of prisoners, are Government aware that electric fans have been provided, or are going to be provided, for Europeans and Anglo-Indian prisoners in many jails, but not for Indian prisoners ; if so, why ? Has there been any correspondence with the United Provinces Government in this connection ?

(b) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the report published in the *Leader*, dated the 15th May, 1931, of an interview with **Mr. Vaukatesh Narayan Tewari**, an ex-member of the United Provinces Legislative Council, in the course of which he stated on the authority of his own personal experience that fans have been provided for European and

Anglo-Indian prisoners but not for Indian prisoners, even of the same class, in many jails ?

The Honourable Sir James Crerar : (a) The reply to the first part of the question is in the negative. I have ascertained from the United Provinces Government that electric fans are at present provided only in the Lucknow Central prison and that hand punkhas are provided elsewhere, when required. Orders were issued by the Government of the United Provinces in May last to the effect that whenever a punkha is considered necessary during the hot weather for any particular prisoner, recommendation should be made accordingly to the Inspector General of Prisons and these orders applied equally to European, Anglo-Indian and Indian prisoners. During the present year punkhas have been sanctioned for 15 Europeans and Anglo-Indians and for 124 Indians.

(b) I have seen the report referred to.

COMPLAINT BY PANDIT JAWAHAR LAL NEHRU AGAINST TAMPERING WITH HIS LETTERS IN THE POST OFFICE.

114. ***Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh :** Has the attention of the Government been drawn to the copy of a letter, published in the *Hindustan Times* of the 27th June, 1931, addressed by Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, to the Postmaster General, United Provinces, regarding the systematic tampering with his letters by Post Office "interlopers" ? Under whose authority are his letters opened and why ? How many letters of his have been so far opened ; and in how many have objectionable matters, if any, been found ; and how have they been disposed of ?

Mr. J. A. Shillidy : The reply to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. With respect to the other parts, Government regret that they are unable to give any information.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh : May I take it that the Government have not got this information in their possession ?

Mr. J. A. Shillidy : I am afraid I must refer the Honourable Member to my reply. The Government are unable to give any information.

Sardar Sant Singh : Will Government kindly state under what provisions of the law they are authorised to open the letters of private individuals ?

Mr. J. A. Shillidy : Under the Post Office Act.

REMODELLING OF THE KOTRI RAILWAY BRIDGE OVER THE INDUS.

115. ***Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon :** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether it is intended to remodel the present Kotri Railway Bridge over the Indus ?

(b) If the reply to part (a) be in the affirmative, what will be the total cost incurred ?

(c) What are the reasons for the new scheme being undertaken at a heavy cost ?

(d) Is it true that the Karachi District Local Board, Hyderabad Sind Municipality, Kotri Municipality and Hyderabad District Local Board and the Bombay Government have been approached to contribute their share to the cost of remodelling the bridge ?

(e) If reply to part (d) be in the affirmative, what are the replies received from each of them ?

(f) If local bodies are unwilling to participate in such a costly scheme, do Government propose to drop the scheme in view of the present economic depression ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : (a) Yes.

(b) The total cost is estimated to be Rs. 17,26,236.

(c) Because the existing girders are too weak to carry the new heavy standard engines already running on the North Western Railway between Lahore and Rohri, it not being possible to run them on the Rohri-Karachi section on account of the weakness of the girders of the Kotri Bridge.

(d) and (e). Government have no information as regards the Karachi District Local Board, Hyderabad Sind Municipality, Kotri Municipality and Hyderabad District Local Board, but the Government of Bombay have agreed to contribute Rs. 7,51,300 out of the estimated amount mentioned for the purpose of providing cantilevered roadways on either side of the strengthened girders.

(f) Work is already in progress and Government are, therefore, not prepared to consider the abandonment of the Scheme.

DUTIES OF THE ADVERTISEMENT AGENT FOR GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS.

116. ***Mr. Bhuput Sing :** Will Government be pleased to state :

- (a) the nature of the duties that the Advertisement Agent for Government Publications has to perform ;
- (b) the pay and emoluments that are paid to such officer ;
- (c) the names of all the provinces where such a functionary exists ;
- (d) since when the post for such a functionary has come into existence ;
- (e) the amount of work that has been introduced by such officer in the province of Bengal ; and
- (f) the name of such officer posted in Bengal and his educational and special qualifications for the office he holds ?

Mr. J. A. Shillidy : (a) The duties of the Advertisement Agent are to secure advertisements for insertion in Government publications and forms, to conduct all preliminary negotiations and correspondence with prospective advertisers and to obtain payment for advertisements accepted by the Central Publication Branch.

(b) The Agent is paid a commission of 20 per cent. on all payments for advertisements secured by him and an additional commission of 5 per cent. if the net revenue to Government from advertisements is equal to or in excess of Rs. 32,000 in a year.

(c) The Agent secures advertisements from all parts of India. No separate Agents are employed by the Government of India in different provinces.

(d) The services of an Advertisement Agent are being utilised since April, 1924.

(e) The information is not available as receipts from advertisements are not accounted for on a territorial basis.

(f) The name of the present Agent is Mr. Colin Muirhead. He has worked as the head of the advertising department of certain firms in Calcutta.

CONSTRUCTION OF QUARTERS FOR EAST INDIAN RAILWAY EMPLOYEES,
NORTH OF HOWARAH STATION.

117. *Mr. Bhuput Sing : Will Government be pleased to state :

- (a) the total number of acres that have been acquired on the north of Howrah towards Salkia side for the construction of mansions and quarters for the East Indian Railway people ;
- (b) since when the acquisition of sites has commenced ;
- (c) since when the constructive operations have begun ;
- (d) the total amount of costs that have been incurred so far in constructing the buildings ;
- (e) how many houses in all have been built on the lands acquired so far ;
- (f) how many of those houses are (i) one-storied, (ii) two-storied, and (iii) three-storied ;
- (g) how many of such houses are primarily intended for the Indian employees ;
- (h) whether any buildings are still in process of construction at the acquired sites ;
- (i) how many people are expected to be housed in all the buildings already completed ;
- (j) how many people have already taken occupation of those buildings so far ;
- (k) the amount that has been spent in laying the roads and avenues about the buildings ; and
- (l) who was it that first originated the idea of acquiring the sites for the purpose of building the houses in question ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : (a) 24.64 acres.

(b) September, 1918.

(c) April, 1928.

(d) Rs. 62,80,253, including the cost of land.

(e) 588 sets of staff quarters with 108 units of servants' quarters.

(f) One-storied—Nil.

Two-storied—108 units servants' quarters.

Three-storied—180 units.

Four-storied—408 units inferior servants' quarters.

(g) 408 exclusively for Indians and 180 for Indian or European employees as required.

(h) No.

(i) 588 families with servants.

(j) All quarters are occupied.

(k) Rs. 21,476.

(l) The proposal was originally put forward in 1918 by the District Engineer, Howrah.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF SIR ARTHUR SALTER.

118. *Mr. Bhuput Sing : Will Government be pleased to state :

- (a) the causes that Sir Arthur Salter has made out for the economic depression in India in particular ;
- (b) the remedies that he has suggested for the alleviation of the prevailing acute economic situation in India ;
- (c) whether the causes and remedies prescribed by him have been accepted by the Government of India ;
- (d) whether the causes and remedies indicated by Sir Arthur Salter are in conformity with those prescribed by Sir E. Hilton Young in indicating the causes of the world slump ; and
- (e) the recommendations of Sir Arthur Salter which the Government of India has resolved to give effect to ?

The Honourable Sir George Rainy : (a) The investigation of the causes of the present economic depression in India was not within the scope of the enquiry undertaken by Sir Arthur Salter. In this connection I would refer the Honourable Member to Sir Arthur Salter's Report, a copy of which is in the Library.

(b) to (d). Do not arise.

(e) Government have not yet taken any action on Sir Arthur Salter's Report.

REMEDIES FOR THE ECONOMIC DEPRESSION IN INDIA.

119. *Mr. Bhuput Sing : Will Government be pleased to state :

- (a) the remedies that the Government of India propose to adopt for the alleviation of the continuing economic depression in India ; and
- (b) whether the provincial Governments are expected to fall in with the Central Government in adopting measures for the removal of the economic distress that prevails throughout the country ?

The Honourable Sir George Rainy : (a) and (b). The real causes of the present economic depression in India are unfortunately beyond the control of the Government of this country.

DECAPITATION OF THE BODIES OF CERTAIN BURMAN REBELS HANGED IN BURMA.

120. *Mr. Bhuput Sing : Will Government be pleased to state :

- (a) the names of persons who are responsible for the severance of heads from their bodies of the 12 Burman rebels in Prome ;
- (b) the steps that the Central Government have taken to find out the exact reason for which such a severance of heads from the bodies was resorted to ;
- (c) the action which the Central Government has taken to deal with the person or persons who had been responsible for the deed ;
- (d) the resolution that the Government of Burma have passed in the matter since the news appeared in the papers ;
- (e) whether it is a fact that long before the news leaked out photographs of the 12 decapitated heads were in the possession of the Executive Members of the Government of India ; and
- (f) under what law the severance of heads from bodies of men already hanged is permissible ?

The Honourable Sir James Crerar : I would invite the attention of the Honourable Member to the Resolution issued by the Government of Burma on the subject, a copy of which I have had placed in the Library.

RECRUITMENT BY THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION.

121. *Mr. Bhuput Sing : Will Government be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Public Service Commission is functioning normally in the present year ;
- (b) whether they have brought out the results of the different examinations held under their auspices timely during the last year ;
- (c) whether recruitment on the results of all those examinations has already been made ; if not, why not ;
- (d) whether the Commission have been authorised to hold all examinations originally held by them in the present year ;
- (e) whether recruitments will be made as usual on the result of those examinations ; and
- (f) whether the activities of the Commission will be restricted in any way by the present retrenchment scheme of the Government ?

The Honourable Sir James Crerar : (a) Yes, except that one member has been absent on leave since April 1931.

(b) and (c). Yes.

(d) and (e). No examination will be held during the current year for entry to the Indian Audit and Accounts Service, the Military Accounts Department, the Indian Railway Accounts Service or the Imperial Customs Service, because no vacancies for direct recruits are expected to occur in any of those services in 1932. Similarly no examination will be held for

the Indian Forest Service, because no vacancy is likely to occur in 1933; that being the year in which a probationer recruited in 1931 would be appointed to the service after training at the Forest College, Dehra Dun. All other examinations will as far as is known at present be held as usual and recruitment will be made on the results of these examinations.

(f) The question as to what economy if any can be effected is under consideration, but there is not likely to be any restriction of the activities of the Commission.

RETRENCHMENT ON THE NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.

122. *Mr. Lalchand Navalrai : (a) Is it a fact that the Railway Unions suggested to the Railway Board that retrenchment should be made by discharging about 115 officers who were provided for on the North Western Railway when the Divisional Scheme was introduced in place of the old system of working under Traffic Superintendents and District Traffic Superintendents ?

(b) Is it a fact that such a re-organization scheme would mean about 10 lakhs annual savings to the Railway ?

(c) Was it also suggested that the salaries of the other 200 high officials should be reduced ; if so, by how much ?

(d) What were the replies made to the Unions on the aforesaid points ?

(e) If their suggestions were not agreed to, what were the reasons for such refusal ?

(f) What steps do the Railway Board propose to take for the retrenchment in connection with the suggested matters ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : (a) to (c). No.

(d) and (e). Do not arise.

(f) The Railway Board do not propose to take any steps in the directions suggested.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai : Will the Honourable Member kindly let me know the reasons for not taking the steps ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : I fear, Sir, that in a reply I cannot give all the reasons, but I can say that it is quite impossible to get rid of 115 officers on the North-Western Railway.

IMPORTATION OF JAPANESE RICE.

123. *Mr. Lalchand Navalrai : (a) Have Government received any representations from the Indian Merchants' Association, Karachi, and the Bombay Chamber of Commerce drawing the attention of Government to an extraordinary import of Japan rice into the Indian markets affecting seriously the sale of rice produced in Sind and other parts of India ?

(b) Are Government aware that the price of rice has gone down abnormally in India, that the producers in India are not able to compete with the Japanese rice and are therefore suffering immensely ?

(c) Have Government taken any steps to protect the interests of Indian producers ? If so, what ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : (a) Government have received representations on the subject from the Indian Merchants' Association, Karachi, and the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay.

(b) and (c). The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to reply already given to Mr. Mohd. Anwar-ul-Azim's question No. 4 on this subject.

The Honourable Member was inquisitive as to the source from which I derived the figures given in the answer referred to. I understand, Sir, that the information was obtained from the Director General of Commercial Intelligence, who, in his turn, I understand, received the reports from the Customs Collectors at all Indian seaports.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai : Was any answer given in the Bombay and Karachi Chambers on this subject ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : I believe the answer given to Mr. Mohd. Anwar-ul-Azim's question No. 4 is the reply to the representations made in the above-mentioned communications.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai : What I want to know is whether any reply was given to the Chambers who communicated with the Honourable Member and therefore expected a reply ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : For that I should like to have notice.

APPOINTMENT OF SINDHIS AS SANITARY INSPECTORS ON THE NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.

124. ***Mr. Lalchand Navalrai :** (a) Will Government be pleased to state how many Sanitary Inspectors there are in the service of the North Western Railway in the Karachi and Quetta Divisions ?

(b) Where are they posted ?

(c) How many of them are Punjabis, how many Sindhis and how many of other denominations ?

(d) How many of them have qualified themselves in the course of training given to such a class in Bombay ?

(e) Is it a fact that one Sindhi, who qualified in the Bombay course applied to the Agent, North Western Railway, Lahore, in 1928 and who has repeated his request from time to time, has not been engaged by the Railway even though his name had been registered in 1928 ? If so, what are the reasons for not giving a due proportion of appointments to Sindhis, specially in the Sind section ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : (a) Four in the Karachi Division and two in the Quetta Division.

(b) Karachi Cantonment, Sukkur, Rohri, Kotri, Quetta and Sibi.

(c) All are Punjabis.

(d) Three of these Sanitary Inspectors have qualified themselves in the Bombay Sanitary Inspector's course.

(e) The Agent, North-Western Railway, reports that he is unable to trace the application of the individual referred to by the Honourable

Member. Recruitment to the Class of Sanitary Inspectors is made by a Selection Board at the Headquarters of the Railways and in recruiting for the subordinate grades generally due attention is paid to securing representation of various communities.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai : Will the Honourable Member be pleased to write to the Agent to recognise the rights of the Sindhis also and not give all the appointments to the Punjabis ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : It appears to me that what should guide the Agent is the qualifications that are needed in Sanitary Inspectors and not whether that they should be Punjabis or Sindhis.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai : Am I to understand that all the Punjabis that are now in service are qualified men ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : I understand so.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh : What about the Biharis ? (Laughter.)

APPOINTMENT OF SINDHIS AS HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS IN THE NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY OFFICE AT LAHORE.

125. ***Mr. Lalchand Navalrai** : (a) Is it a fact that the heads of the Departments in the Agent, North Western Railway, Lahore's office continue to be Punjabis ?

(b) Has any attempt been made to give such responsible appointments to Sindhis in order to safeguard the interests of the Sind subordinates on the North Western Railway ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : (a) Presumably the Honourable Member refers to the Superintendents of the clerical establishments in Principal Headquarters Offices.

Out of nine posts six are filled by Punjabis and 2 by Sindhis.

(b) No.

DEPOSITS WITH THE IMPERIAL BANK OF INDIA.

126. ***Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh** (on behalf of Mr. T. N. Ramakrishna Reddi) : (a) Will Government be pleased to state what was the amount of deposit with the Imperial Bank of India during each of the months from 1st January, 1930 to 1st July, 1931 ?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state what interest is allowed on these deposits and what was the total income derived by way of interest during the period in question ?

The Honourable Sir George Schuster : (a) The amount of the Government deposits with the Imperial Bank is shown in the weekly statement issued by the Bank and also in a monthly statement published by the Controller of the Currency.

(b) The Imperial Bank does not pay interest on the deposits, but as a *quid pro quo* for interest-free deposits it executes a large amount of work for the Government.

ALLEGED DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT OF INDIAN AND NON-INDIAN DIRECTORS OF THE IMPERIAL BANK OF INDIA.

127. ***Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh** (on behalf of Mr. T. N. Ramakrishna Reddi) : Will Government be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the

Indian Directors of the Imperial Bank branch at Madras do not receive the same treatment as their non-Indian colleagues, that papers circulated to the latter are not circulated to the former and that knowledge of many of the transactions of the Bank are withheld from the Indian portion of the Directorate ?

The Honourable Sir George Schuster : The question deals with a point of procedure with which Government are not concerned and about which Government have no information.

WITHDRAWAL OF FACILITIES GRANTED TO INDIAN MERCHANTS BY THE
IMPERIAL BANK OF INDIA.

128. ***Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh** (on behalf of Mr. T. N. Ramakrishna Reddi) : (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether it has come to their knowledge that the Imperial Bank, through its branches, is putting pressure on Indian merchants, particularly in withdrawing facilities granted to them for doing their business and in otherwise compelling them in many cases to close their accounts ?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state if it is a fact that in some instances at least this financial pressure is due as much to financial as to political reasons ?

The Honourable Sir George Schuster : (a) No.

(b) Does not arise.

AMOUNT OF ADVANCES GIVEN TO INDIAN MERCHANTS BY THE IMPERIAL
BANK OF INDIA.

129. ***Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh** (on behalf of Mr. T. N. Ramakrishna Reddi) : (a) Will Government be pleased to state what is the amount of advance given to Indian merchants in the various branches of the Imperial Bank outstanding in the beginning of January, 1930, and what is the amount at present outstanding on the 1st of July, 1931 ?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state what is the amount of advance outstanding against Indian merchants in Burma, particularly on the 1st of January, 1930, and what is the amount outstanding on the 1st of July, 1931 ?

(c) Will Government be pleased to give similar figures for the same period to non-Indian constituents of the various branches of the Imperial Bank ?

The Honourable Sir George Schuster : Government are not in possession of the information required by the Honourable Member as it relates to the commercial business of the Bank over which Government have no control.

INQUIRY INTO THE WORKING OF THE IMPERIAL BANK OF INDIA.

130. ***Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh** (on behalf of Mr. T. N. Ramakrishna Reddi) : Has the attention of Government been drawn to the allegations that have been specifically made in the course of the Banking Enquiry Committee regarding the Imperial Bank ? Have Government considered the

desirability of appointing a committee of inquiry to go into the question of the working of the Imperial Bank ?

The Honourable Sir George Schuster : No.

EFFECT OF THE BURMESE REBELLION ON INDIAN INVESTMENTS IN BURMA.

131. ***Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh** (on behalf of **Mr. T. N. Ramakrishna Reddi**) : (a) Have Government considered the effect of the rebellion in Burma on the investments made by Indians in that country in relation to the policy pursued by the Imperial Bank and by other Banks regarding payment of advances made by them to their constituents ?

(b) Have Government considered any proposal for declaring a moratorium during the period of the rebellion in Burma and for some time thereafter till normal conditions are evolved, and have Government, in this connection, considered the proposal that the moratorium should include the banks of the country ?

The Honourable Sir George Schuster : (a) Government realise that rebellion in Burma may have had some influence on the relations between the Banks in Burma and their constituents, but they see no reason for State interference.

(b) No.

RETRENCHMENT AT THE DEHRA DUN FOREST COLLEGE.

132. ***Mr. Bhuput Sing** : Will Government be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been no recruitment this year to the Dehra Dun Forest College for the Imperial Forest Service ; if so, (i) the reason for arriving at such a decision ; (ii) the manner in which the staff—who would have otherwise occupied themselves with the candidates to have been recruited—are employed and (iii) whether still the normal grant is to be maintained for the Dehra Dun Forest College this year ; and

(b) whether any retrenchment has been made or any such scheme prepared for that institution ; if so, the names of departments which are to be affected by the retrenchment scheme so prepared ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : (a) and (b). No competitive examination for the Indian Forest Service has been held this year as no vacancy is likely to occur in 1933 to which a probationer, if recruited this year by competition, could be appointed after the usual training of two years at the Forest College, Dehra Dun. There are still two classes consisting of students who were admitted in 1929 and 1930. The staff is, therefore, fully employed. The question whether the College should be continued is under consideration. Expenditure on contingencies and miscellaneous charges has already been reduced as a measure of economy.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh : Is there any truth in the report that Government have already decided to close down the Dehra Dun Forest College as a measure of retrenchment ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : The matter has not yet been decided. It is under consideration.

POWER HOUSES ON THE EAST INDIAN RAILWAY AND THE OFFICERS IN CHARGE OF THEM.

133. *Mr. Bhuput Sing : Will Government be pleased to state :

- (a) the total number of power-houses on the East Indian Railway ;
- (b) the names of stations where such power-houses exist ;
- (c) in how many of them the Officer-in-charge is (i) Indian, (ii) Statutory Indian, and (iii) European ;
- (d) the name of the officer under whose superintendence and direction the power-house at Jhajha was recently constructed ; and
- (e) the academical and special qualifications of that officer ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : (a) 18.

- (b) (1) Jamalpur.
- (2) Lillooah.
- (3) Giridih.
- (4) Lucknow.
- (5) Tundla.
- (6) Asansol.
- (7) Ondal.
- (8) Pathardihi.
- (9) Jhajha.
- (10) Dhanbad.
- (11) Moghalserai.
- (12) Gaya.
- (13) Jasidih.
- (14) Barakar.
- (15) Raneegunge.
- (16) Pannagar.
- (17) Kiul.
- (18) Hazaribagh.

(c) 16 Power Stations are in charge of Indian Officers and 2 in charge of Statutory Indian Officers.

(d) Mr. P. D. Low ; and

(e) Chartered Electrical Engineer (Associate Member of the Institute of Electrical Engineers).

MILITARY TELEGRAPHISTS EMPLOYED ON CIVIL DUTIES.

134. *Mr. Bhuput Sing : Will Government be pleased to state .

- (a) the total number of military telegraphists who are working on the civil side of the Posts and Telegraphs Department ;
- (b) the purpose or purposes for which such telegraphists are kept for work and training on the civil side ;

- (c) the pay and allowances to which they are entitled ;
- (d) whether their pay and allowances are debited to the civil budget ; and
- (e) the hours of duties they are required to put in daily ?

Sir Hubert Sams : (a) 97.

(b) To have available a regular supply and reserve of fully trained Army signallers for military requirements.

(c) Military telegraphists are entitled to their military pay and allowances *plus* a departmental allowance ranging from Rs. 1-4-0 to Rs. 3-8-0 a day according to their proficiency and length of service in departmental telegraph offices.

(d) The Civil Budget bears only a sum calculated as representing the actual value to the Posts and Telegraphs Department of the Military telegraphists' services. The balance of their pay and allowances is borne by the Army.

(e) The same as for Civil telegraphists, namely, 8 hours day work, 7 hours evening work, and 6 hours night work.

REPRESENTATION OF MUSLIMS IN THE ELECTRICAL BRANCH OF THE NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.

135. ***Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon :** (a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to an article under the heading "Reduction in Electrical Branch", published in the *Muslim Outlook* of Lahore in its issue of the 20th May 1931 ?

(b) Is it a fact that in the cadre of gazetted officers and subordinates consisting of out-door supervisors, Foremen, Assistant Foremen and Train Lighting Inspectors in the Department all are non-Muslims ?

(c) If so, will Government be pleased to state on what ground has the above practice been adopted by the authorities concerned ?

(d) Is it a fact that since the opening of the above Branch, the posts of supervising staff have become the monopoly of non-Muslims ?

(e) Are Government aware that junior subordinates, who are Muslims, are being put to the hardest possible test and every effort is being made to prove them unfit with a view to reduce their pay or to discharge them from service ?

(f) What action do Government propose to take to stop further injustice being done to the Mussalmans and to redress their complaints and grievances above named ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : (a) The Honourable Member presumably refers to the article on the subject which appeared in the paper in its issue dated the 23rd May, 1931, which Government have seen.

(b) Yes.

(c) The present Supervisors, Foremen, Assistant Foremen and Train Lighting Inspectors have been promoted from lower grades. Selections for promotions are made irrespective of race, community or creed. The rules for recruitment for the lower grades from which promotions are made provide adequate safeguards in the interests of communities inadequately represented.

(d) No.

(e) No, this is not so.

(f) The attention of the officer appointed on special duty to assist in carrying out the policy of Government with a view to securing adequate representation of Muslims and other minority communities has been drawn to the article in the *Muslim Outlook*.

PURCHASE BY GOVERNMENT OF THE BENGAL AND NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.

136. ***Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon** : (a) Are Government aware that under the agreement with the Bengal and North Western Railway, the Secretary of State for India has an option to purchase the Railway on the 31st December 1932 on giving 12 months' previous notice ?

(b) Is it a fact that the next option to take over the line under the agreement with the Railway does not occur for a period of 50 years, that is until 1982 ?

(c) Are Government aware that this Railway has in recent years distributed ordinary dividends including bonus as under :

1922-23 at 11 per cent.

1923-24 at 13 per cent.

1924-25 at 14 per cent.

1925-26 at 16 per cent.

1926-27 at 18 per cent.

1927-28 at 19 per cent.

1928-29 at 19 per cent.

(d) Are Government aware that in addition to paying the above dividends the Company's reserves have within the last six years been increased from £1,800,000 to £3,150,000, being actually in excess of its ordinary capital which is £300,000 ?

(e) Is it a fact that various public bodies have drawn the attention of Government to the prosperous condition of this Railway as revealed by the figures quoted in parts (c) and (d) above, and advocated the purchase of this Railway by Government under the option referred to in part (a) ?

(f) Will Government be pleased to state what action they have taken or propose to take in the matter ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : (a) Yes.

(b) The next option is 49 years later, in 1981.

(c) Yes. I would point out, however, that the ordinary (profit sharing) capital of the Company is only £3 million whereas the total capital outlay is over £8 million, the balance being met from preference capital, debentures and reserves.

(d) This is correct, taking all reserves, including sinking and other similar funds together.

(e) Yes.

(f) A Resolution on the subject will be placed before the Assembly in the course of the present session.

**GRANT OF ADVANCE INCREMENTS TO ACCOUNTANTS IN THE STATE RAILWAY
ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT DEPARTMENTS.**

137. *Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon : (a) Will Government be pleased to state the principles governing the grant of advance increments to accountants of the State Railway Accounts Department ?

(b) Is the grant of advance increments to accountants of the State Railway Audit Department, governed by the same principles ?

(c) Will Government be pleased to furnish :

(i) the number of cases in which advance increments have been given to accountants of the Accounts Department and the number of such increments given in each case from 1st October 1928 to date ; and

(ii) similar information in respect of accountants of the State Railway Audit Department, for the same period ?

(d) Is it a fact that some advance increments were given to Mr. P. G. Bhandari, accountant of the Accounts Department ; if so, how many ?

(e) Is it a fact that Mr. Bhandari has failed to pass the accountant's examination twice ?

(f) Is it a fact that in the Audit Department appointment or promotion to the rank of accountant takes place after passing the examination ?

(g) Is it a fact that in the Audit Department there are men with qualifications similar to or better than those of Mr. Bhandari who are not given advance increments ?

(h) Will Government please state reasons for adopting an unusual course in the case of Mr. Bhandari ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : (a) Advance increments are generally granted when the work of a person justifies such a reward. Occasionally they are given to save persons from unintended loss which they would suffer by the strict operation of the rules.

(b) Yes.

(c) (i). Seven. In two cases, 5 increments were given ; in one case 3 ; in one case 2 ; and in three cases, one.

(ii) One case of one increment.

(d) Yes. Five.

(e) Yes.

(f) Yes, except in the case of probationers who however have to pass an examination before confirmation.

(g) and (h). I am not in a position to answer the question, but Mr. Bhandari was given advance increments partly to save him from unmerited loss and partly because of his high qualifications and the excellent manner in which he discharged the very responsible duties which were entrusted to him.

**DISCHARGE OF MUSLIMS FROM THE NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY ACCOUNTS
OFFICE.**

138. *Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon : (a) Will Government be pleased to state if it is a fact that some clerical staff was discharged in the North Western Railway Accounts Office in May 1931 ?

(b) Is it a fact that Mr. Judge, Chief Accounts Officer, took into consideration the existing paucity of Muslims in his office and therefore discharged only a few Muslims in the first instance ?

(c) Is it a fact that he was sent for by the higher authorities at Simla ?

(d) Is it a fact that he was instructed to reverse the policy and discharge a larger number of Muslims ?

(e) Is it a fact that in the batch of men discharged from the 1st July 1931, after Mr. Judge came back from Simla, there were five Muslims and only one or two Hindus ?

(f) Will Government please state the percentage of Muslim subordinate staff, permanent and temporary together, in the General Branch of the Chief Accounts Officer's office to the total number of subordinate staff (clerks and accountants) in that branch on 1st March 1931 and 2nd July 1931, separately ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : (a) Yes.

(b) Yes.

(c) No. But he had a discussion with the Controller of Railway Accounts on this matter when he was in Simla on other business.

(d) There was no question of reversing any policy. It was, however, pointed out to the Chief Accounts Officer that in making his discharges he had not taken into account the existence of a number of purely temporary employees who had not passed the requisite qualifying examination for admission to the Railway Accounts Department.

(e) Yes. These were some of the purely temporary employees to whom I have referred.

(f) On the 1st of March, 1931, 18.68 per cent. and on the 2nd July, 1931, 18.16 per cent. I should like to add that in discharging the temporary staff the interests of Muslims and other minority communities were safeguarded by the rule that the members of the minority communities discharged should not exceed one-third of the total number discharged.

APPOINTMENT OF APPRENTICE MECHANICS ON THE EAST INDIAN RAILWAY.

139. ***Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon :** (a) Is it a fact that the East Indian Railway advertised for apprentice mechanics in April 1931, or thereabout ?

(b) If so, how many men were appointed ?

(c) Will Government kindly give the number of men appointed by communities ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : (a) Yes.

(b) 44.

(c) Anglo-Indians	..	..	..	..	20
Hindus	..	..	..	..	20
Muhammadans	..	..	..	..	4

OFFICERS OFFICIATING IN THE LOWER GAZETTED SERVICE OF STATE RAILWAYS.

140. ***Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon** : Will Government please state the number of officers officiating in the lower gazetted service on all State Railways by communities ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : The figures are as under :

Europeans and Anglo-Indians	..	..	102
Hindus	..	..	24
Muslims	..	..	2
Indian Christians	..	..	2

RETRENCHMENT ON THE RAILWAYS.

141. ***Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon** : (a) Will Government please state if it is a fact that staff near the age of retirement have on some Railways been asked to proceed on leave preparatory to retirement ?

(b) Is it a fact that on the North Western Railway the staff who have actually proceeded on leave are mostly Muslims and Hindus have been exempted ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : (a) Yes, but only when their posts were brought under reduction.

(b) No.

(c) Government issued general instructions on the point in March last which apply equally to all State Railways and all communities.

RETRENCHMENT ON THE NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.

142. ***Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon** : Will Government be pleased to lay on the table a statement showing the total number by communities of :

(i) staff whose pay has been reduced permanently, and

(ii) staff discharged on account of retrenchment on the North Western Railway ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : Statements giving the required information are laid on the table.

Statement showing by communities the total number of men whose posts were abolished on the North-Western Railway in connection with the recent retrenchment and who have accepted posts on lower pay as an alternative to discharge.

Europeans	..	..	..	..	8
Anglo-Indians	..	..	..	..	19
Hindus	..	..	..	..	501
Muslims	..	..	..	..	538
Sikhs	..	..	..	..	84
Indian Christians	..	..	..	..	9
Other classes	..	..	..	..	8

1,157

Statement showing staff discharged on account of retrenchment on the North Western Railway up to the 9th July 1931.

Particulars.	Euro-peans.	Anglo-Indians.	Hindus.	Muslims.	Others.	Total.
Distribution on 1st March 1931.	721	1,074	42,522	69,316	9,789	123,422
Retrenchment from 1st March to 9th July 1931.	2	22	2,894	5,706	629	9,253
Distribution on 10th July 1931.	719	1,052	39,628	93,610	9,160	114,169
Percentage on 1st March 1931.	·58	·87	34·46	56·16	7·93	
Percentage on 10th July 1931.	·63	·92	34·71	55·71	8·03	

SUPERVISION OF FEMALE LABOUR IN FACTORIES.

143. **Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer :** (a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Labour in India, viz., " that where women are engaged in substantial numbers, there should invariably be employed at least one educated woman in charge of their welfare and supervision throughout the factory " ?

(b) In how many factories does such female supervision exist at present ?

(c) In how many factories is such supervision non-existent ?

(d) Do Government propose to give effect to the said recommendation of the said Royal Commission ? If so, when and how ?

Mr. J. A. Shillidy : With your permission, Sir, I propose to answer questions Nos. 143—149 together as they refer to recommendations made by the Royal Commission on Labour. The Report of the Commission, which was published on the 2nd July 1931, is receiving the careful consideration of Government, but in this short space of time it has not been possible to arrive at a decision on any of the recommendations of the Commission. The Government of India are about to write to Local Governments with regard to the examination of the Report.

2. The statistical information desired by the Honourable Member in parts (b) and (c) of his question No. 143 is not available, and with reference to part (b) of his question No. 149, the reason for not convening any conference of Chief Inspectors of Factories since 1924 is that there has been no manifest demand for such a conference.

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR IN REGARD
TO UNEMPLOYMENT.**

†144. *Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer : (a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Labour in India, viz., that " Government should examine the possibilities of making preparations to deal with unemployment when it arises and of taking action where it is now required " on the lines of the system devised to deal with famine in rural areas ?

(b) What steps have the Government taken in the said direction after the publication of the said Commission's Report ?

(c) What steps do the Government propose to take and when ?

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR REGARDING
HOURS OF WORK IN FACTORIES.**

†145. *Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer : (a) Are Government aware that the Royal Commission on Labour in India have recommended that the weekly limit of hours for perennial factories should be reduced to 54 and the daily limit to 10 ?

(b) If the reply to part (a), be in the affirmative, will Government be pleased to state whether they propose to give effect to the recommendations of the said Royal Commission ? If so, when ? If not, why not ?

PROTECTION FOR ADOLESCENT LABOUR IN FACTORIES.

†146. *Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer : (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether they intend to give effect to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Labour in India, viz., (i) that persons between the ages of 15 and 16 years should not be employed as adults in factories unless they are in possession of medical certificates of physical fitness for adult employment ; (ii) that such persons should not be employed during the night hours ; and (iii) that such persons should in no case be exempted from the provision relating to spread over ?

(b) If the answer to part (a) be in the affirmative, will Government be pleased to state whether, and if so, when they propose to introduce a Bill to give legal protection to the adolescents ?

APPOINTMENT OF WOMEN FACTORY INSPECTORS.

†147. *Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer : Will Government be pleased to state if they propose to introduce women factory inspectors of Indian domicile, not less than 25 years of age, in every province ? If so, when ; if not, why not ?

FACTORY INSPECTION.

†148. *Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer : Will Government be pleased to state if they propose to separate boiler inspection from factory inspection and Ajmer-Merwara and Delhi from the Punjab for inspection purposes ? If so, when ? If not, why not ?

†For answer to this question, see answer to starred question No. 143.

ANNUAL CONFERENCES OF CHIEF INSPECTORS OF FACTORIES.

†149. *Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer : (a) Do Government propose to hold annual conferences of Chief Inspectors of Factories either in Simla or Delhi ? If so, when ? If not, why not ?

(b) Why was no conference convened since 1924 ?

ILLNESS AND TREATMENT OF MR. IHSAN ILAHI, A DETENUE UNDER REGULATION III OF 1818.

150. *Mr. Jagan Nath Aggarwal : (a) Are Government aware that Mr. Ihsan Ilahi, a State detenué under Regulation III, 1818, who is at, present confined in Lahore Central Jail, contracted complicated diseases since his confinement in jail ? If so, will Government be pleased to state what steps have been taken for his proper treatment ?

(b) Is it a fact that Hakim Noor Ilahi, the brother of the detenué, who himself is a qualified medical practitioner, applied twice to the authorities that Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava, M.B., B.S., and Dr. Satya Pal, M.B., B.S., two well-known doctors of Lahore might be permitted to visit Mr. Ihsan Ilahi with a view to examine him medically, but that the request was refused on both the occasions ? If so, why ?

(c) Are Government prepared to issue instructions to the effect that the detenué may have access to and consultation with his medical advisers and use the medicines prescribed by them ?

(d) Are Government aware that Hakim Mohammad Hussan Kureshi, Principal, Tibbia College, Lahore, examined Mr. Ihsan Ilahi in June and gave it as his opinion that Ihsan Ilahi was ill as the result of the confinement, that he should not be segregated and that he required particular attention ?

(e) Are Government aware that Mr. Ihsan Ilahi, is practically kept in solitary confinement and is not allowed to remain in the company of other people ?

(f) Will Government please lay on the table the result of the inquiry of the Sessions Judges appointed to inquire into the case against the detenué ? If not, will Government please give reasons for the same ?

* (g) Are Government aware that Mr. Ihsan Ilahi was not given an opportunity of appearing before the Sessions Judge and explaining his position and defending himself ? If so, why ?

(h) Will Government be pleased to state why the legal adviser of Mr. Ihsan Ilahi, was not allowed to have an interview out of the hearing of the C. I. D. officials after Government had announced their intention of appointing two Sessions Judges for inquiring into the cases of the detenués ?

(i) Is it a fact that the applications for interview submitted by the relatives or friends of Mr. Ihsan Ilahi are not attended to for a long time ?

(j) Are Government aware that the correspondence of Mr. Ihsan Ilahi is inordinately delayed ? Are Government prepared to issue instructions that this delay should not take place ?

†For answer to this question, see answer to starred question No. 143.

The Honourable Sir James Crerar : (a) The answer to the first part is in the negative. The second part does not arise.

(b), (c) and (d). My information is that in June last a brother of the prisoner was allowed to take Hakim Mohamed Hussain Qureshi to see and examine Mr. Ihsan Ilahi. The Hakim made no report or recommendation to the Medical Officer of the Jail or to any other official, and subsequent requests by two other doctors to be allowed to see the prisoner were refused. If the prisoner submits a representation, it will be considered.

(e) The prisoner is not kept in solitary confinement, but has complained of lack of companionship. This complaint is under consideration.

(f) The report is a confidential document and I regret that I am unable to lay it on the table.

(g) Written charges were framed against the State Prisoner and his replies were recorded in writing in accordance with the procedure mentioned in parts (c) and (d) of my reply to the Honourable Member's question No. 783 on the 2nd March last. The Regulation under which the State Prisoner is confined makes no provision for any appearance before or examination by the Sessions Judge.

(h) Under the rules a police officer has to be present at all interviews.

(i) Applications for interviews submitted by relatives are attended to with as little delay as possible. The Superintendent of the jail has instructions to forward all such applications expeditiously for orders.

(j) After careful enquiry the Government of India are satisfied that Mr. Ihsan Elahi's correspondence has been delivered without avoidable delay. Instructions already exist that such correspondence should receive immediate attention.

Mr. Jagan Nath Aggarwal : Do I understand the Honourable Member to say that if the Regulation does not provide for a person to be represented before the Sessions Judge inquiring into his case he has no right to appear there ?

The Honourable Sir James Crerar : No ; he has no right under the Regulation.

Mr. Jagan Nath Aggarwal : Is it not a part of natural justice to allow a man to defend himself before the judges who are inquiring into his case ?

The Honourable Sir James Crerar : As I have already explained, when cases are laid before Judges a State prisoner has the fullest opportunity of submitting his replies to the charges in writing.

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad : Is this a just rule in 1931 ?

Mr. Jagan Nath Aggarwal : Since when have the Government of India come to subscribe to such a rule that a man shall not be present before the person inquiring into his case but that he can only submit representations ?

The Honourable Sir James Crerar : I cannot add to the reply I have already given on that point, I am afraid.

Mr. Lalchand Navairai : Is there any such rule in England or any other civilised country ?

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad : How long was he kept in solitary confinement ?

The Honourable Sir James Crerar : He has not been kept in solitary confinement.

TRAINING SCHOOL FOR RAILWAY ACCOUNTS IN CALCUTTA.

151. ***Mr. Jagan Nath Aggarwal :** Will Government be pleased to state :

- (a) if it is a fact that on the eve of the separation of Audit and Accounts in the Railway Department a Training School for Railway Accounts was started in Calcutta and it cost the Railway Department a large sum of money, almost a lakh of rupees, to run it for a period of ten months ;
- (b) if it is a fact that students for that School were recruited from the different Railway Audit and Accounts Offices as well as from outside ;
- (c) what was the criterion of recruitment from outside, whether it was open competition or influence ; and
- (d) what was the number of such outside students and how many of them passed the school examination ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : (a) Yes, the cost was Rs. 86,000.

(b) Yes.

(c) Neither candidates were selected on the basis of qualifications.

(d) Eight men were recruited from outside and four passed the examination.

PROMOTION OF RAILWAY ACCOUNTANTS

152. ***Mr. Jagan Nath Aggarwal :** Will Government be pleased to state :

- (a) if it is a fact that all the students of the Training School for Railway Accounts, Calcutta, were given to understand that on their passing the school examination they would be eligible for promotion to the rank of accountants, grade II ;
- (b) if it is a fact that all the successful students recruited from outside were promoted as accountants on the Eastern Bengal Railway immediately on their passing the school examination and all of them are working as such up to the present day ;
- (c) what were the reasons for posting all the successful outsiders on the Eastern Bengal Railway only ; whether it was to keep them secure from reversions ;
- (d) if similar steps are taken by the accounts administration to secure the interests of departmental men in the matter of being promoted as accountants or if it is a fact that in cases out of number they had actually to wait for such promotion ;
- (e) if it is a fact that successful students, other than outsiders, even if they had long service and experience to their credit,

have not so far been promoted or if promoted in some cases, had actually worked as accountants for a short time only ;

- (f) if it is a fact that out of the 56 students of the school only 19 passed in the first attempt after obtaining 66 per cent. marks and only 4 passed in the second attempt ; and
- (g) if it is to be understood that the success of only 23 out of the 56 students of the school is due to a stiff standard of examination which required a high standard of efficiency ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : (a) The Honourable Member is referred to my answer to starred question No. 448 asked by K. B. Sarfaraz Hussain Khan on the 6th March 1930.

(b) Yes.

(c) Because there were vacancies on the Eastern Bengal Railway. The suggestion in the concluding portion of the Honourable Member's question is incorrect.

(d) Vacancies are filled up primarily with reference to administrative exigencies and not with reference to the interest of particular persons.

(e) Yes. Because accountants on probation and men who had passed higher qualifying examinations had to be provided first.

(f) Yes.

(g) No doubt if the standard of the examination had been lower, more candidates would have passed and the standard of efficiency required would not have been attained.

PROMOTION OF RAILWAY ACCOUNTANTS.

153. ***Mr. Jagan Nath Aggarwal :** Will Government be pleased to state :

- (a) if it is a fact that only recently the Controller of Railway Accounts has instructed the various Railway Accounts Offices that men who have passed the Training School for Railway Accounts examination should not be considered at par with those who pass the Appendix " D " or part II examination for the purpose of promotion to accountants, grade II, i.e., men who have passed the Appendix " D " or part II examination should be promoted as accountants grade II in preference to those who passed the school examination ;
- (b) if it was the intention originally when starting the school that the qualification of passing the school examination would be inferior to that of passing the Appendix " D " or part II examination for the purpose of promotion to accountant, grade II ;
- (c) if answers to the parts (a) and (b) above are in the negative, whether Government are prepared to issue clear instructions to the Railway Accounts Offices that, other things being equal, the successful students of the Training School should be promoted to the rank of accountants, grade II, according to their legitimate position in the seniority list along with the other qualified men ; and

- (d) if the answers to parts (a) and (b) above, are in the affirmative, whether Government will be pleased to explain the reasons for spending a large sum of tax-payers' money (almost a lakh) in running the school, when its successful students were not to be ranked equal with other qualified men for the purpose of promotion to accountant, grade II at least ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : (a) No. The orders are that of two qualified men with the same substantive pay and length of service the person who has passed the Appendix D or Part II examination should be considered senior to the other who has only passed the Appendix E. Examination.

(b), (c) and (d). The school was started because of the insufficiency of qualified men for filling accountant's posts in the separated accounts offices. To be on the safe side a larger number of men had to be trained than there were vacancies. The standard of the examination was tentative. The examination ultimately prescribed as a permanent measure is the examination prescribed in Appendix D. and in Part II of the Subordinate Accounts Service Examination, both of which required very close knowledge of departmental details, and are much stiffer than the original tentative examination. Orders have been issued making efficiency the primary criterion for promotion.

PROMOTION OF RAILWAY ACCOUNTANTS.

154. ***Mr. Jagan Nath Aggarwal :** (a) Will Government be pleased to state the number of unqualified men working as accountants, grade II in each Railway Accounts Office, together with the dates of their appointment as such in each case ?

(b) Were their appointments as accountants, grade II, made on the condition that they must pass the qualifying examination within a specific time, or their services would be dispensed with ?

(c) How many of them have passed the Accountants' examination since their appointment ?

(d) Has any action been taken against those unqualified accountants who have not fulfilled the above condition ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : (a) and (b). Presumably the Honourable Member is referring to accountants appointed on probation whose retention in service and confirmation as accountants is subject to their passing the qualifying examination. If so, there are three such men one of whom was appointed in August 1928 and the other two in 1929.

(c) None.

(d) The time limit within which they were required to pass the examination has not yet expired.

PROMOTION OF RAILWAY ACCOUNTANTS.

155. ***Mr. Jagan Nath Aggarwal :** (a) Is it a fact that before the separation of Audit and Accounts in the Railway Department outsiders were not appointed as accountants, grade II, and never were they confirmed as such, unless they passed the qualifying examination ?

(b) Will Government please state whether after the separation a departure was made from the old practice in appointing unqualified men as accountants in the first instance? If so, why?

(c) Are Government aware that the appointment of such unqualified men as accountants is a cause of heart-burning to those who have qualified themselves for the post of accountants and who have not so far been provided, because, a large number of accountants' posts are held by unqualified men?

(d) Is it a fact that these unqualified men are given chances after chances to pass the examination in spite of their failure to do so within two years?

(e) Were these unqualified accountants recruited through an open competition as hitherto had been the practice, viz., to recruit probationary accountants before the separation, or otherwise?

(f) Is it a fact that out of the 16 permanent posts of accountants, grade II, on the North Western Railway at least seven are being held by such unqualified persons?

(g) Is it a fact that under the stress of the economy campaign or under any other circumstances these unqualified accountants are not reverted from the position of accountants in preference to the other qualified men? If so, are Government prepared to issue necessary instructions so that the interest of the qualified men are safeguarded in preference to those of unqualified men, whenever chances of reversion arise?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : (a) Outsiders were appointed as probationary accountants, but they were not confirmed until they had passed the departmental examination.

(b) It is not clear what departure the Honourable Member is referring to. With the separation of audit from accounts the Auditor General withdrew a number of men, filling posts of Accountants prior to separation, for employment in the new audit offices created after the separation. Their places were taken by :

(1) Temporary accountants recruited on the East Indian Railway during the experimental period of the separation scheme, whose work had been found satisfactory.

(2) Accountants appointed on probation in the experimental accounts offices under the Financial Commissioner's control.

(3) Passed students of the Training School at Calcutta, and

(4) Clerks who qualified by passing the prescribed examination.

(c) Government do not look upon the men appointed otherwise than on the result of examination as unqualified.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) No. There was no competitive examination during the experimental period of the separation scheme.

(f) No.

(g) As passing an examination has not been the sole qualification for appointment as accountant in the Railway Accounts Department the question of issuing the instructions suggested by the Honourable Member does not arise.

SALARIES OF EUROPEAN AND INDIAN RESEARCH WORKERS.

156. *Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh : (a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the following statement made by the President of the 7th All-India Medical Conference, held at Poona, in April, 1931, in his Presidential address :

“ Though it is boasted that the Indian Research Fund Association employs as many as 62 Indians on the Research side as against 12 Europeans, on working out the details in the way of salaries, allowances over-sea pay, leave and pension contributions, &c., I find that the 12 European Officers cost the Indian Research Fund Association something over Rs. 25,000 a month, while the 62 Indians cost likewise just under that amount. The European Research worker is thus paid on an average five times more than an Indian Officer under the same research organisation.”

(b) Will Government be pleased to submit a statement showing the work done by the Indian and European research workers, respectively, paid out of the funds of the Indian Research Fund Association, during the course of the last three years, which would justify such marked disparities in their emoluments ?

(c) Do Government propose to instruct the Governing Body of the Indian Research Fund Association, (i) so to regulate its grants that as little money is spent on large salaries as possible ; and (ii) that research is encouraged at Medical Colleges and Universities throughout the country, by granting as many Research Fellowships as possible with a view to encouraging young medical graduates in undertaking investigations, as recommended by the Conference of the representatives of the Government, the Central Legislature, the Medical Faculties, the Indian Medical Association and non-medical scientists, held in Simla on the 21st and 22nd July, 1930 ?

(d) Will Government be pleased to state their conclusions on the several resolutions, and particularly the one relating to the widening of constitution of the Governing Body, Indian Research Fund Association with a view to ensuring a larger representation of non-official medical and scientific bodies on the same, passed by the Conference held in Simla on the 21st July referred to in part (c) above ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : (a) Yes, the House would perhaps like to be told that the number of Europeans and Indians working under the Indian Research Fund Association at present is 9 and 77, respectively, and the total monthly salaries drawn by Europeans and Indians, respectively, are Rs. 16,540 and Rs. 29,500.

(b) Enquiries conducted under the auspices of the Indian Research Fund Association are not as a rule done by European and Indian workers separately, but together ; it is not therefore possible to prepare such a statement.

(c) (i). It is not necessary to do so. It is a well understood principle of sound administration that best return for investment should be secured.

(ii) The question of creating Medical Research Fellowships is under consideration.

(d) Government have not yet reached final decisions on all the recommendations of the Conference and hope to publish an announcement shortly.

RECRUITMENT FOR THE MEDICAL RESEARCH DEPARTMENT.

157. *Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh : (a) Are Government aware that on the 8th February, 1930, Mr. M. R. Jayakar moved a Resolution in this

House, recommending the appointment of a committee, to inquire into and report on (i) the most suitable University centre for the establishment of the Central Medical Research Institute; (ii) the constitution of the Governing Body of the Indian Research Fund Association; and (iii) recruitment of the Medical Research Department; and that in reply to that debate, Sir Frank Noyce, while agreeing to convene a Conference to discuss the above points, said as follows:

“ To that Conference Government are also willing to refer for consideration the two other questions which have been raised in the resolution, *viz.*, the constitution of the Governing Body of the Indian Research Fund Association, and the question of recruitment of the Medical Research Department ” ?

(b) Are Government aware that in spite of the above assurance, Sir Frank Noyce, as Chairman of the Conference, which was convened on the 21st and 22nd July, 1930, in pursuance of the above undertaking, ruled out of order the question of the recruitment of the Medical Research Department on the plea that the Secretary of State had already passed orders for the reservation of posts in the Medical Research Department for I. M. S. officers ?

(c) When did the Secretary of State pass the orders referred to above; and why was the solemn undertaking given on behalf of the Government on the floor of this House, not allowed to be carried out, and the Conference was shut out from discussing this particular question ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : (a) Yes.

(b) The only question which was ruled out of order was that of the reservation of certain posts in the Medical Research Department for members of the Indian Medical Services.

(c) The orders of the Secretary of State regarding the reservation of certain posts in the Medical Research Department for members of the Indian Medical Service were issued in May, 1928. No undertaking was given that they would be open to discussion, and when the point was raised at the conference it was held that it was beyond the terms of reference to it.

FREQUENT CHANGE OF DIRECTORS OF THE HAFFKINE INSTITUTE, BOMBAY.

158. ***Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh :** Will Government be pleased to state :

- (a) if the Director of the Haffkine Institute, Bombay, is appointed by or on the recommendation of the Department of Education, Health and Lands ;
- (b) if it is true that eight different I. M. S. Officers acted as Directors of that Institute during the course of nine years, from January 1921 to December 1929, there being 11 changes of Directorships during this period, and on eight out of these 11 occasions the Directorship was held by different officers for periods of not more than 10 months' duration at a time ; and
- (c) if so, will Government be pleased to explain why such frequent changes were permitted, and if such changes are conducive to efficiency ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : (a) Appointments to the post of Director, Haffkine Institute, Bombay, are made by the Governor General in Council.

(b) Yes, except that the post was held on four occasions by the same officer for 10 months or more.

(c) The frequent changes have been due to leave or to the selection of incumbents of the post for other important duties. Such changes are peculiarly liable to happen in the case of a department with as small personnel as the Medical Research Department. These particular changes could not be avoided ; every effort, however, will be made to reduce them in the future.

RAILWAY INDIANISATION.

159. *Mr. Lalchand Navalrai : (a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to an editorial under the heading, " A retrograde move in the Railway Indianisation " published in the *Sind Observer* of the 15th July, 1931 ?

(b) Is it a fact, as stated therein, that the policy of 50 per cent. Indianisation was changed to 85 per cent. of European guards, 10 per cent. of station masters and 5 per cent. by direct recruitment in the control system ?

(c) Is it a fact, as stated therein, that 4 of the station master's cadre have been reverted from the Control Department ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : (a) Yes.

(b) No such policy, as that referred to by the Honourable Member, has been laid down for the subordinate establishment. The policy generally followed is to recruit subordinate staff in all classes and grades in India with the exception of a few specialists who are not available in the country.

(c) If the Honourable Member refers to men permanently promoted to posts in the Control Branch, the reply is in the negative.

APPOINTMENT OF GUARDS TO THE CONTROL SYSTEM ON THE NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.

160. *Mr. Lalchand Navalrai : (a) Will Government be pleased to state if the guards hitherto transferred to the control system on the North Western Railway had ever worked as station masters or assistant station masters ?

(b) If so, which of them ? If not, how do Government justify taking up such guards on the control system ? Is that work supposed to be the duty of station masters ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : (a) All guards and other staff transferred to the control system on the North Western Railway have to be qualified in Assistant Station Masters' duties. Many of the guards who have become Controllers have worked as Assistant Station Masters before their transfer to control work.

(b) The information for which the Honourable Member asks is not obtainable ; but I may mention that he is mistaken in thinking that control work is the duty of Station Masters. Guards, as well as Station Masters, have been utilised for this work ever since the system was introduced.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai : Will the Honourable Member be pleased to say if the guards ever worked as Station Masters before this control system was instituted ?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons : I should like to have notice of that question.

**SAVINGS BANK, CASH CERTIFICATE AND GOVERNMENT SECURITY WORK
IN POST OFFICES.**

161. ***Mr. S. C. Mitra :** (a) Will Government be pleased to state the number of (i) clerks, (ii) supervisors, (iii) inferior staff employed in (1) Post Offices and (2) Audit Offices for performance of Savings Bank, Cash Certificate, and Government Security work in the Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department for the year ending 31st March, 1931 ?

(b) Will Government be pleased further to state the amount expended on each head for the following purposes :

(i) Pay, (ii) leave provision, (iii) pensionary charges, (iv) travelling, (v) stationery, printing and contingency ?

(c) What amount has been paid to the Post Office for the performance of (i) Savings Bank, (ii) Cash Certificate, and (iii) Government Security business ?

Sir Hubert Sams : (a) and (b). It is not possible to furnish figures on these points, as work in connection with the Savings Bank, Cash Certificates and Government Securities is done for the most part along with other Postal work.

(c) The credits received in the Budget for 1931-32 are for (i) and (iii) Rs. 42 lakhs, and (ii) Rs. 3,38,000, approximately.

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE OF THE POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT
FROM AIR MAIL.**

162. ***Mr. S. C. Mitra :** Will Government please supply the following information :

(1) total income of the Postal and Telegraphs Department on account of air mails in the year 1930-31 ;

(2) total amount expended for (i) printing circulars and other posters, (ii) employment of staff, (iii) conveyance, and (iv) subsidy to the Imperial Airways flying between Karachi and London during the year 1930-31 and to the Indian State Air Service in the same year ?

Sir Hubert Sams : (1) Statistics are not kept of the actual amount of postage realised on air mail articles, but from the weight of mails carried, it is estimated that the income of the Posts and Telegraphs Department from air mails in the year 1930-31 was about Rs. 5,26,000.

(2) During 1930-31 the total amounts expended on the items named below were :

	..	..	Rs.
(i) Printing Circulars, &c.	..	..	6,000
(ii) Employment of staff	..	..	7,000
(iii) Conveyance and delivery	..	..	9,349

Rs.

(iv) Transit charges paid :

- | | |
|--|----------|
| (a) For the Karachi-London Air Service to the British Post Office by which the service is controlled (and not to the Imperial Airways) | 3,24,963 |
| (b) To the Indian State Air Service during the same year | 27,962 |

In addition to the above items of expenditure a sum of Rs. 6,000 was incurred on account of the manufacture of air mail stamps and stationery and a sum of Rs. 10,000 on account of telegrams issued in connection with the air mail services.

DUTIES OF TELEPHONE SUPERVISORS.

163. *Mr. S. C. Mitra : (a) Will Government be pleased to state what is the duty of telephone supervisors ?

(b) Is it a fact that in June 1930 some telephone lines in Benares went out of order ?

(c) Is it a fact that an Engineering Supervisor from Allahabad was deputed to repair the lines, although there was a telephone supervisor in Benares ?

(d) Will Government please state why such extra expenditure is incurred ?

Sir Hubert Sams : (a) Telephone Supervisors' duties are :

- (i) Maintenance of telephone exchange apparatus and plant.
- (ii) Fitting, re-fitting and maintenance of the wiring in subscribers' offices.
- (iii) Maintenance of subscribers' instruments.
- (iv) Attention to complaints from subscribers.

(b) No, but there was a failure of telephone cables at Benares in July, 1930.

(c) Yes.

(d) Because the repair of telephone cables is work in which telephone supervisors are not trained or experienced.

DUTIES OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF TELEGRAPH TRAFFIC.

164. *Mr. S. C. Mitra : (a) Will Government be pleased to state the duties of the Superintendents of Telegraph Traffic ?

(b) Is it a fact that they are not required to inspect the combined offices and departmental telegraph offices ?

(c) Is it a fact that they deal with tour and complaint cases of the telegraph side only ?

(d) Is it a fact that now the inspection work of the telegraph branch of the combined offices has been taken away from their hands and this duty is being done by the Postal Superintendents and Inspectors who are given training for the purpose ?

(e) Will Government please therefore state why the Superintendents of Telegraph Traffic have been retained for such small work expending a lot of money ?

(f) Do Government propose to consider the question of abolishing these superfluous posts in these days of economy ?

Mr. J. A. Shillidy : (a) The question of the exact duties to be performed by the Superintendents, Telegraph Traffic, is left to the Postmaster General to decide, but it is intended that such officers should ordinarily divide their time between inspection and office duties. These officers also deal with work connected with the telegraph branch of combined offices, telephone revenue accounting, etc.

(b) No, but owing to the financial stringency the detailed inspection of combined and departmental offices by these officers has been temporarily suspended.

(c) No.

(d) As an experimental measure and with a view to economy the inspection work has been entrusted to Superintendents of Post Offices.

(e) and (f). Pending the examination which is being made by the Retrenchment Advisory Committee in respect of the Posts and Telegraphs Department as a whole it is regretted that no statement can be made.

COMBINED POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS OFFICES, THEIR STAFF, COST AND INCOME.

165. ***Mr. S. C. Mitra :** Will Government be pleased to state :

- (a) the number of combined offices in the Posts and Telegraphs Department in 1930-31 ;
- (b) the number of signallers employed in those offices in the same year ;
- (c) the number of supervisors and inferior staff employed in those offices ;
- (d) the amount expended for (i) pay, (ii) leave provision, (iii) pensionary charges, (iv) travelling, (v) stationery, printing and contingency ;
- (e) the amount credited as share of cost of combined office revenue and the basis of calculation ;
- (f) the basis on which this amount is credited ; and
- (g) the total income of the combined offices in the year 1930-31 ?

Sir Hubert Sams : (a) 4,296.

(b) 970 wholly on signalling duties and 3,925 partly on signalling and partly on postal duties.

(c) and (d). Government do not possess the information and do not consider the trouble involved in collecting it would be commensurate with any advantage to be gained by doing so.

(e) and (f). Rs. 32,07,922, credited by a *per contra* debit to Telegraphs and calculated as laid down in Article 302, Posts and Telegraphs Account Code. A copy of the Article is being sent to the Honourable Member.

(g) The information is not available.

DEPARTMENTAL TELEGRAPH OFFICES, THEIR INCOME, WORK AND STAFF.

166. *Mr. S. C. Mitra : Will Government be pleased to state :

- (a) the number of departmental telegraph offices in the years 1922-23 and 1930-31 ;
- (b) the total income of these offices in 1922-23 and 1930-31 ;
- (c) the number of telegrams handled during the years 1922-23 and 1930-31 ;
- (d) the total number of (i) Superintendents, (ii) Deputy Superintendents, (iii) Telegraph Masters, (iv) telegraphists (General, Local and Station Service) including leave reserve and (v) clerks and supervisors, (vi) inferior staff in the years 1922-23 and 1930-31 ;
- (e) whether it is a fact that the Indian Retrenchment Committee in 1922-23 remarked that altogether 626 telegraphists were in excess in proportion to the work ;
- (f) the number of telegraphists who have since been curtailed ;
- (g) the number of telegraphists recruited since 1922-23 upto the year 1930-31 ; and
- (h) the reasons why the telegraphists were recruited when their number was excessive ?

Sir Hubert Sams : (a) 179 and 82.

(b) It is regretted that the information is not available and could not easily be collected.

(c) 19,250,961 in 1922-23 in both departmental and combined offices. Figures for 1930-31 are not at present available, but will be supplied to the Honourable Member as soon as possible.

(d) If the Honourable Member will kindly specify the particular class of Supervisors referred to in part (d) (v), available information about them will be furnished. Information on the other points is being collected and will be supplied to the Honourable Member separately.

(e) Yes.

(f) 636.

(g) and (h). Information is being collected and will be supplied to the Honourable Member separately.

CONVERSION OF DEPARTMENTAL TELEGRAPH OFFICES INTO COMBINED OFFICES.

167. *Mr. S. C. Mitra : (a) Is it a fact that the Ryan Committee of the year 1924-25 recommended rapid conversion of departmental telegraph

offices into combined offices, with the exception of a few special important offices ?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state since then how many departmental telegraph offices have been converted into combined offices ?

(c) What was the number of (i) Telegraph Masters, (ii) telegraphists, (iii) Clerks and (iv) inferior staff employed in those offices ?

(d) Will Government please state why the conversion of departmental telegraph offices into combined offices has not been as rapid as it has been recommended by the Ryan Committee ?

(e) Is it a fact that only one departmental telegraph office in the Punjab and not a single office in Bombay Circle has been converted into a combined office ? If so, why ?

(f) Will Government please refer to my starred question No. 171 answered in the Legislative Assembly on the 29th January, 1931, and state what was the total annual expenditure on account of pay, house-rent, etc., of the staff of the Madura, Trichinopoly and Vizagapatam Departmental Telegraph Offices ?

(g) Why are these offices being maintained when they are losing concerns ?

(h) Is it a fact that the Postmasters-General, Bengal and Assam proposed to convert some departmental telegraph offices into combined offices but the Director-General did not accord his sanction ? Is it also a fact that many obstructions are put in the way of converting the departmental telegraph offices into combined offices ?

Mr. J. A. Shillidy : (a) Yes, the Ryan Committee of 1924-25 recommended that the conversion of departmental telegraph offices into combined offices should be vigorously pressed. It was contemplated that about 75 such offices could be converted.

(b) Of these, 60 offices have since been converted into combined offices or closed as a result of the Ryan Committee's recommendations, and in 5 more the departmental telegraphists have been replaced by postal signallers. The cases of the conversion of 16 more offices are now under examination.

(c) (i) Telegraph Masters	.. .. .	4
(ii) Telegraphists	.. .. .	210
(iii) Clerks	.. .. .	41
(iv) Inferior staff	.. .. .	553

In addition to the above, nine other telegraphists were formerly employed in the 5 offices which are now being manned by postal signallers.

(d) Government consider that the pace of conversion has been as rapid as was practically feasible.

(e) No. The second part of the question does not arise.

(f) Total annual expenditure is :

	Rs.	s. p.
Madura	91,448	4 0
Trichinopoly	52,507	8 4
Vizagapatam	67,560	12 0

(g) These offices are what are known as " area " centres ; their function is to collect and distribute the traffic of a large number of minor offices and their cost cannot therefore be compared with the actual amount taken for telegrams emanating from them. The volume of traffic handled is very heavy for which high-speed apparatus is requisite and it is not possible for them to be converted into combined offices. Moreover, Madura and Vizagapatam are in addition important relaying stations between Madras and Colombo and Calcutta and Madras, respectively, necessitating the employment of a highly technical supervisory staff.

(h) No. The reply to the second part of the question is also in the negative.

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RESOLUTION RE CIVIL COURT DECREES AND PROCEEDINGS AGAINST AGRICULTURISTS.

Mr. President : As Sir Abdulla Suhrawardy is not present, I call upon Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon to move the first Resolution.

Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon (Sind : Muhammadan Rural) : Sir, I beg to move the Resolution which is in the name of Sir Abdulla Suhrawardy, and that runs as follows :

" In view of the general economic depression this Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to introduce, without delay, legislation prohibiting execution of Civil Court decrees against agricultural landholders and farmers for the next two years, and prohibiting institution of any new Civil Court proceedings against them for past debts for the next two years."

Sir, the present condition of the agriculturists and the zemindars is well known to all the Honourable Members of this House and therefore I do not think it is necessary for me to go in detail into their difficulties, but I propose to place a few points before the House and the Government so that they may consider the situation seriously ; otherwise what will happen everybody can understand.

12 Noon.

As ill-luck would have it, the condition of the agriculturist is far from satisfactory even in normal years. He is there because there is nowhere else to go. He is ill-housed, under-fed and badly clothed. Dr. Harold Mann, the well known Director of Agriculture of Bombay, when retiring, gave an interview to the Press and referred to the economic condition of the cultivator in the following words :

" Until the Government and the social reformers recognised that the secret of the whole prosperity of the agricultural population was filling of their stomachs—the empty stomach was the greatest obstacle to progress in India."

The agriculturist lives in a lifelong perpetual poverty and his lot is not far removed from utter destitution. The existence of crushing debt is universally acknowledged to be the main cause of this state of affairs.

[Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon.]

Professors J. B. Jather and S. G. Beri in their book on Indian Economics, Volume 1, page 309, quote Mr. Wolff who says :

“ The country is in the grip of the *Mahajan*. It is the bonds of debt that shackle agriculture.”

It is a well known fact and needs no emphasis that the average agriculturist is born in debt, lives in debt and dies in debt. What gives cause for alarm is that the debt is unproductive and tends to increase automatically. The reports of the different Provincial Banking Inquiry Committees have been published and their conclusion is :

“ There is a general consensus of opinion that the volume of agricultural indebtedness has been increasing in the course of the last century.”

Further, the Punjab Provincial Banking Inquiry Committee Report says to the effect that the agricultural debt in the Punjab has increased from Rs. 90 crores in 1921 to Rs. 135 crores in 1929. The Royal Commission on Agriculture says :

“ It is more than probable that rural debt has increased in the present century.”

Sir, the condition of the agriculturist is this. Whatever surplus the agriculturist has got after paying the revenue and expenses on cultivation, including his livelihood—in his livelihood we include bare necessities of life, not to say of better living, no allowance is made for medical relief, decent clothing, insurance against sickness, and temporary as well as permanent disability ; it is assumed that he wears a *langota* and remains half naked and is pleased with half a meal per day—is absorbed by interest charges. If by chance he falls sick, if by chance he is blessed with an issue and organises a simple thanksgiving ceremony, if by chance he buys a few fancy things for his dear little ones at home, if he marries, if he wishes to change the course of water running down his fields, he incurs debt. As agriculture barely yields him his subsistence, the debt increases by leaps and bounds.

Stability as a result of British rule has added to the misery of agriculturists and tended to increase the debt. In pre-British days, dynasties succeeded dynasties very rapidly, with the result that with the change of dynasty the agriculturists became free of the debt and made a new start in life. They obtained a chance to start with a clean slate and improve their condition.

The existence of the debt and the inability of the agriculturists to pay it have been suicidal to the best interests of the country. Land is rapidly passing out of the hands of the agriculturists into those of non-agriculturists. In my constituency of Sind 40 per cent. of the land has passed into the hands of money-lenders. In the United Provinces, as my colleague Maulvi Sir Muhammad Yakub says, the aristocratic families are rapidly vanishing owing to heavy indebtedness, and their property is passing into the hands of upstart money-lenders. To remedy this evil state of affairs, the Government even in normal times helped the agriculturists by the grant of *takavi* loans, freedom of attachment of the goods of the agriculturists, and the power given to the Courts to go behind the contract and see that the agriculturist is not unfairly treated. The co-operative movement was launched to eliminate money-lenders by providing means to redeem the past debt as well as to finance the current expenditure of the agriculturist. But it has signally failed in this, as is shown by the Provincial Banking Inquiry Committee's remark on their draft report, to the effect that the

existing co-operative credit organisation cannot provide funds for liquidation of prior debts except to a very small and negligible extent. Mr. Manu Subedar, one of the members of the Central Banking Inquiry Committee, said that 40 to 60 per cent. of the members of the co-operative movement in the Punjab had contracted debt from outside. The Central Areas Provincial Banking Inquiry Committee's Report, paragraph 119, reads as follows :

“ Not only the indebtedness of the co-operative members continues to increase, but their dependence on outside financing agencies for the satisfaction of their economic needs shows no signs of being eliminated in the near future.”

That is the Report of the Central Areas Banking Inquiry Committee.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt (Burdwan Division : Non-Muhammadan Rural) : On a point of order, Sir, I want to draw your attention to rule 138, page 49 which reads :

“ A member in whose name a Resolution stands on the list of business shall, when called on, either—(a) withdraw the Resolution in which case he shall confine himself to a mere statement to that effect ; or (b) move the Resolution in which case he shall commence his speech by a formal motion in the terms appearing on the list of business :

Provided that the member may, with the permission of the President, authorise any other member, in whose name the same Resolution stands lower in the list of business, to move it on his behalf, and the member so authorised may move accordingly.”

Mr. President : Will the Honourable Member continue reading the rule part (2) ?

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt :

“ If the member when called on is absent, any other member authorised by him in writing in this behalf may, with the permission of the President, move the Resolution standing in his name.” (Laughter.)

It is not a question of laughing.

Mr. President : I do not know whether the Honourable Member was present when I called upon Mr. Haji Abdoola Haroon to move the Resolution. I stated that Sir Abdulla Suhrawardy being absent, Mr. Haji Abdoola Haroon should move it. This is covered by part (2) of rule 138 which the Honourable Member does not seem to have read. I have received the written authority. Otherwise, I would not have called upon Mr. Haji Abdoola Haroon to move the Resolution.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt : We were not aware of it.

Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon : The opinion in the Central Banking Inquiry Committee, when we discussed the draft Report, suggested debt conciliation on some such basis as through the agency of local *panchayats* under the direction of the Government officer where debtors and creditors meet and debts are composed on payment of cattle and grain at higher prices than the prevailing market price, and concessions are made regarding rate of interest and remission of irrevocable debt and payments by instalments. The Committee also refer in this connection to the work especially of the Sialkot debt composition committee. These measures might have succeeded in normal years but they are utterly inadequate to cope with the present economic position of the agriculturists. The prices of food grain and other agricultural produce have fallen abnormally, to the immense advantage of *sahukars*. The agricultural produce now sells for a song and is wholly taken away by the money-lenders in lieu of interest. The agriculturist is not left with enough grain to feed himself and his family. It has been

[Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon.]

estimated by the Provincial Banking Inquiry Committee that the rural debt stood at the colossal figure of 877 crores in 1929, which works out to 23 per cent. of land revenue. It is estimated that the average land revenue, as estimated by the Indian Year Book, 1930-31, is 37.4 crores. The Provincial Banking Inquiry Committee remarks that the interest charges vary from 12 to 75 per cent. The rate is highest in Sind in the Bombay Presidency, rising to 50 per cent. Here let me say that the average interest paid is at least 25 per cent. and if you calculate the total debt of the agriculturist as about 900 crores, the yearly amount of interest paid by agriculturists amounts to 225 crores, whereas the land revenue is only 37 crores. At present on all sides a hue and cry has been raised that the burden of taxation is very high. It has been proposed that land revenue be reduced by one-half. Owing to the recent fall in prices, Government have remitted land revenue varying from 25 to 40 per cent. I ask of you when the agriculturists are unable to pay even land revenue, it is impossible to expect of them, without giving rise to serious social and economic upheavals, to pay interest running to 5 to 10 times the land revenue. The time has come when we must come forward to help these poor people. We should not remain idle. Nero was fiddling while Rome was burning. Let us not fiddle while 90 per cent. of our population is passing through acute economic distress. Let us not wait for a Bill embodying this Resolution. for the Bill might cause a delay at least of six months or a year and who knows, in the meanwhile the situation caused by the agrarian discontent will be beyond remedy. Let the Viceroy peremptorily issue an ordinance as soon as you pass this Resolution, giving effect to its principles, and before the ordinance lapses let the required legislation be passed. Every one knows that the economic condition not only of India but of the whole world is very bad. The mightiest and the richest States of Europe are unable to pay interest on their borrowings, and therefore President Hoover of America has agreed to a moratorium excusing payment of debt and interest thereon for one year. The Government of India and the Provincial Governments have also benefitted by this moratorium. Would you deny the same privilege to your agriculturists who form 90 per cent. of the population, who are the backbone of the prosperity, happiness and greatness of this fair land of Hindustan, and who produce not only the food of the community in India, but a large exportable surplus by which India meets her obligations abroad ?

Nor will this Resolution be disadvantageous to money-lenders in the long run. There is no denying the fact that the agriculturists are unable to pay the interest. If money-lenders persist, riots similar to Deccan, Santhal and Sukkur will follow, with the result that the agriculturists as well as money-lenders will be ruined for good. This Resolution will give a breathing space to agriculturists and enable them to improve their economic position, with the result that after 2 years they will be in a better position to discharge their debts.

Sir, the fall in prices, as you all know, is not a temporary one. If this Resolution fails on the floor of this House, or some delay is caused to translate this Resolution into action, the future ahead for India is gloomy and gives cause for desperation. What will be the result ? The aristocratic families, who exercise a great moderating influence over the masses and who are the custodians of India's noblest traditions, will disappear. Land will pass into the hands of a microscopic minority of money-lenders.

More than 90 per cent. of the population will be landless, homeless, and without means. Recurrence of riots will be the order of the day. India will be plunged into lawlessness and no power on earth can stop this lawlessness inasmuch as it will be universal.

Sir, signs of this catastrophe are not wanting in India. Agrarian riots have taken place in U. P., Pudukotah State, etc., resulting in the deaths of many zemindars, tenants and public servants. If you want to lead India on to the path of progress, greatness and happiness, if you want that tranquillity, order and peace, which you all praise, should prevail in India, in a word if you want the India of your dreams, a happy India where its inhabitants can take full meals and have sufficient clothes and other necessities of life, this Resolution must be accepted by this House.

Sir, I have placed my case fully and fairly before the House. I am now only appealing to Honourable Members that they must consider this Resolution very seriously and give effect to it as soon as possible.

Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad (Patna and Chota Nagpur *cum* Orissa : Muhammadan) : Sir, having every sympathy with the debtors, I am very sorry to oppose this Resolution so ably moved by my friend on behalf of the new Midnapore Knight. The Resolution, in my opinion, has not been drafted in guarded language. It is proposed to give relief to agricultural landholders and farmers by prohibiting the execution of decrees against them, but any such legislation for ameliorating their condition will ruin them entirely. The Resolution has two parts. The first prohibits the execution of civil court decrees for two years, and the second prohibits the institution of any new civil court proceedings against them for the same period. It is not known to which particular kind of civil decree the recommendation refers. All kinds of civil decrees, whether for arrears of land revenue or for debts, come under this decree. A landlord will not be able to execute a decree about his arrear of rents. Being under protection of law, I do not know why the tenant will pay a single pie to the landlords, and in this way all the landlords will be ruined. The same case will happen with the Government and they will not be in a position to institute civil court proceedings against the landholder. I ask the Treasury Benches to realise the consequences which this Resolution, if accepted by the House, is bound to have. Had there been any mention of the exemption of rent decrees and rent dues, I would not have opposed it. And so I say that the Resolution has not been properly drafted. If a landlord will not get his dues, I cannot understand how he will be able to pay rent to the Government, to pay the collection charges, and to do improvements in the agricultural lands. When Government in their turn will not be able to realise the land revenue from the landholder, their condition during these deficit years can be better imagined than described.

Now comes the question of farmers. When the previous decrees will not be executed under the law, these decrees will not be barred by limitation. After two years there will be decrees again of the pending suits and also of fresh suits. The total burden as a result of these suits will be that about 99 per cent. of the tenants will not be in a position to pay such a heavy amount. The uneducated population of the tenants will not save anything and will not think of the future and the result will be that after two years they will find themselves in such a depth of water that there will be no alternative for them but to drown.

Sir, as I have pointed out at the outset of my speech, the second point prohibits the institution of fresh suits. This will also increase the burden

[Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad.]

of interest on the poor debtors. My arguments in opposing the first part will also apply here.

In my opinion the best thing will be to recommend to the Government to float a loan in India—not abroad—for the purpose of helping these poor agriculturists during these hard days and to give loans to them for their bare necessities at a cheaper rate of interest and to recover the amount by easy instalments and to prohibit by legislation that no agricultural property should be mortgaged or sold in future for any decree other than for the dues of rents.

With these few words, Sir, I strongly oppose the Resolution.

Mr. Muhammad Yamin Khan (Agra Division : Muhammadan Rural) : Sir, I rise to support the Resolution as it stands. I think the last speaker when he opposed this Resolution was mostly led by the law which prevails in his own province where a rent decree is also passed by the civil court. This is an extraordinary procedure which does not exist in other provinces. In other provinces rent decrees are passed by the revenue courts and not by civil courts. If the Honourable Member had some such difficulty, his remedy would have been to send in an amendment in order to exclude Bihar and Orissa, if the same law prevails there, so that the rent decrees may not be stopped. The chief reason why I support this Resolution, Sir, is this. At present in the case of a tenant who has not got any money to pay even to the landlord—and landlords have got no money, they cannot realise their rents even to pay their land revenue,—if the tenant is harassed by his money-lender, there is only one course for him to adopt, and that is to seek the remedy of the insolvency courts or to run away from his village. If the civil court decrees are not discharged now, the only course for the poor agriculturist or tenant is to leave his home and run away from his village and find some kind of petty labour in big towns. A tenant has to pay, as everybody is aware, Rs. 3-2-0 per cent. per month. That is the rate of interest which prevails in the villages. If a tenant can borrow at Rs. 2 per cent. with compound interest, it would seem to be the cheapest interest which he can ever get. But the usual rate of interest which one has to pay is Rs. 3-2-0 per cent. per mensem, which comes to something like 40 per cent. per annum. If an agriculturist borrows a little amount for the purpose of his seeds and for purchasing cattle or investment, then his cost of production from Rs. 100 rises to Rs. 140 in one year. Now, Sir, if there is a decree passed by the court, which never carries an interest of more than 6 per cent., he will be getting a great relief by having against him a decree instead of borrowing a fresh loan from some other person and paying off the whole loan and incurring a new debt at Rs. 3-2-0 per cent. per mensem. This matter had been threshed out a great deal and many zemindars had been invited by the district officers in my province at least. After consultation, the zemindars agreed not to execute the decrees even for the rent which they had against their tenants and at the same time they wanted that some relief be given to them by their *sahukars* as well. This matter is now being seriously considered by the United Provinces Government whether a moratorium be granted to the tenants on account of the rental decrees as well as the civil court decrees. As far as the zemindars are concerned, they are whole-heartedly supporting this, and are ready to forego the realisation of their money for two years, which they can get from executing their decrees provided the tenant is not going to cheat them or

deceive them. One thing which this Resolution seeks to do is that the already existing decree may not be executed, but if the tenant has got enough money he can pay to his *sahukar*. If he can satisfy the *sahukar* and is willing to borrow a fresh loan, which he can do only by paying something towards the past loan, they will never stop him from doing so. It is a wrong thing which has been put before the House that it will stop the tenant from getting any loan. That is not the case. The tenant will be getting the loan and paying his loan all right. If there is a decree which exists in his name, his cattle, his house and his other property may not be attached and he may not be driven to seek the remedy of the insolvency court. (A voice : "They are already exempt.") No, in the case of a civil court decree his house and his cattle are not exempt. His plough and other agricultural implements and the farm house are exempt. Sir, whether the relief is given to a tenant or not, that is the only gist of the Resolution. If relief can be given, it ought to be given. The House mostly consists of the representatives of the agricultural class, and I cannot see how they can vote against this Resolution and against the interests of the very persons whom they have come to represent in this House. Such a course on their part will drive the tenants to Bolshevism. If the tenants are finding themselves against Government to-day, there will soon be a time when the zemindars will find themselves up against the money-lenders. They must take proper precautions beforehand and must see that they should not tease them more than they can bear. With these few words, Sir, I support the Resolution.

Lala Hari Raj Swarup (United Provinces : Landholders) : Sir, so far as this Resolution is concerned, I am placed in a very awkward position. I represent the landholders of the United Provinces, and the landholders in a joint conference in Lucknow on the 26th July last passed a Resolution practically in the same words asking the Government that, "in view of the economic crisis which seriously affects the agricultural classes, this Conference is of opinion that immediate steps should be taken by the Government to postpone the execution of civil court decrees against the members of the agricultural classes and declare moratorium for at least one year". My difficulty is this, that so far as my constituency is concerned, they want the Government to legislate to prevent the execution of civil court decrees, but as a student of economics and as a man of business and one who knows something of commercial morality, I feel that by such legislation we shall be defeating the very purpose which we are out to safeguard. The chief difficulty, if such legislation is undertaken, will be that the burden on the cultivators will go on accumulating. The Resolution says that fresh institution should be suspended for two years and no existing decrees should be executed. It means that the interest on the existing decrees will go on accruing at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum and on the existing debts at the contractual rates. It is just possible that in these times of economic depression, when decrees have been obtained, there may be some compromise and the tenants might be able to get some remissions from the *sahukars* or village money-lenders, when they will see that the tenant is not able and has nothing with which to discharge his obligations.

The second disadvantage will be that the whole system of agriculture will be dislocated. Everyone in this House must be aware that the agricultural operations of the tenant depend mostly on the finances that he receives from the village money-lenders. If this legislation is undertaken, I am sure fresh advances will cease, because they will think that

[Lala Hari Raj Swarup.]

another legislation may be undertaken prohibiting the institution of civil suits and suspending execution. The Co-operative Credit Societies in this country are in their infancy and they do not provide sufficient money facilities for the tenants in order to meet all their requirements for carrying on agriculture.

The third disadvantage will be that the value of land will fall. When advances cannot be had on the security of land on account of such legislation, the value of land will decrease and it will seriously affect the agricultural classes. In my own opinion, the remedy is not to promulgate such legislation, but to pass some legislation which may restrict the usurious rate of interest that the money-lenders can charge from the tenants. Or perhaps the best thing might be that for a certain number of years the rate of interest on the existing loans and the loans that may be advanced in the future may be fixed at a certain figure which may be considered reasonable both for the money-lenders and the agricultural classes. But, however, these are my personal views and so far as voting on this Resolution is concerned, I shall guide myself by the mandate that I received from my constituency.

Dr. F. X. De Souza (Nominated Non-Official) : Sir, with your permission, I should like to make a few observations on the Resolution before this House. The Honourable the Mover has painted a very gloomy picture of the distress into which the agricultural population of this country has been plunged. So far as Southern India is concerned, with which I am more intimately acquainted, I venture to think that the picture has been painted in colours far too sombre, and the reason is that the price of rice, which is the staple grain of Southern India has not fallen so low in value as compared with the price of wheat, which is the staple food of Northern India. Besides, the agriculturist of Southern India has got subsidiary means of eking out his income by the cultivation of spices and garden produce, which are not open to the cultivators of Northern India. There is however no doubt that agriculturists throughout India have been plunged in distress, in some places of a very acute nature. That distress is not peculiar to India ; the distress is world-wide. The curious part of it is that this distress is not due to scarcity ; it is a distress caused by abundance ; there is abundance of food, abundance of grain, but there is scarcity, a famine of money due to a fall in prices. What is the cause of this fall in prices ? Doctors disagree in diagnosing the cause. Some will tell you that the fall in prices is due to over-production which has been stimulated by the high prices prevailing during the boom period. Others will tell you that the low prices are due to the dumping of grain grown by free and sweated labour such as Russia does in pursuance of her five-year plan. Others again will tell you that the cause of the low prices is the fact that of the gold supply of the world, two-thirds are locked up in the vaults of the banks of New York and Paris, leaving only one-third for circulation. These are, however questions of high finance into which I am unable to enter, nor do I venture to express any opinion upon them. But the fact remains that the distress caused is very great and widespread throughout the world.

Now, Sir, different countries have attempted to tackle the distress in different manners. We read that in the United States where the price of wheat has fallen so low that it hardly pays the cost of transport, the farmer

makes use of his surplus produce as fuel for the purpose of feeding his engines in place of coal. We are told that in certain parts of the United States the Government propose to acquire stocks of cotton on a very large scale and the Government are also seriously considering the question of restricting the cultivation of cotton, cultivating only one out of three rows in a field of cotton. In Brazil the Government are levying a heavy export tax of 10 shillings per bag and utilise the proceeds of the tax to buy up inferior coffee for the purpose of destruction. I am afraid these are remedies which we cannot dream of in this country. We cannot deal with the produce but with the producer. Our endeavour should be to keep him afloat till better times come. The problem has been attempted to be solved by the Government in Egypt very recently on the following lines. The House is aware that a sharp fall in the price of cotton in that country has led to the very serious danger of the owners of land being expropriated at the instance of the credit agencies who have given them loans and who are pressing for the refund of their money. The Government stepped in and what they have done is this. They have opened a new credit Agricultural Bank to which they have advanced a very large loan, about £10 millions, with instructions to take over the debt from the credit agencies and banks and make the agriculturists debtors to Government and give them time for repayment. They have also suspended repayment of loans for the purchase of seed and manure for a period of five years. Lastly, in lieu of payment of land tax, they accept payment of agricultural produce in kind and they are also accepting the golden ornaments of *Fellahn* women at market price in lieu of land tax. If I make a proposal on these lines to the Honourable Member for Agriculture, I know what he will tell me, in his most suave manner, that he will place the proposal before the Retrenchment Committee for consideration.

Is the proposal embodied in the Resolution likely to meet the situation? Is it feasible or is it likely to benefit the cultivator? I venture to think it will not benefit the cultivator in the slightest degree. It is a proposal virtually to grant a moratorium for a period of two years to the debtor. I have always understood that a moratorium is granted by the creditor of his own free will. Has the Honourable the Mover of this Resolution ascertained what the views of the creditors are in this matter? The creditors concerned are mostly small men who have been almost as badly hit as the debtors and they are not likely to consent to a moratorium. If the creditors will not consent what will be the result? We are aware from our own knowledge and from the description given by the Honourable the Mover of the Resolution of the conditions in which the agriculturist finds himself at the end of the cultivating season. He has no reserve to fall back upon. For his clothing, for his food, and for buying petty trinkets, as he pathetically put it, for his little ones, he has to fall back upon the money-lender. Now, if there is a compulsory moratorium, imposed upon the creditor, it will necessarily mean a cessation of credit for the debtor. And if the debtor for the next two years is not in a position to make any borrowings from his creditor, his last state will be worse than the first.

What then is the solution? That the problem requires solution, and an urgent solution, admits of no doubt. The law as it stands gives relief to the agriculturist to a very small extent indeed. For instance, in the case of civil court decrees, it is open to the court to grant him instalments while passing decrees; it is also open to the courts to reopen

[Dr. F. X. De Souza.]

accounts under the Usurious Loans Act which, I am very sorry to see, the courts use so sparingly. But, as I say, the times are abnormal, and special legislation is necessary. When the Government of Bombay in the year 1879 found themselves confronted with a similar situation, by the agrarian riots in the Deccan, they enacted a special piece of legislation which is known as the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act. That Act has been in force ever since 1879, and although certain defects of that Act have come to light in the course of its administration, yet the principles on which that Act was based are thoroughly sound, and I venture to think that if those principles are applied to India as a whole, some sort of solution may be found. Those principles are that in the trial of suits it shall be open to the Court, whatever be the terms of the bond, to reopen accounts and to see that the rate of interest charged is small, and then make up the account ; and that course is open to the Court whether it is a simple money bond or a mortgage bond. In the course of execution of decrees, it is also open to the Court to grant instalments and to see that the land of the agriculturist is immune from attachment and so is his person. If any legislation on these lines is feasible and can be enacted, I venture to think that some sort of solution may be found. But, as I say, it is merely tinkering with the problem. The problem is too vast and I have my own doubts whether it is capable of solution by human ingenuity. The Honourable the Mover of the Resolution said that the total amount of agricultural indebtedness was 875 crores of rupees, and that the interest which the agriculturists pay in normal years to their creditors is something like 235 crores. These figures are such that they defy any treatment in the ordinary way. I for one am unable to suggest any adequate remedy ; to be effective it must be a drastic remedy ; and I only hope the time will not come when, if a solution is not found before then, the agriculturists themselves, who form the large mass of the population of this country, will take the solution in their own hands and find a remedy in their own way in a manner which I do not care to contemplate. That is all I wish to say and with these words I resume my seat.

Mr. B. R. Puri (West Punjab : Non-Muhammadan) : I am afraid, Sir, I must oppose this Resolution. To my mind it is a singularly ill-conceived Resolution. It seeks to secure for the benefit of a particular class a preferential treatment, and on that principle every reasonable man ought to oppose it. No doubt there is economic distress. That fact can hardly be disputed. But the economic distress is universal and it hits every class of people, and consequently there does not seem to me to be any special reason why a particular class should be selected for sympathetic treatment any more than any other class who has been equally hit....

Mr. Muhammad Yamin Khan : Is there any other class which has been hit so hard ?

Mr. B. R. Puri : Every class : I am one, you are the other.

An Honourable Member : I am both.

Mr. B. R. Puri : There is not a class that has not been hit ; otherwise it would not be a general distress. In fact the very wording of the Resolution states that proposition.

An Honourable Member : You are hit less than the agriculturists undoubtedly.

Mr. B. E. Puri : Proceeding with the Resolution itself, one of the principal arguments that has been advanced for special sympathetic treatment towards this particular class is that they are impecunious. But, when were they not, may I know? To quote my friend the Honourable the Mover, the affairs of this class are that they are in a perpetual state of indebtedness. Whether in a period of adversity or in a period of prosperity, they are always in a state of indebtedness. And I would like to know from my Honourable friend the Mover of this Resolution whether it does credit to a class to come forward and say, " Sir, we so badly manage our own affairs, that we are always in a state of indebtedness. Whether we get plenty or not, we are always like that ; and therefore please give us preferential treatment ". I submit that the proposition is too ridiculous to be seriously advanced. Let us look at the remedy suggested.

The remedy proposed is worse than the disease itself. The Honourable the Mover suggests that for two long years—twenty four months—there should be no fresh institution of any money suits against the agriculturists. . . .

Mr. Muhammad Yamin Khan : No, no.

Mr. B. E. Puri : I say, yes, yes. Look at your Resolution. I am afraid you have not read the Resolution. It says " and prohibit the institution of any new civil court proceedings against them for past debts for the next two years ". I wish my Honourable friend had read the Resolution before he started contradicting me.

Has the Honourable the Mover realised the import of his suggestion? I think if this Resolution were to be carried out, one of the first persons who would be up in arms would be the Honourable the Finance Member. He is already in straits so far as the financial condition of the country is concerned and the large revenue which at present is derived from the sale of court fees would be materially reduced ; and that would affect the revenues of the country : would it not? I put the pertinent question. After that, let us pursue this matter a little further and see the evil consequences of a measure like this. If this relief is to be given to the agriculturists, it cannot be given except at the expense of another class, that is, the creditors. If the creditors are debarred from seeking what is due to them, would there not be justification on their part to come forward and say, " Sir, you have robbed us of our legitimate dues ; please do not levy any income-tax from us, at any rate for the corresponding period of two years because you have crippled our resources and thus debarred us from meeting our obligations ". If that is the position, then this peculiar measure is likely to lead to very widespread mischief in the country, and I am afraid on that ground it should be strenuously opposed.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai (Sind : Non-Muhammadan Rural) : Sir, I think I am peculiarly fitted to speak on this Resolution because I have heard some Members in this House say that they belong to certain institutions, that they are landlords or agriculturists and therefore they have certain mandates. But in my case I do not represent any special constituency. I represent a general constituency, which comprises both agriculturists and creditors. Therefore I feel that I am in a position

[Mr. Lalchand Navalrai.]

to put the case impartially. I should not be misunderstood in the least that I have no sympathy with the agriculturists or the landholders; but it should be recognised that we should be fair to both the agriculturist and the money-lenders.

I feel a little surprised that the Mover of this Resolution, who I do not think belongs to the land-holding class but belongs to the money-lender class, has unfortunately chosen to shoulder this Resolution.

An Honourable Member : But he represents the agriculturists.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai : If he had belonged to the land-holding class, I think in speaking on this Resolution he would have been more fair. Now coming to the merits of the Resolution, I feel that the Assembly would be stultifying itself if this Resolution is passed. I will make myself clear. The reason that is given for this Resolution to be passed is the general economic depression. Now I ask, does the general depression affect the creditors and other people also or not? If it does, then this Resolution stultifies itself. Now coming to the practical difficulties, I as a lawyer can claim to say that there will be a great many difficulties in giving effect to this Resolution as it will necessitate amendment of several existing legislative enactments. In the first place, it will be revolutionising many Acts of the Legislature. Take for instance the Limitation Act. You cannot pass the Resolution without amending the Limitation Act. You ask that the decrees should be postponed for two years. Under what law? A law shall have to be made amending the ordinary provisions of the Limitation Act. Take then the Civil Procedure Code. I think the whole procedure there will have to be changed. But apart from that, a very important thing that you have to consider is this. Has this House the power to interfere with the contracts of parties? You are asking by this Resolution that the contracts that have been solemnly made or statutorily adjudicated between parties should be changed and that creditors and decree-holders should be kept out of the benefits that are their due under their contracts. The Contract Act itself should then be amended. So there are three Acts which must be amended.

(At this stage Mr. K. Ahmed made an interruption which was inaudible.)

I do not follow the Honourable Member's interruption. Then, Sir, apart from these difficulties there will be actual harm done by asking that this Resolution be passed. There will be complications and fresh encumbrances attaching to the debtors. Their interest will accumulate, and that will have to be paid after all. Then the second thing that will have to be considered in this connection is that there will be a loss of credit. Already there has been much loss of credit I think, and the creditors are feeling shy of lending to their debtors to the extent they used to do before. Now do you want that the entire credit of these people should be jeopardised? Then you have to remember that there are already several remedies which can be applied instead of asking for the adoption of a Resolution like this. Take, for instance, the case where there is a contract between parties and a decree has been made. Now you want that that decree should be postponed for two years. But why not ask the Court and make out a case before them for easy instalments? Then, if it is a mortgage decree, why not ask for six

months' postponement? You have got remedies already which are ample.

Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon : The agriculturists has got no money to engage pleaders and no money to pay for the cost of mortgaging property.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai : Well, I know agriculturists are well-protected at least in Sind. Proceeding further, I have to say that, apart from the securing of easy instalments and the postponement of decrees, there is another remedy also. When the creditors realize their position, namely, that they will not be able to get their dues in full at once, and the debtors also realize their position, and it is clear to both that it should be made easy for the creditors to postpone the obligations that the debtors have to perform, they come and compromise their cases. Then the case is sent to arbitration, easy instalments are made, and time is given. Why then should there be any legislation, and especially legislation which differentiates between man and man? Then, Sir, there are other remedies also by way of asking for remission of assessment, or postponement of assessment, as is already now happening in Sind. Now the difficulty which presents itself to me is this. The Resolution is a general one asking for legislation for the whole of India. My Honourable friend opposite said that the Honourable Member from Bihar should ask for separate legislation. Well, this is a general Resolution. If you want any particular Resolution for helping certain tenants and certain zamindars who are inconvenienced, bring out another Resolution applying to that part of the country alone, but to ask for a general Resolution is, I submit, not proper. Sir, I will not detain the House any more, and with these words, I resume my seat.

Mr. S. G. Jog (Berar Representative) : Mr. President, I am rather fortunate in catching the eye of the President at once and I thank you, Sir, for giving me an opportunity of saying a few words on this Resolution. The Resolution I think is very loosely worded, and I think in a way it is heading towards Bolshevism (Laughter). The Resolution takes it for granted that all the tenants are honest and that all the landlords are dishonest, (*Cries of "No, no"*) and that there is harassment of the tenants by the landlords in times of distress. I think both these premises are entirely wrong. I know of many tenants who are very dishonest, and although they are in a position to pay the rent, still they want to take advantage of any factor whereby the property is not liable to attachment, or they devise all possible means of avoiding payment. Then look at the question from the legal standpoint, which has been already explained by my Honourable friend, Mr. Navalrai. (*Mr. Lalchand Navalrai* : "I am Lalchand Navalrai.") Sir, the various difficulties in the way of the adoption of the Resolution have already been pointed out. The law as it is already gives sufficient protection to the agriculturist. It gives wide power and discretion to the Courts to give relief in proper cases. The Courts can and do grant instalments on very easy terms. The Courts can reduce the amount of interest, and in so many other ways the Courts have got sufficient discretion to give relief to deserving tenants.

Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon : Therefore, the agriculturist is prospering!

Mian Muhammad Shah Nawaz (West Central Punjab : Mithamadan) : If you think the Courts can reduce the rate of interest, then you have not heard of the Privy Council ruling.

An Honourable Member : What about the attachment of the produce of the tenant ?

Mr. S. G. Jog : I am coming to that.

As regards the Code of Civil Procedure, with which probably my Honourable friend the Mover is not so very familiar, I will read out to the House the exact section which says what properties of a tenant are not liable to attachment. Section 60 (c) of the Code says that "houses and other buildings (with the materials and the sites thereof and the land immediately appurtenant thereto and necessary for their enjoyment) belonging to an agriculturist and occupied by him" are not liable to attachment or sale.

Mr. K. Ahmed : The principle is just the same with regard to lawyers' books and their libraries.

Mr. S. G. Jog : My Honourable friend also suggested that special legislation might be undertaken by Local Governments. There is another section which empowers a Local Government to give relief in certain cases. That also I will read out for the information of the House.

"The Local Government may, by general or special order published in the local official Gazette, declare that such portion of agricultural produce, or of any class of agricultural produce, as may appear to the Local Government to be necessary for the purpose of providing until the next harvest for the due cultivation of the land and for the support of the judgment-debtor and his family, shall, in the case of all agriculturists or of any class of agriculturists, be exempted from liability to attachment or sale in execution of a decree."

I think the provisions as they stand are sufficient to give proper relief in the present circumstances. The framers of the Code in those old, old days could very well foresee the distress of the agriculturists and they have made provision for this also. Therefore I submit that the Resolution moved by my Honourable friend is entirely futile.

Apart from the question of other difficulties explained by my Honourable friend, I think it is also against principle that civil remedies should be suspended for a period of two years. It will give an opportunity to, it will encourage, dishonesty among the tenants. This Resolution deserves wholesale condemnation and it should not be passed by the House. There are many tenants who are in a position to pay and who will be in a position to pay. They will also take advantage of this Resolution and the consequent legislation and will not pay anything to the landlords. In these circumstances, I oppose the Resolution and request the House also to reject it.

Bhai Parma Nand (Ambala Division : Non-Muhammadan) : I only want to make a short observation with regard to this Resolution. My point is simply that the phraseology of this Resolution is incorrect when it talks of the "execution of Civil Court decrees against agricultural landholders and farmers". From what I understood from the speech of the Honourable the Mover of the Resolution, he has referred to the case of the Punjab mostly, and he has taken the cue to this Resolution from the condition of the Punjab agriculturists. Taking the Resolution as it is worded, it will mean that the agriculturists would form one class of the population and non-agriculturists would be the other class. The agriculturists in the Punjab are made a special caste, and in that caste it is not only the

poor tenants that are included but all the big landholders and owners of large squares of land. I do not know if this remedy is for the relief only of the poor tenants and the poor agriculturists.

Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon : Of both the agriculturists and the landholders.

Bhai Parma Nand : The landholders are there. They are also called agriculturists. Not only that, but among that class of agriculturists there are people who are enjoying the posts of Ministers and Executive Councillors. While these people class themselves as agriculturists in the Punjab, there are actually people holding land but who being Hindus are not called agriculturists. This phraseology, "landholders and farmers in the Punjab" will apply to a particular class of people, among which class we find very rich men, and these big landholders are owners of land and they now occupy the position of money-lenders also. If this Resolution is passed, it will mean that the money-lenders or the creditors will have no case against those people who are very rich and who intentionally avoid paying their dues to the creditors. With these few observations, I want to oppose the Resolution because it does not define what a landholder and what a farmer is. We should have to give a proper definition of these words, and then there will be great trouble in saying which class we should exempt from the operation of this Resolution. With these words, I oppose the Resolution.

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

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

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain (Member for Education, Health and Lands) : Sir, I did not intervene, at an earlier stage of this debate today because the subject (knowing as we do, how keen and wide an interest it evokes in all legislatures), was bound to evoke the same in this. In my forecast I was not disappointed. The Honourable the Mover of this Resolution has given us a mass of statistics. I am not in a position to say that I have had them verified, but if they are anywhere nearly correct, they do really reveal startling circumstances and conditions which must make us all pause and see whether all is well with our agrarian population. Many efforts have been made in this country and in other countries to take steps and measures to improve the condition of the agrarian people. Some measures have achieved a certain amount of success and for a certain amount of time. Some have entirely failed, but upon one point all schools of thought are agreed, that unless and until what is called a national reconstruction programme is adopted and enforced with great will, no substantial improvement in the condition of the agrarian population can take place. That is perhaps not a very optimistic point of view with which to begin a speech, but still I have always believed that it is best to know the worst and then see what measures—may be palliative, may be curative—we may take to put matters right. It is true our legislation has gone far to protect the interests of the agriculturists. Why? Obviously because the profession is such that it has from times immemorial stood in need of protection, as was remarked by an Honourable Member who I think spoke from this side

[Sir Fazl-i-Husain.]

of the House (Mr. De Souza), and if I may say so, made an excellent speech, well-balanced speech, showing that the speaker had an insight into both sides of the case. I must say that, having devoted some time to the study of this question, to which I along with many others from time to time have felt very much attracted, I have not achieved success up till now to any appreciable extent in devising schemes or methods which would substantially improve the condition of the rural population; nor had I, when I had a chance of putting those ideas into practice in the Punjab, attained any great measure of success in materially improving the condition of the rural population in that province. But the efforts that I made enabled my critic friends to invest me with a reputation which I feel I hardly deserved of being very strongly rural. Therefore whatever unpleasant things I may say about the rural population or their defects will not, I trust, be misunderstood, coming as they do from one described not only as a friend, but a partisan.

I must say that the Resolution as it stands is not one to which, however much I may desire to give my support, I can lend support. It is unfortunately very vague, and perhaps the vagueness from which it suffers is such that even if an effort were made to do away with it, that effort would not succeed. As has been pointed out during the course of the debate, whom are we out to protect? The "agricultural" landholder and farmer. The landholder is a man who holds land and a farmer in common parlance is a man who owns and probably cultivates agricultural land. But what an agricultural landholder or an agricultural farmer is it is not easy to determine. "Agricultural landholder" is a restrictive term rather than descriptive. Probably an agricultural landholder is intended to mean a landholder who is by descent an agriculturist, and is not a purchaser from amongst those who have been practising professions other than that of agriculture. That will create very great difficulty, because in each case the issue will have to be determined whether a particular landholder and farmer is an agricultural one or not, and by no executive order, unless it be based on Manu's caste system or on the system which prevails under the Land Alienation Act in the Punjab of notified agricultural tribes can that be done.

That is one difficulty. The other one relates to "decrees". By that I am sure the Honourable the Mover of the Resolution never intended to cover either decrees obtained by landlords against tenants or by tenants against landlords. Otherwise it will mean really the cessation of agricultural relationship or co-operation between the landlord and the cultivator. In the third place, when he says that no civil proceedings can be initiated, is not the Honourable the Mover going far beyond what is intended to be done? To put a very extreme case, if an agricultural landholder defames somebody and the defamed person wants to proceed against him for damages, for two years that agricultural landholder or farmer can have the run of his life defaming everybody he likes. I am sure he did not intend doing that. Similarly an aggrieved person in a case of damage for assault and battery can have no relief for two years.

An Honourable Member : He means for past debts.

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : So the whole matter really bristles with difficulties. I feel that a certain amount of

good has been done by availing ourselves of this opportunity of pointing out how very difficult it is to proceed with a measure which at first sight is so attractive as to enlist the sympathy of the casual person who looks at it. When the Resolution is examined in detail, even those who have great sympathy with the object of the scheme under consideration find it difficult really to sponsor it. These are some of the difficulties that must be apparent to any one who tries to examine critically the wording of the Resolution.

As to the object of the Resolution, I think I may take it that, in spite of some of the remarks which fell from some Members just opposite me, that we all really feel that the rural population, although they have got the safeguards of the Civil Procedure Code and the Usurious Loans Act and other things, are not the top dogs in the scheme of present day society, and realising that, we must always bear in mind that, situated as these people are, we must not miss any opportunity that offers itself to do the best we can for them. We must remember that whatever the reasons under the existing conditions of Indian society the rural people have not the best of times. The rural population has a wonderful facility for running into debt and getting their estates encumbered. A man may be well off during the first two or three years of his career as a farmer, but he soon manages to run into debt. There is some fatality attaching to land which makes even a good business man who takes up farming run into debt. I have seen many doing so. In fact, in my part of India, it is well understood that those who earn money in professions and buy land, before the second or third generation is over, will be no better than the persons from whom they purchased it. So knowing that without agriculture India cannot possibly do, are not we more or less creating a caste, if not a caste, at all events a class, which is absolutely essential to Indian society? The cultivating class is so situated economically, that it is almost always badly off. We may say it is badly off because it does not possess knowledge. It is badly off because it does not possess the requisite capital to improve its methods of cultivation. All these things come back to the same thing. There is some defect in the scheme of economic and social construction which is responsible for a very large population in the country being situated as the rural population is. I have not the slightest doubt that every one, whether on the Government Benches or on the Opposition Benches, would welcome a scheme which offers some chance of improving the condition of the rural classes. Any scheme like that would deserve sympathetic and careful consideration, because the evil is there and the desire to remove the evil is there. What we need is a suitable scheme which will enable us to remove that evil. If I am right, so far as the desire to attain the end is concerned and the willingness and the keenness to tackle any scheme that offers itself for examination, will it be too much to ask the Honourable the Mover of this Resolution, having seen the enormous difficulties that stand in the way of the scheme that he has suggested, that he should be content with the discussion that has taken place and with such solace as my words have been able to convey. No useful purpose will be served by pushing this Resolution to a division.

I feel that putting off the evil day for two years is neither here nor there. It is better to go to the insolvency court today to put an end to the long drawn agony of an impecunious man hopelessly in debt

[Sir Fazl-i-Husain.]

rather than do so two years hence. Perhaps I have put it very baldly. If what I have said is enough to convince the Honourable the Mover that the best thing is not to proceed further with the Resolution, then I need not prolong my speech. I understand that the second Resolution on the agenda paper is not going to be moved. The third one relates to agriculture and there is a good deal of information I want to give the House as to what the provinces are doing. I would have given it under this Resolution, but for the fact that it would more appropriately come under the third Resolution. Therefore, I think I had better give it in the more suitable and relevant place than here.

Mr. President : Are you going to withdraw your Resolution ?

Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon : After hearing the Honourable Sir Fazl-Husain, I want to suggest.....

Mr. President : Do you intend to withdraw ?

Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon : I want to withdraw under certain conditions. When Mr. Amar Nath Dutt's Resolution is considered, I hope that my Resolution will be considered side by side.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer (Rohilkund and Kumaon Divisions : Non-Muhammadan Rural) : If you withdraw it now, it will be considered then.

Mr. President : The Honourable Member has to decide.

Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon : I am not withdrawing.

Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan (Nominated Non-Official) : Sir, I am very unfortunate that from this part of the House I could not quite follow the speech of the Honourable Government Member, although I wanted to pay every attention to his arguments in order to furnish myself with a possible reply thereto. However, I can see from the trend of his speech that his words were words of empty consolation. The situation in the country is such as to call for the closest attention of the Government ; and not only attention but the application of some sovereign remedy for this world malady which is now afflicting not only India but practically every part of the world. If people elsewhere have thought fit to apply certain remedies in their parts of the world, how is it that we do not seek any remedy for our own country ? If we do not possess ingenuity enough to find a sovereign remedy, we might at least follow what others have done in other parts of the world. Well, the House knows, and Government ought to know more, that the distress and the financial depression in the country are very acute and are shaking the very soul of the people. It has gone so far as to move the great masses of India which are not very easily amenable to influence or agitation, whatever their strength may be. But when we do see them moving and their souls being affected by the distress, then I think it is the duty not only of every Member of this House but more so of the Government to see that the people do get relief and do go back to a life of contentment as before. Sir, I have known instances in which whole families have committed suicide for not being able to support themselves, and the state of the children starving before the eyes of their starving parents is such as to move the heart of any man. In the Punjab I know that murders of money-lenders have taken place already, and I think it is on a large and increasing scale ; and howsoever a money-lender may take a decree for execution, this will never be executed,

and I am afraid those money-lenders who go to the rural areas for the execution of their decrees will find that, unless they take a strong military force, there is no chance of their decrees being executed. The prices of produce have gone down to practically one-third of the original prices, and therefore the indebtedness of the people has increased three-fold. Under these circumstances, is it not the duty of the Government to look into this affair and see that a moratorium is declared so that these distressed people may find some relief ? Sir, it is also the duty of the Government to see that the rate of interest is also decreased proportionately. I think this Resolution has caused some flutter in the dovecotes of the money-lenders. I am not an enemy of money-lenders, on the contrary I am a friend of theirs, and I wish them well, but at the same time I want them to have sympathy with those very people who fill their coffers, and if they are obstinate, and if they do not listen to reason, and if they are unmindful of the distress of the people, then I am afraid they will be cutting their own throats. Sir, how does Bolshevism come into the country ? Bolshevism comes into the country because the masses find it difficult to live ! You have to enable them to live in order to find tranquillity in the country. If the masses think that the money-lender is making their existence impossible, then you know the consequences. You know how revolutions come—and you know how even the strongest Government will find it impossible to cope with the situation under these circumstances. Sir, I am not an alarmist, but I am only putting the situation before you, not in its sombre colours, but actually as I find it in the country outside this Chamber ; and I think that instead of opposing this Resolution—as I find some of my Honourable friends to my right doing—they ought to have sympathy, they ought to have enlightened self-interest in their minds when they think over these subjects. Even self-interest demands that they should have sympathy with this Resolution and try to show to the people, those very people who want this relief, that in such times of distress they will come to their relief and they will afford them every facility in order that they may get some peace, in order that they may recoup and in order that they may strengthen their resources.

Mr. S. G. Jog : No legislation is necessary for that purpose.

Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan : Yes, legislation is necessary ; otherwise you will not listen to reason. (Laughter.)

Mian Muhammad Shah Nawaz : Quite right !

Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan : I have pointed out what is the duty of the Government, and I have pointed out what is the duty of the money-lenders, and I think I need not point out what is the duty of this Chamber, because I know that my Honourable colleagues are enlightened enough and will only consult their own very best wishes by supporting this Resolution.

Mr. G. I. Griffiths (Bombay : European) : Sir, I wish with your leave to touch lightly on the Resolution as it stands on the paper. Apparently, no Honourable Member who has spoken on the subject has remembered the rights of the trader and the business-man in this connection. Does the Honourable the Mover intend that this two years' moratorium should be granted for everything ? What about the suppliers of livestock, agricultural machinery, raw materials and such commodities ? Have they to wait for two years to receive their money ? I think, Sir, the Resolution is unhappily worded ; and if the Honourable the Mover will accept an amendment whereby protection will be afforded to the

[Mr. G. I. Griffiths.]

business-man and the trader, I feel sure that this side of the House will whole-heartedly support his Resolution against the money-lender and the exorbitant rate of interest which the farmer and the landholder pay at present.

Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon : Sir, I have listened to all the speeches which have been made in the House. Lately, I heard 3 P.M. the Honourable Sir Fazl-i-Husain and I find there are many difficulties for the acceptance of this Resolution because of its wording. But I know that all the Members, including the Government Members, are full of sympathy for the poor agriculturist and are anxious to do something for him. Of course, if I ask for a division now, I have very little hope of success. What I would like to suggest is that, if Resolution No. 4 which stands in the name of Mr. Amar Nath Dutt is accepted, then my Resolution ought to be forwarded to the Committee which Mr. Dutt's Resolution seeks to establish. Having considered all these points, I have decided to withdraw my Resolution.

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

Bhai Parma Nand (Ambala Division : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, it was in the interests of the agriculturists that I had proposed a Resolution. That Resolution of mine proposed to levy a duty on imported cotton but it has not come out in the ballot. My supplementary Resolution* has come in the ballot and I do not want to move it.

RESOLUTION RE AGRICULTURAL DISTRESS.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt (Burdwan Division : Non-Muhammadan Rural) : Sir, the Resolution that stands in my name needs very few words for its acceptance from this House. It runs as follows :

" This Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to form a committee of inquiry consisting of experts and Members of the Assembly to inquire into the causes of the present agricultural distress and to devise means for improving the condition of the agricultural population."

Sir, if I am correct in my diagnosis of the views of the Members of this House, I may be bold to assert that there is not a single Member in this House who has not his sympathies for the distressed condition of the agriculturists at the present moment and who has not also an earnest desire to improve it. Sir, the science of political economy has changed so much from the days when we were students in college that I find that all the theories which we find in Fawcett's book have been exploded. It is no longer a question of land, labour and capital, but it is a question of socialism, communism, Third International, Fourth International and dictatorship of the proletariat. (*A voice* : " And communalism.") Sir, we in India are the inheritors of a great civilization and culture and cannot see eye to eye with our European friends about their ideas of constitution-making and economic arrangement of our society. It has been said that we are a conservative race. No doubt, we are a conservative race because we believe in the wisdom of the past and wish to preserve our

* " This Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council that he will be pleased to levy an import duty of 50 (fifty) per cent. *ad valorem* on cotton yarn imported into India."

ancient culture, religion, and philosophy. Sir, foreign institutions, which have been grafted on Indian soil by our foreign masters, have not benefited us in the least but have brought us to the verge of ruin. The system of land tenure and land holding, I do not know which is at fault. I will not try to discuss what is at the root of all this agricultural distress, but I may point out that nearly a century and a half ago there was another devastating famine in Bengal which is known as *chiattarer Manwantar*. Sir, if anyone is inquisitive to know all the details of the horror which the people of Bengal suffered in those days, I would refer him to the book of that eminent historian Sir William Wilson Hunter and you will have to admit that the conditions are no less severe in Bengal at the present moment. I know you all sympathise with the poor agriculturist and I hope you will try to strengthen the hands of the Government in anything that they would try to do in order to improve his condition. The condition in Bengal has been such that when a purse was going to be raised for the Poet Laureate of Asia, I mean Sir Rabindranath Tagore, he would not accept the same and said that this was not the time to raise a purse for his University and that it was time to raise a purse for those people who are in distress. I do not wish to tire out your patience by placing before you the harrowing tales of distress and poverty which the agricultural population are going through at the present moment. But I would like to warn you that unless you take note of these facts, unless you sincerely and earnestly try to devise means by which to put a stop to this state of things, conditions in India will not be in any way different from those that obtained in Russia a few years ago before the five years' plan came into force. It is not for me to suggest the remedies at the present moment and I feel sure that the Honourable Member in charge of the Department, whose sympathetic speech we listened to with attention, leads me to hope that he has something up his sleeve which will improve the condition of the agriculturist. I thank my Honourable friend Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon for his Resolution. That indicates a noble mind, a feeling mind and a sympathetic mind. He himself is a rich man, yet he came forward with a Resolution for the alleviation of the distress of the poverty-stricken people. I found Member after Member supporting the principles underlying the Resolution, but they only found some difficulty in working it out practically. I also sympathise with them, and I hope they are also in favour of what Mr. Haroon wanted or what I am putting forward in my Resolution. From what I heard from the Government side, I am emboldened in the hope that there will be a committee of inquiry which will devise means to the best of its ability to give relief to the poor. I wish to submit that more than 75 per cent. of the people of this country live on agriculture. The exact figure of course is not 75 per cent. but something like 73.9 per cent. The Government have their own way of collecting statistics and I shall accept them. But to my mind it appears to me that we have devoted too much attention to industrial development, and industrialism is the bane of our country. Of course, whether it is so or not, it will be for the committee to decide. Industrialism drives an important section of the agricultural population to the towns, and what is the gain? Slum-life and nothing else. It is a Western article imported into India which we never wanted. Industrialism has deprived these people of the little cottage industry with which they could maintain themselves. I can tell you that if you go to a Bengal village, of which I have sufficient experience, you will find that, though they got sufficient crops last year, yet not a single seer of paddy is to be found in the homes of the tillers

[Mr. Amar Nath Dutt.]

of the soil. Why? Because you have brought in before them cheap industrial products and you have made them accustomed to those luxuries which they would purchase from towns, leaving nothing for themselves to eat. Such luxuries were unknown before. I remember the days of plenty in a Bengal village 50 years back when I was a little boy of four or five years. I witness the distress at the present moment. They were then a very prosperous class of people having nothing to do with politics, undisturbed by friends over there, with no ideas of constitution. They were leading peaceful lives except for the occasional fear from the appearance of a *darogha*, who also disappeared as soon as he got a few rupees. Those days are gone. They had plenty of grains in their granaries, plenty of fish in their tanks and plenty of pure milk, and from the weaver's house, they could get one or two cloths which were sufficient to clothe them throughout the year. Now, you place before them all sorts of tinsels imported from Europe. You bring in all kinds of luxuries from Europe and tempt them. (Laughter.) I see one of the Honourable Members on the Government Benches is surprised at this statement. I say most emphatically that all the miseries to which the agriculturists are subject in this country have been brought from abroad. If the foreigners were not allowed to trade here, I think the condition of the agriculturist would not have been what it is to-day. This favoured land of the gods, surrounded on three sides by the sea, the natural barrier and on the north by the insurmountable Himalayas, except for a few passes through which the foreigners came, while Europeans came in the guise of traders through the seas and subsequently not only monopolised the trade but became rulers. It may be that I am wrong in my analysis of the causes of agricultural distress, but what I beg of you is to have a committee of inquiry which will go into the causes deeply and if I am wrong in my diagnosis of the causes, my views will not be accepted, and the views of others more competent to speak on this subject will be accepted and acted upon. Therefore, I ask the Government to institute a committee of inquiry comprising of people who know the exact situation of the agriculturists in this country, not comprising merely of well-to-do people, who can merely talk here or elsewhere, but comprising those who live amongst the poor people, who know their real needs and who live with them day in and day out. It is only such men that can go into the real cause of the situation. They must be men who can understand the situation, and who can devise means for the alleviation of the distress of the agriculturists. I do not want Commissions of the type which were instituted in the early eighties. There were several Commissions instituted.

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Hussain: I understood those were days of plenty.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt: I may remind you that our miseries began not from 1757 or 1857, but from 1193.

Mr. K. Ahmed: During the Muhammadan period.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt: I think it is too late for any Honourable Member to go to school to learn all the dates. Even if he is sent to school he will not take the lesson. There was a Famine Commission in

1880, another in 1898 and another in 1901. We had one Irrigation Commission and that was in 1903. Then we had also a Committee of Co-operation in the year 1915 and last but not least we had the Agricultural Commission in 1926. You had so many Commissions, but you missed the real point. You did not enter into the real causes of the distress, but you merely satisfied yourselves with high-sounding phrases. You wanted to have scientific agricultural research, the Research Institute, Pusa College and things like it. We do not want them. They merely provide a few more jobs.

An Honourable Member : Few more jobs for Europeans.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt : No, we have some Indians also, and one of them I see here. Be that as it may. What I submit is those are good literature and probably good literature for the consumption of the West, people of the West who have no knowledge of the actual situation in the country. I ask you to be a little more sincere, to take into your consideration the actual situation of the country, because such things can never happen at least from those principles of political economy which we learnt more than 35 years ago which are said to be exploded now. When there is ample food, there can be no famine. Yes, we grow ample paddy, but still all the paddy goes to, I do not know where, at least it does not remain in the homes of the agriculturists. Sir, I do not pretend to philosophise about the five year plan or the hoarding of gold by France or the United States. These are things quite outside my province. But what I want to say is this : let us do away with all these things ; let us seriously undertake this business of inquiring into the causes of distress and do the best we can to alleviate the distress of the people ; and for this I make an earnest appeal to the Honourable Members sitting on the Treasury Benches. With these words, I beg to move my Resolution.

Mr. B. Das (Orissa Division : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I feel grateful to my friend, Mr. Amar Nath Dutt, for having given this House this opportunity to talk about the distress of the agricultural population. Some of the Provincial Councils have already discussed this problem and some of the provinces have already taken steps, but everybody recognises that the Provincial Governments are handicapped ; they cannot take adequate steps without the Government of India coming to their succour, and the Government of India themselves own large territories where also the agriculturists are in acute distress. My friend, Mr. Amar Nath Dutt, has spoken as a member of the proletariat ; I myself am an agriculturist and a farmer ; I speak as a practical farmer and I will not refer to the five-year plan in Russia or to what will happen when my friend Mr. Amar Nath Dutt sits on the other side and forms his five-year plan.....

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt : That will never be.

Mr. B. Das : I do not want to go into the hoary past of 1880 nor into the tragic ratio troubles that happened in 1905 thereafter. I come to the immediate past. What are the causes of the acute distress among the agricultural population to-day ? Those of us that were Members of this House during the ratio trouble, when the Government of India by the order of the Bank of England and of the British Government forced down the throats of an unwilling people the 18d. ratio, those of us who were on this side warned the Government that they were leading the agriculturists to ruin, and that the purchasing power of the agriculturists

[Mr. B. Das.]

would go down and that they would have no money and there would be scarcity of money in the country. That has happened. The agriculturist has suffered from heavy assessment of land revenue by the policy of the alien government which has ruled India for so many years. There was a time in India when there was no venue of taxation except land revenue, and they went on raising it till they could get the maximum blood out of the agriculturist. Since then the Government of India have got other methods of taxation. The Customs revenue has gone up to Rs. 50 crores per annum and there are other methods also. The Government of India might have given relief to the agriculturist ; but they could not ; under the Montague-Chelmsford reforms, land revenue became a provincial source of revenues ; and many a province, like mine—Bihar and Orissa—lives only on land revenue and on the money derived from excise duties. The people must drink more, Sir, under this civilised Government so that their civilised administration shall continue. So now the Government of India and the Provincial Governments have come to a position when they have to pause and think whether the agriculturist should receive any relief. But the situation, that was created by the ratio Bill of 1925, has brought great economic distress in the country. My Honourable friend the Finance Member cannot accuse me that I have not taken into account the drop in prices all over the world. I have taken that into account, but the legislation of the Government, whether Central or Provincial, should be so flexible that it will take into account the drop in the world level of prices, and it will automatically ensure that land revenue also will be reduced. I recognise that some of the provinces—especially the United Provinces as I recently read—have announced that they have permitted their district officers to give relief to land revenue to the extent of 50 per cent. That is something ; but it is not all. While I support the idea of a committee, I would suggest that while the committee is going on with its investigations, the Government of India have ample opportunity to take certain action ; the Finance Member of the Government of India and the various provincial Finance Members and the Revenue Members could meet together and devise means how they can give immediate and adequate relief to the agriculturists in the country. The Finance Member, who always taps our resources and takes loans from the public, can take a few crores more loan and give it to the provinces so that relief could be given to the distressed taxpayer.

I must observe here that a certain loan has been floated recently to tap an already impoverished people. There is scarcity of money in the countryside ; everybody knows that the agriculturist cannot pay his land revenue to the Government, and yet to-day the Honourable the Finance Member has floated a loan whereby he wants to tap the little hoarding of the masses in the countryside. He has floated his recent Postal loan ; I do not know how much he will get ; he is going merely to enrich those who have already Cash Certificates at 4½ per cent. They will convert them to 6½ per cent., and he is going to add to the distress of the countryside. I know that the President of the Indian Federation of Merchants Chambers has already protested and all the Indian Chambers of Commerce have protested against this unwise step which the Honourable the Finance Member has adopted. That shows that the Finance Member, sitting in the cool climate of Simla, does not take note

of what is happening in the countryside. Thinking that the provinces are autonomous or semi-autonomous and that he has no concern whether they are solvent or insolvent, he is not concerned with the distress of the agriculturist.

My friend, Mr. Amar Nath Dutt, had a cheap gibe at the industrialists of India. I confessed at the start that I am a farmer, but I am also an industrialist. On behalf of the infant industries in India—because we are just making our headway—already we are suffering heavy losses through the ratio policy of the Government of India and general trade depression—and it is no use my friend laying the blame at the door of the Indian industrialist. He must have gone himself deep into the problem and ought to have pointed out that, apart from the drop in price levels, it is the ratio policy of Government of India that has made the agriculturist so poor that he cannot buy his daily luxuries and he cannot pay the taxes that are due to the Government or to the landlord. It is recognised on all hands by economists, whether Indian or European, that the Indian land revenue is assessed very high. If it was 55 or 60 per cent. two or three years ago, it is 100 per cent. to-day as it happens to be in Orissa. Even if the agriculturist sells his whole output, he cannot meet the demand of the Government or the landlord who collects the revenue. This Government want to pose as a civilised government. Their primary function is, even without appointing a committee of this Legislature, without appointing a committee of experts, to go themselves into the problem, and if there is justice on the side of the agriculturists, they must come forward and reduce the land tax to an equitable basis of taxation. I challenge any Member of Government to come forward and say that to-day the Indian taxpayer pays land revenue which is equitable, and can my Honourable friend the Finance Member who comes here with a better experience of England,—can he say why the land revenue is so low in England, and why the incidence of taxation in India is so high—as high as in England, considering at the same time the income per capita in India as compared to England? Why should he not take steps to reduce the taxation to a limit which every civilised nation pays? I hope that the Government will have sympathy to do that. Whether they appoint a committee as suggested by my Honourable friend, or whether they themselves go into the problem, I commend to them to go into the question. Otherwise, you talk of terrorism and revolution. There will be a revolution, an economic revolution in the country where the masses will rise and upset every Government and even those of us who pose as capitalists.

Mian Muhammad Shah Nawaz : (West Central Punjab : Muhamadan) : Mr. President, I whole-heartedly support the Resolution so freely moved by my Honourable friend Mr. Amar Nath Dutt. It will be freely admitted that the prosperity and the defence of this country very largely depend upon the well-being, happiness and contentment of the agricultural population which forms the bulk of the people of this country. It will also be admitted that widespread distress and discontent have been caused by the terrible decline of prices in agricultural commodities. Sir, the agricultural population is on the verge of revolt. Honestly speaking, the situation is one of desperation. There is confusion among the agriculturists worse than death and it is growing worse day by day. Look at the hard facts of the situation. The agriculturist collects his yearly due of corn, wheat, maize and cotton,

[Mian Muhammad Shah Nawaz.]

and when he collects it and it is a saleable commodity, the demand comes from the Government for payment of the land revenue and the water rates, and the whole income is lost. I can say without exaggeration that there is not a single agriculturist in the whole of the Punjab who can save a penny from his lands. My Honourable friend Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain will bear me out when I say that no one can save a penny. All the income goes towards the payment of land revenue and water rate. In this House I have the honour of representing what used to be one of the richest colonies in the whole of India, but which is now in the most distressed state, I mean the Lyallpur Colony. The land revenue from that colony used to be Rs. 2 crores and the zemindars were willingly paying the heavy land revenue and water rates to the Government and were themselves in good circumstances. At present I am receiving letter after letter saying that they are selling their daughters to meet the crushing demands of the Government and their creditors. They have already sold ornaments of their womenfolk and they have mortgaged their lands. They have no capacity to pay and they are on the verge of ruin. I make no exaggeration whatever, and I say that I cannot be an honest man if I make an exaggeration in this respect; I will tell the truth. By the traditions of my family I am not an extremist, or disloyal to the Government, but the hard facts of the situation must be told to the Government in the interests of the agriculturist population and the public. I say that if the Government were to treat the agriculturists fairly, kindly and generously they would be all right. There is a couplet in which the old Sadi said :

*Maraat-i-dahqaan kun az bahr-i-khesh,
Ki mazdur-i-khush dil kunad kar besh.*

In your own interest treat your cultivators and agriculturists with consideration and kindness as a happy labourer works harder and harder to enable him to pay your dues and also receives his own income. Have Government done much to meet the present situation? I submit that the Government have failed to give material relief to the distressed agricultural population of Northern India. Sir, if the situation continues like this, the agriculturists will not care much for the present administration, good, bad or indifferent. The duty of the Government is not to maintain law and order only. The duty of the Government is to look after the well-being of the people of this country, especially the agricultural population, who form 90 per cent. of the whole people. So far as the agriculturists are concerned, the present administration has failed. In the Punjab the distress is so widespread that the Governor in Council is in a difficulty, the Revenue Member is in a difficulty, and everybody is in the grip of a dire calamity, and yet we are hoping against hope for the best. Pain, pain, no hope, no pause, and no redress! And it is strange that yet the agriculturist continues to endure. No food for subsistence for the children of the producers of grain, hard labour for aged agriculturists, sore task to hearts worn down by incessant payments of crushing land revenue and water rates and limitless debts with exorbitant rates of interest. Surely, surely the Government cannot view this awful situation with equanimity.

Sir, I would like to suggest many remedies which should be considered by the Central and Provincial Governments and should be considered forthwith, before the assessment on the *Kharif* crops comes to be

paid. First of all, I submit that the land revenue should be cut down by 50 per cent. Secondly, the water rates should be reduced by 40 per cent. in the Lyallpur Colony which, as I have said before, I have the honour to represent in this House, 7 years ago the land revenue was increased by 42 per cent. Then the price of wheat was Rs. 4-8-0 per maund, the price of cotton was Rs. 13 or 14 per maund. What is the condition to-day? The price of wheat is Rs. 1-4-0, that of cotton is Rs. 3. Is it not just, is it not fair that the Government should reduce the land revenue by 66 per cent., at any rate by 50 per cent.? The water rates used to be much lower, fifteen or twenty years ago, than they are at present. Now that the prices of agricultural products have gone down so low is it not fair, is it not just that the water rates should be reduced at least by 40 per cent.? If the Government are not prepared to do all this, then I say to the Government, I cannot pay you in cash, I pay you in kind. (Applause.) That is the only alternative left to the agriculturists. I stand here at the bar of this House and demand justice from the Treasury Benches and also from Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain who is in charge of the subject. Does he not possess land in the Lyallpur Colony? Can he say that he earns any income whatever from that land? Can he swear that he does? (*An Honourable Member*: "Pause for a reply.") Sir, we cannot pay you in cash, then take it in kind. What is the due of the Government? 25 per cent. in the Punjab. I collect my corn, wheat, maize, cotton, barley or whatever it is. I give you 25 per cent. in kind, after defraying charges, towards the payment of land revenue. In addition to this the cultivators will give to the Government 25 per cent. of the yield in kind. One half is our due and in fairness and justice we are entitled to it. I must have it. It is ridiculous and absurd to hold that I must give my entire earnings—earned with hard labour, to the Government for the expenditure of a top-heavy administration. Mr. President, in the old times of the Moghul rule and the Sikh Government, the agriculturists were never so badly off as they are at the present evil times. The then Government used to levy their dues in kind, after the agriculturist had fed his cattle,—he used to have as much fodder for his cattle as he liked,—the Government took one-third in kind and not in cash and everybody was satisfied. The trouble is this that the prices of grain have gone down very much. Indeed we do not know what to do. It is but just that the Government should have their dues in kind or their value in money. Whether the Government have got to employ many servants or a few servants we do not care. I repeat it, Sir, that we cannot pay you in cash but we must pay you in kind. If the Government want payment in cash, then they must reduce their demand by 50 per cent. in respect of land revenue and 40 per cent. in respect of water rates. At any rate reduce it to the level which existed 30 years ago. Or if the Government must be paid in cash, then they must be satisfied to charge from the agriculturists on the basis of income-tax.

Then, Sir, it is an admitted fact that the agricultural population is buried in debt throughout their lives. There is a proverb which says that an agriculturist is born in debt, he lives in debt and he dies in debt. How to meet the situation? Cannot we fix a rate of interest, say 9 per cent. or 12 per cent. per annum? I know in Turkey it is 9 per cent. and in some other countries it is 12 per cent. fixed by law. In the Czecho-Slovakian constitution I find that usury is prohibited by the constitution. Here in India is a state of things of which Government can never be proud of. I know in the city of Lahore and in several towns and rural areas

[Mian Muhammad Shah Nawaz.]

the money lenders are exacting 36 per cent. and 48 per cent. from the most respectable men, and yet there is no remedy for this. I do not wish to say anything against their Lordships of the Privy Council, but I have a great complaint against Government. Their Lordships of the Privy Council have laid down, rightly or wrongly—I do not challenge their judgment and they do not know the conditions of this country—that if the rate of interest agreed upon is 24 or 36 per cent. per annum it must be enforced by the courts of justice. Courts of justice! As if freedom of contract can exist between the lion and the lamb! This is the state of things, and yet Government have paid no attention to it whatever. I earnestly request you, Sir, to fix the rate of interest at nine or twelve per cent per year. It should never exceed 12 per cent. Indeed the Hindus even in the days of Manu never exacted double the principal. The Europeans have brought the so-called freedom of contract in this country and the rate of interest is enforced at 36 and 48 per cent.; and in this year of grace 1931, no one cares to find a remedy despite the fact that the agriculturists are in a state of helplessness.

Then, Sir, retrenchments must be effected in all the Departments of the provinces and the Central Government, and the salaries of the officials must be cut down by a certain percentage and the relief must be given to the provinces. Otherwise there is no hope for the provinces at all. The provinces are living from hand to mouth. No retrenchments can relieve them unless the Government of India come to their help. Retrench your Army, reduce your military expenditure, cut down the salaries and help the provinces and help the agriculturists, and for God's sake do it quickly, otherwise it will be too late. A noble lead has been given by His Majesty the King-Emperor. His Majesty has cut down his civil list by £50,000. And His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales has reduced his household expenses by £10,000. I request the officials to follow the noble lead given by our Emperor. Again, Sir, has not the Honourable the Finance Member a borrowing programme for the benefit of the agriculturists? Can he not give a portion of the money he is going to raise to the Provincial Governments so that they may in turn give it to the agriculturists at the rate of 6½ per cent., the rate at which he is himself raising it? Is he going to do this? I doubt very much. The Government are so indifferent because the agriculturists are weak and do not agitate. But I am afraid the day of reckoning is not very far. In January last when the Wheat Bill (now the Wheat Act) came before this House, clause 3 was not deleted and my friend on my right was in favour of retaining it because he would not disturb the contracts. I said then that we were sitting on the verge of a volcano and yet thinking of a few contracts. And what is the position now? The contracts still exist and tons and maunds of wheat are coming from Australia and other countries. A few wealthy contractors and the millers are still bringing their cargoes from Australia on the basis of bogus contracts to jeopardise our own interests at home. That is the way the Government treated the agriculturists in the Delhi Session for the benefit of a very few Midas-eared and emerald-necked contractors. Even at that time I said that we must raise a high tariff wall against the importation of wheat and cotton, etc. But nobody listened to me and nobody cared. But the Government have got to care for the agriculturists very soon.

Mr. President : The Honourable Member's time is up. I will allow him only two minutes more to conclude.

Mian Muhammad Shah Nawaz : I will not take any more time, Sir. I have placed the case of the agriculturists quite clearly and fairly. I have spoken with the greatest frankness. I assure you that I am not an alarmist. I am a well-wisher of the Government. Indeed Government have brought peace and prosperity to this country ; but it is the bounden duty of Government to look after the interests of the agriculturists and they should look after them in time so that there may not be any danger of an upheaval. Surely the Government cannot create a desert and call it peace. With these words, I whole-heartedly support the Resolution. (Loud applause.)

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : (Member for Education, Health and Lands) : Sir, we have listened to three speeches on this Resolution. I am ready to admit that there is a great deal of truth in every one of the three speeches made. There is a great deal of what has been said by the three Honourable Members with which I entirely agree. But what we have to see is, starting from the substratum of fact and truth that is in every one of these three speeches, what is it that we want to do and what is the right method of achieving that object ? We really have by now passed beyond the stage where it is necessary to work up our sentiments in favour of the agriculturists. Government at all events do not stand in need of that being done. We know the problem perfectly well ; we know perfectly well that all is not well with the agriculturists. We know perfectly well that, after having a wonderful windfall of high prices during the last 10 or 15 years and having thus been led by Providence to improve his standard of comfort slightly, the fall that has come is felt by the agriculturist all the more because it is a fall from a slightly improved standard of comfort in living. We all know that. The Honourable Member who spoke last appealed to me to say whether I made much out of my lands in the Punjab. He may rest assured that, although a short while ago Revenue Member in the Punjab and now here, I make no more than he does out of his lands.

Sardar Sant Singh (West Punjab : Sikh) : Did you not pay land revenue out of your pockets this year on the *rabi* crop ?

Mian Muhammad Shah Nawaz : I paid Rs. 350 from my own pocket in addition to my income from land, which was absorbed in the payment of Government dues.

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : That is all very well. I say that I am fully cognisant of all the troubles with which the average farmer is faced, and all the disappointments with which the large land holders or the professional man who has an agricultural income, is faced. All these are facts and I can assure the House that these are perfectly well known to Local Governments. In many of the Local Governments, the Revenue Members are themselves suffering from all these troubles which have been referred to by the previous speakers. We may take it therefore that as regards the troubles from which the agriculturists and landholders, large or small, are suffering, there is no misunderstanding on the subject and no misapprehension whatsoever. I think it would be right if at this stage

[Sir Fazl-i-Husain.]

I place before Honourable Members certain information I have been able to collect from the Local Governments. I have frankly admitted that there is a great deal of economic distress amongst the rural people in India. None of us individually, barring myself perhaps, is in a position to know exactly what the situation in each province is. Each Member knows more or less what is happening in his province, but he cannot be expected, unless he is keeping himself in touch with all other provinces, through his friends in those provinces who are in the know, to know all these things. The position is like this. I will first take Assam. There remission of land revenue had to be resorted to and a good deal of land revenue had also to be suspended. This action indicates that there is agricultural distress there and the Local Government had to meet that distress by having resort to what has already been suggested by the three speakers who have spoken. Not only had the Assam Government to suspend land revenue, but they had to give *takavi* as well. I may mention for the information of Honourable Members that *takavi* is not given by Government at the exorbitant rate of 12 or 18 or 24 per cent. It is seldom given at more than 6½, and the rule is 6¼ per cent. Therefore Government do not resort to the distribution of *takavi* in order to make money, but simply and purely to assist the poor agriculturists. I may further add that recently there has been a great change in the method of distribution of *takavi*. In the old times *takavi* used to be given to these people at the district headquarters or at the most at the headquarters of the *tahsil*, and it cost some money to the man to come to the district or *tahsil* headquarters. Under the improved system, Collectors depute a number of revenue officers to go about the district and find out where money is needed for the purchase of seed or bullocks. In Assam, they had unfortunately to have recourse to opening test works. They are not opened in a place unless the distress is so acute as to need a decision on the point whether famine works are to be opened or not. They had further to give gratuitous relief in the case of women and children. The Local Government in Assam is fully cognisant of the distress there and is doing its best to help the people to the utmost that lies in its power.

Next we come to Bengal, which in the matter of land revenue is luckier than most other provinces. I believe the question of the remission of land revenue does not arise there. In Bengal, agricultural loans have been given to the extent of 10 lakhs. Test works have been opened and Rs. 45,000 has been spent thereon. Gratuitous relief to the extent of Rs. 68,000 had also to be given. That again bears out the fact that in Bengal there has been some distress, and efforts are being made to meet it. The continuance of low prices is no doubt a serious blow to small landholders. As has been rightly pointed out, a debt of Rs. 100, five acres of your produce of jute or wheat might have been quite enough to repay, but now the same debt cannot be repaid because the prices have gone down and the produce of the same land, though same in quantity, will not fetch even one third the money. The condition in Bengal however is not so serious as in some other places. In the adjoining province of Bihar and Orissa *takavi* has been made available. It has actually been distributed.

Mr. B. Das : No announcement has so far been made.

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : I will just advise the Local Government that it is best to advertise the good work they are doing.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh : To what extent ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : To such extent as the proposals of the Retrenchment Committee of the Assembly will permit. The condition in Bihar and Orissa is not so bad as in many other places. Collection of revenue has been fair.

Mr. B. Das : The collections have been extorted by zamindars and District Magistrates. The condition there is the worst in India.

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : I would request my friend to be a little more careful. He may be perfectly justified in saying that the condition in Bihar and Orissa is bad, but he cannot generalise that it is the worst. He really cannot know the conditions in Ajmer-Merwara, in the Punjab and the United Provinces. I admit that it is very very bad, but you cannot say that it is the worst in India. Here again the complaint is that money is scarce. Reading these reports, one gets absolutely sick of the repetition of this complaint that money is scarce. Why not do away with money and have recourse to some such thing as barter ? The next province, the Central Provinces, seems to be better off than many parts of India because it appears that they have been lucky enough to have their land revenue assessment at a lower rate than other provinces. There is no cause for much anxiety there. It is refreshing to know that.

Mr. S. G. Jog : (Berar Representative) : Has the Honourable Member figures relating to Berar, where the distress is acute ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : Under Federation we might have. Here we have an interesting philosophical and critical account of the theory about low prices

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We got a very illuminating paragraph on the subject of low prices. Low prices ? Yes, it is there, but you cannot say that there is not enough of produce ; there is plenty of grain to eat, and plenty to sell. Low prices ? Yes, that is troublesome ; but does it really matter very much, taking society as a whole, because low prices benefit quite a lot of people ; they do not benefit me a bit. I assure you. They do not benefit any producer of grain. But everybody is not a producer ; and therefore some people do benefit thereby. The people who are suffering the most by these low prices are, I am told,—and there is a great deal of truth in it, I recognize—either the big landlords or the absentee landlords. That is perfectly true. My friend and I both belong to the last category.

Mian Muhammad Shah Nawaz : We have no time to go to our lands.

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : Well, the second class of people that are suffering the most are the enterprising people who had taken long leases of agricultural land, hoping to make lots of money thereby. Having taken long leases, at rates which prevailed two years ago, they, naturally, are now down, absolutely

[Sir Fazl-i-Husain.]

down, but I understand, though I have very little acquaintance with business affairs, that that is a contingency which does occur to many who try to become rich quickly (Laughter). The third class, Sir that has suffered the most is the class which was in the unfortunate position of owing large debts at the time when this trouble arose, when this distress came. Well, they had borrowed large sums, but when they have to pay them back, especially in the case of those who have to pay from their agricultural income, to them those debts have become three-fold, excluding interest and every thing else ; well, they are very hard hit. We must sympathise with them. We must see whether we can help these people. If we can, well, we ought to try ; and if we cannot, you must not refuse them the sympathy that we can give them. Passing on from the Central Provinces, Sir—I have forgotten Burma, and I must go back to Burma (*An Honourable Member* : “ Leave Burma alone ; they want separation ”). Sir, as long as Burma is in India, it is our duty to treat it like ourselves ; therefore it will never do, because they are contemplating separation, that we should (*An Honourable Member* : “ They are not contemplating separation ; you are forcing it on them ”) try to shirk our duty to them : we must try to be so affectionate and so mindful of them that such intentions as they have of getting separated may be revised. (*An Honourable Member* : “ They have no such intention of their own ”.) Well, in the case of Burma, the reduction in land revenue has been very considerable.

Mr. B. R. Puri : That is why you are anxious to talk of Burma ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : And *takavi* also has been given to the extent of 56 lakhs.

An Honourable Member : Was that before the riots, or after the riots ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : I think both before and after.

Mr. B. R. Puri : And during the riots too ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : Passing on from Burma to Bombay, the remission of land revenue by the enlightened Government of Bombay has been to the extent of 40 lakhs. (Hear, hear.) That is not a small sum by any means.

Mian Muhammad Shah Nawaz : What is the percentage ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : I am afraid I could not tell you that. There has been suspension of land revenue to the extent of 28 lakhs and of water rates to the extent of 4 lakhs.

Mian Muhammad Shah Nawaz : Out of 6 crores, 40 lakhs ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : They make much more by excise. Therefore, Sir, the Bombay Government, I am sure the House will recognize, has not done so badly. Coming on to Madras, that is a lucky province ; they are not so subject to all these fluctuations in the prices of agricultural produce as the rest of India. (*An Honourable Member* : “ And they have plenty of rainfall ”.) They had to suspend their land revenue a little, and they are doing

fairly well, considering the circumstances prevailing in the rest of India. (*An Honourable Member* : "That is because the price of rice has not so much gone down.")

Sardar Sant Singh : And therefore there is no Member from Madras present now.

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : Loans have also been given to a fairly large extent there.

Now coming to the United Provinces, you know there are peculiar conditions there of the system of rent ; that is to say, the dues from the cultivator to the landlord, the rent, they are all cash rates. My Honourable friend was saying, "Take it in kind". I wondered whether he was in league with the Kisan movement in the United Provinces and against most of the Taluqdars, or whether he was only thinking of himself and myself and not of the United Provinces landlords. Sir, the conditions prevailing in the United Provinces are quite different from those prevailing in other parts of India. But the economic conditions, difficult and complicated as they are, have been made much more complicated by the inter-action of economic and political forces. Yet I am glad to be able to say that the United Provinces Government have had recourse to the constitutional machinery of invoking the aid of the Legislative Council to solve this tangled scheme. A committee was set up to see to what extent the fall in prices should be reflected in the amount of land revenue to be demanded by the Government, and the rents to be fixed between the landlord and the tenant. I have no doubt that the underlying idea of what was said by Mr. B. Das and my Honourable friend, Mr. Shah Nawaz, led in the same direction. Great minds often think alike ! Apparently, the United Provinces Government and the Members of the Assembly are thinking alike.

Passing on to my own province, the Assembly will no doubt see from the figures I am going to quote, the extent of the distress prevailing there, and the responsibility of the Administration of that province. During the last year, land revenue to the extent of 1 crore and 40 lakhs had to be remitted. One crore and forty lakhs ! That is, in land revenue and water rates. There is distress in two districts where test works have been opened, and some gratuitous relief has also been distributed. The suspension of land revenue in other districts has also been resorted to. *Takavi* is liberally distributed ; concessions in canal areas are also given ; and railway freights of over a lakh had to be paid by the Punjab Government because their expectations did not come up to the figure to which they ought to have worked up their exports to Calcutta.

Mian Muhammad Shah Nawaz : But are the conditions materially improved ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : Now, Sir, these are all but palliatives. I do not claim that any Local Government has put the matter right, or for the matter of that can in a year or even two or three years put matters right. Is this trouble of low prices a trouble limited to a province or limited to India ? Are the Government of India responsible for the low prices that prevail here or, at all events, are we entirely responsible for them ? Is the responsibility wholly ours ? If some Members for a moment think

[Sir Fazl-i-Husain.]

that that is so, I would request them to study the conditions prevailing in other parts of the world. I will not go so far afield as the whole world but would confine myself to the British Empire. Are not the Australians quite near us? I have got in my hand the Journal of the Parliaments of the Empire, and Australia claims quite 56 pages of this book. It is very sad reading from beginning to end. I have been through it. Canada presents another tale of sorrow. They have tried to do there all that has suggested itself from time to time to various persons who want to improve the lot of the agriculturist. In one place they have actually said that every man who produces say a maund of wheat ought to get 4 annās, and the Finance Member was asked to raise a loan as was suggested by one of my friends here. There is a strong party in favour of it, but they had reached the stage where the loan could not be subscribed. Therefore, it is easy enough to devise schemes to help the agriculturist and we may succeed in helping him for a year or two, but the process cannot go on for any length of time. We have heard this morning the enormous debt which the agriculturists of India owe. It is something like 875 crores of rupees, the interest of which we were told comes to about 237 crores. I find from this book, which is very interesting, that in Australia the annual produce of the farmers has not been found this year or the last year, I forget which, to be enough to pay the interest on the debt due from the farmers. Does not that sound bad? They say that the produce of a farmer is not enough to pay even the interest which he owes for the debt that is due from him?

Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon : The same prevails in India.

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : Then I can tell my Honourable friend that "*margi amboh jashni darad*".

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt : What does it mean?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : It means this, Mr. Amar Nath, that if you were called upon to die alone, by yourself you might feel a little bit awkward about it and feel hurt also, but if you were told that you and all the Members of the Assembly would die together, you would not I trust mind it very much. (Laughter.)

I do not really mean to say that we must not take this economic distress seriously nor that we should not strain every nerve of our brains to devise means to meeting it and overcoming it as far as possible. But at the same time it is no use taking it so seriously to heart as to imagine that we are the only afflicted people in the world, and not others, because obviously there are others also. I assure you that I have tried my level best to find out why we are all suffering in India as well as outside India. I must say I have not got the financial gift to make that discovery. Somebody said there is not enough money and we must find money. I must say as a Member for Education in charge of all sorts of researches that are going on now and which might be stopped owing to the retrenchment campaign, that none has yet discovered the old *Kimya* of making gold that we could distribute in the country.

But one thing I can tell the Assembly straight away. It is this. They want me or want the Government to institute a committee of experts and Members of the Assembly to inquire into the present agricultural distress. Is it to inquire whether this distress exists or not? If that is the object, then it is useless to have a committee, because we know there is distress. Then, admitting that there is agricultural distress, this committee is to do what? To devise means for improving the condition of the agricultural population. Now, just imagine, this committee is to devise means for improving the condition of the agricultural people. Surely, India did not spend 13 lakhs of rupees on the Royal Commission on Agriculture which sat for 18 months and which produced 14 volumes and which made a book of recommendations, in pursuance of which this Assembly organised a Governing Body of the Council of Agricultural Research which is functioning now and which the Assembly is now thinking whether they should not do without.

Mr. B. Das : Mr. Amar Nath Dutt never meant that.

Mian Muhammad Shah Nawaz : You are avoiding the issue.

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : The other way of improving the condition of the agriculturist is well known to all of us and I hinted at it this morning, namely, the nation-building activities in the rural areas. Without primary education and without removing the ignorance of the rural masses, it is impossible to achieve any success. They lack vitality. We have tried to do away with things that bring about lack of vitality by improving the public health conditions of the malaria-infected areas. When we are doing this and many more useful things on the top of it comes this financial depression, and what is the result? Honourable Members sitting opposite are advising strongly that all activities beneficent or otherwise should be stopped.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer : Yes, food first.

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : True, I bow to that. But is this committee going to find food or to advise how food is to be produced, and can food be produced unless people who are to produce it know what is the right way of producing it?

Mr. B. Das : It will reduce the land revenue and thereby bring more food.

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : As for land revenue and water rate and things of that description, no useful purpose can be served by constituting a committee of the Members of the Assembly and experts. That is a matter which is peculiarly the concern of the Provincial Governments and Provincial Governments have their Legislatures, to which Legislatures in money matters they are responsible. Therefore, to say that we should take upon ourselves to do the work that Local Governments and Local Legislatures are doing, to my mind, is hardly fair to them. It shows hardly the right appreciation for the efforts that they are making, and if I may venture to say so, it is the usual frailty of all associations and legislatures—they feel that they can do the work of other legislatures ever so much better. Therefore, I strongly place these points before the House to show

[Sir Fazl-i-Husain.]

whether we are not really having recourse to the appointment of a committee as a matter of personal satisfaction and not that we really expect much to come out of it. If it is so, I trust the Assembly will not adopt the Resolution.

Mr. Arthur Moore (Bengal : European) : After the sincere and impassioned speech of Mr. Shah Nawaz, I think the Member who doubted the realities of agricultural distress and agricultural unrest must have revised his opinions. But, Sir, it is only a few years ago since the Indian taxpayer spent a sum of 14 lakhs on an agricultural enquiry and as far as I know the principal result of that was the Council of Agricultural Research, and I am told, I do not know whether it is correct, that in these times of financial stringency there is already a proposal to abolish that Council of Agricultural Research. Now, it seems to me that it would be the height of paradox on grounds of financial stringency if we abolish the results of one Commission, and for the same reason decide to set up another machinery of enquiry which would involve fresh expenditure. Therefore, I cannot see my way to vote for my friend, Mr. Amar Nath Dutt.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt : You have never voted with us.

Mr. Arthur Moore : O, yes, we have been in the same lobby several times. At the same time one of our objections to this Resolution is that it is really a delaying Resolution. We do feel that the agricultural situation is extremely serious and that something has got to be done. The unfortunate agriculturist has through the catastrophic fall in the price of silver lost his savings and through the equally catastrophic fall in the price of commodities has lost his income, and as well as that he is loaded down by debt. Therefore, I would like, if it is possible, to get some indication from Government as to what real measures they think can be taken. Some Members would be interested to learn something of the question of the possibility of re-monetization of silver. The proposal is rapidly making new converts, and we would be very glad if it were possible for Government to give us a little information on that question. Certainly I would not ask them to commit themselves, but they can tell us something whether it has reached some definite stage of discussion, in what I imagine must be an international discussion. We would be very glad to know if there is in the offing any possibility of speedy international action with regard to silver, which we do feel might bring possibly enormous relief to the Indian agriculturist.

Further, there is the question as to whether there is under contemplation by Government any real and effective measure to deal with the exorbitant interest charges to agriculturists, and whether in the opinion of Government a really practicable measure is possible.

Mr. C. S. Banga Iyer (Rohilkund and Kumaon Divisions : Non-Muhammadan Rural) : Sir, I must confess that I was somewhat disappointed with the speech of the Honourable Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain. I was disappointed not because I did not recognise in his speech his usual sympathy for the agricultural masses, he was so full of it, but I was disappointed because his speech was devoid of any practical measures to meet the situation, a fact which I believe Mr. Arthur Moore also had in mind when he definitely wanted to know what the Government had to show in a practical way to deal with the situation. I believe on this problem, so far

as the question of sympathy is concerned, the House is unanimous, as it never has been in the past, but mere sympathy without its being translated into actuality will not deal with the situation with which the country is confronted. Sir, as an old Member of this House, I remember the agony that prevailed on one side of the House when the ratio and exchange question was being discussed. I also remember on that occasion the warning that was given to the Government from the non-official Benches, how, as they thought, this manipulation of the ratio and exchange would affect the agricultural masses in an agricultural country. Unfortunately today the Honourable Member responsible for the creation of that particular ratio is absent and the burden of his responsibility falls on new shoulders. We have not had any assurance from the Government that they propose to take any practical step in the way of revising the ratio, and curiously enough the Honourable Member on behalf of the Government who spoke, spoke only about how much the Government feel in this matter and what they have done in certain provinces and that it is a provincial matter. When a matter of this kind is brought before the Assembly, we are told, "Go to the provinces"; then I say there should have been no discussion at all in this House. There should have been a provincial discussion. But it is an all-India problem, and every province is affected and we want more or less uniformity of treatment. There is no use saying that parts of the Central Provinces are better off than parts of the Punjab; there is no use saying that in the United Provinces there is what the Honourable Sir Fazl-i-Husain was pleased to describe as "inter-action of economic and political forces". Sir, I thought that that expression, with all its implications, would not have been used in this House, especially after the Government of the United Provinces and the politicians of the United Provinces agreeing to observe the Settlement and the inter-action of economic and political forces, as he himself later on was pleased to observe, found expression in what is called the appointment of a commission of enquiry. What is demanded now is not what Mr. Arthur Moore was pleased to observe as a delaying process. We do not want anything in the nature of expensive machinery either. If he has read the Resolution, rather the tabled amendment of Mr. Das, he could have understood the purpose that we have in mind.

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : Where is the amendment of Mr. Das.....

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer : I do not want to give way to the Honourable Member. We do not want an expensive enquiry. We do not want an expensive commission of enquiry, as the Honourable Sir Fazl-i-Husain was perhaps thinking, when he was pointing out to us the Agricultural Commission and its enquiries and its recommendations. We know what has happened to the recommendations of the Agricultural Commission. He ought to tell us what the Government have done in regard to those recommendations. He ought to tell us why those recommendations have not been given effect to. There is no use telling us that we are now asking for a commission of enquiry, a sort of white elephant consisting of white men and coloured men and all kinds of men who would just go into a committee of enquiry and make a mountain of recommendations and then just put them aside and not give effect to them. That is not what we are concerned with. We are now face to face with a most difficult situation in the country, face to face with what in his most frank and honest and feeling speech, Mr. Shah Nawaz was pleased to describe as

[Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer.]

a situation verging almost on a revolution : he did not use that word, but that is what he meant. He said, " Something coming and for goodness' sake—I am a loyal man and my family is loyal : I am not accustomed to talk like this, but knowing things as I do in the Punjab, something is coming, something like communism ". That is what he had in his mind when he dwelt on the situation getting from bad to worse. At such a time we want the Government to tell us what they propose to do. The Honourable Member-in-Charge talked about Australia, and in a rather flippant and frivolous way, unworthy of an occasion of this kind, said that all of us were in a sinking boat and all the Assembly Members would like to die together rather than die alone. That is the kind of attitude that is responsible for the utter irresponsibility which characterises the policy of the Government when on occasions like this we bring forward practical suggestions to meet a delicate crisis. What has the Finance Member to say I ask, in regard to the revision of the exchange and the ratio ? Is he going to accept the opinion which was expressed in this House when the ratio was under discussion ? If Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas were here today, or if I were inclined to read from his speeches, I could read to you that his prophecy has turned out to be true in regard to the crisis that has swept over the land.

Then the Honourable Member was talking of America, he was talking of Australia and he was talking of England. Does he understand the average income of an Englishman ? Does the Honourable Sir Fazl-i-Hussain understand the average income of people in America and the average income of the Indian ? Has he made a comparative study of the situation there and the situation here ? I am simply astonished that a Member entrusted with much responsibility should talk so frivolously in this matter. We should like to know if Government officials drawing high salaries are prepared to forego 30 or 40 per cent. of their salaries until the situation is tided over ?

Sirdar Harbans Singh Brar : Like Australia.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer : My friend, Mr. Harbans Singh says like Australia. I do not know why that quotation did not emanate from the Honourable Sir Fazl-i-Hussain (Laughter), or from the gentlemen seated on the Treasury Benches. I ask, are they prepared to forego 40 per cent. of their salaries until the agricultural and economic situation improves ? We have no answer to that question. The proper thing would be for men drawing over Rs. 500 to forego 40 per cent. of their salary, and men drawing under Rs. 500 to forego 20 per cent. of their salary. Let us face things in a practical way. We do not want commissions of enquiry ; we do not want white elephants to tour over the land. We want to deal with the proposition as it is, with the situation in the country growing worse and worse. After all there is what Sir Fazl-i-Husain himself described as the inter-action of political forces. Those political forces have been temporarily chained. Goodness knows when the hounds of Bellona are going to be let loose on this land. I hope a situation like that will never arise, but we cannot be sure. In politics it is the unexpected that always happens, as the late Lord Morley used to say. Face to face with an agricultural crisis, of which the Honourable Sir Fazl-i-Husain himself is quite well aware, and also with an unsettled state of political affairs, what have we got from the Government

in the shape of practical proposals ? I put to them one question : are they prepared to forego—men drawing more than Rs. 500—forty per cent. of their salary ? I do not want them to forego that for all time to come but only until the situation is tided over. Secondly, are they going to revise the present ratio and the present exchange ? That has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. The forecasts of prophets, like Sir Basil Blackett, an able man himself, have proved absolutely false. Our own prophecies have unfortunately proved true. We were then thought to be talking like Cassandras, prognosticating an ugly and clamorous future, but our prophecies have unfortunately proved true, and in the light of that experience, in the light of all that has happened, are the Government prepared to revise this ratio ? Are they prepared to get out of this maladjustment of ratio and exchange ?

My third and last question is this : are they prepared to see to it that the land revenue is, as Mr. Shah Nawaz truly said, considerably reduced until the situation is tided over ? Or are they prepared to receive their revenue in kind instead of in cash ? I do not want sympathy : I do not want soft words of which we have had an abundance today. Soft words were showered on this House by Sir Fazl-i-Husain, but soft words cannot liquefy hard facts.

Sirdar Harbans Singh Brar (East Punjab : Sikh) : Sir, Mr. Shah Nawaz has truly displayed what the Punjab and other agriculturists all over the country are feeling. He has asked that the land revenue should be charged in kind. I whole-heartedly support it, and I would go further and ask that the agriculturist should not be burdened more than the urban population and that the land revenue should be based on the same scale as the taxes on income. People in urban areas getting an income up to Rs. 2,000 a year are not taxed on their income—they do not have to pay even a pie. But the agriculturist who has got even a farm of 10 acres and whose income does not go to more than 50 rupees has to pay land revenue as well as water rates. We must have equality. If the Bombay mill-owners and capitalists want bounties for Tatas in order that they may get dividends, if they want income-tax not to be levied on their securities in foreign countries, they must now come forward and feel with the agriculturists and propose to the Government that the taxes on land should be on the same scale as the taxes on income.

Then, Sir Fazl-i-Hussain pointed out the example of Australia and England. I hope Government in their sincerity will follow the example of the New South Wales Government where from the Governor downwards they have voluntarily agreed to a 25 per cent. cut in their salaries, and of England, where His Majesty the King Emperor knowing the high cost of living and the establishment which he requires, has agreed to a cut of £50,000 a year. I hope the Government of India will follow that example. (Hear, hear.) I hope the Government will put this principle into practice even before the Retrenchment Committee reports, because the remedy is needed to be immediate, and it is no use postponing it for a year or two, and in meantime to consider their report, print it, circulate it and wait for opinions and all that sort of thing. They must be practical men and face things in a practical way.

As regards the rate of interest that Mr. Shah Nawaz wants to be fixed, I do not think that is a practical proposition. The money-lender will

[Sirdar Harbans Singh Brar.]

merely get the amount written double in the beginning, whatever the interest may be. What the Government ought to do is to follow the German example and establish land mortgage banks which would advance money to agriculturists at a rate which is now charged on *takavi*, or a little more than the rate at which Government borrow themselves. It is only if Government adopt such propositions that the agricultural conditions can be improved.

As Mr. Ranga Iyer said, the question of the ratio and exchange is most important. It was emphasised from the non-official Benches most unequivocally that the conditions will be what they are now; but the Government did not pay any heed to it and unfortunately some Members who are now with us voted with the Government then under some mistake or misapprehension. (Laughter.) I hope now they have revised their opinion and they will also be with us in pressing on the Government that it is time to change the ratio to what it was previously.

With these few remarks I appeal to the Government not merely to express lip sympathy with the agriculturists or say that the conditions here are the same as in the whole world, that it is the same with Australia, Canada or England, and that Members of this Assembly would like to die together rather than one by one and as other countries are also suffering, let us also suffer. That is no consolation. If other countries are not doing well, that is no concern of ours: that is no reason why we should not do anything. We must mend our ways and manage our own affairs in a more business-like manner and try to put the conditions right and help the agriculturists in the most distressing trouble which they have ever faced since the British rule in India, because during these 160 years the condition of the agricultural masses has gone from bad to worse, and now they are almost on the verge of insolvency. What I predicted on the 31st March last will soon come true, that unless the Government adopt these measures, revolution will come and we are in the midst of it. Let them now guard against it if they want to remain any more in India.

Rai Bahadur Lala Brij Kishore (Lucknow Division: Non-Muhamadan Rural): Sir, the present agricultural distress prevailing all over the country is too well known to require any mention. India is chiefly an agricultural country where a very large percentage of the population lives by agriculture. And when such a large population of the country is in distress due to an unprecedented fall in the prices of agricultural produce, it is imperative for the Government and for this House to explore all avenues for improving the condition of the agricultural masses, and the improvement of the masses is impossible without rendering them financial assistance. No masses in the world are so steeped in such abject poverty as the masses of India. The agricultural indebtedness of the masses is a notorious fact, but the only remedy for such indebtedness is to raise the standard of living. At present, however, the trouble has arisen through various causes, not the least of which is agricultural depression. How this agricultural depression or distress has arisen, how it is to be tided over and how long it will last, are matters which call for urgent enquiry. All that my Honourable friend, the Mover of the Resolution, wants is a committee of enquiry consisting of experts and Members of this House to probe this distress to the bottom so that both the Government and the agricultural classes will be in a position to

combat it. Perhaps the Government are not aware how hard this agricultural depression has hit the Zamindars. Agricultural produce is lying unsold so much so that one contemplates with anxiety as to what will happen at next harvest when there will be increased reaping of wheat and decreased sale. What is it due to? Is it due to outside competition or to any other reason, the Government themselves are not in a position to furnish an answer, and having as they do the welfare at their heart of the consumer as well as the producer it is not too much to expect of the Government to accept this Resolution. With these words, Sir, I support the Resolution moved by my Honourable friend, Mr. Amar Nath Dutt.

Kunwar Raghbir Singh (Agra Division : Non-Muhammadan Rural) : Sir, I whole-heartedly support the very useful and necessary Resolution of my Honourable friend, Mr. Amar Nath Dutt.

India is predominantly an agricultural country and every Government of India must hold the welfare of the agriculturist at heart, and unless it does so, it is bound to fail in its primary mission. The distress is undoubtedly acute and it cannot be redressed by mere lip sympathy of the Government. Lord Irwin was very sympathetic, and being a landlord himself, showed keen interest in every matter concerning agriculture, but it is a pity that this distress arose in his time. The present Viceroy is also interested in agriculture as when he was Governor of Bombay and of Madras he showed his sympathy by attending agricultural exhibitions. There were so many such shows in his time as were never witnessed in any other Governor's time. In spite of such sympathetic Viceroys, the Government have been lukewarm in their attitude towards the agriculturist, as was apparent in the Delhi Session. Government in fact opposed the motion of my Honourable friend, Lala Hari Raj Swarup, about the dumping of wheat, and when the House carried that motion, the Government was forced to levy a tax on the import of wheat. So the price of wheat rose but very slightly. So unless the Government are forced to move, they do not do so themselves. Hence, my Honourable friend, Mr. Amar Nath Dutt, has earned the thanks of the teeming millions of my countrymen for bringing forward a matter of such importance. Government will be well advised in accepting the motion. There will be no necessity for remission of rent if the situation improves as a result of the deliberations of the committee proposed in the motion. There will be no necessity for the retrenchment axe, or the reduction of salaries of low paid clerks. So, the distress is very widespread, as the Annadata, the grain giver, is in trouble the layman eater is bound to die of hunger. The tenant, even if he pays his rent and his debt, cannot pay water rate and other dues; hence it is very necessary to appoint such a committee. In fact, the Government ought to have appointed such a committee themselves. It is, in my opinion, a silver lining in the cloud of agricultural distress that a lawyer has thought it proper to bring such a motion and an industrialist supports it. So, the House is unanimous in its support. Hence, I will again appeal to the Government to accept it and save their face from a crushing defeat. Taxation is very heavy in my province. 45 per cent. is revenue, 4 per cent. cess, income-tax, district board tax, on circumstances and property, etc.—all these are, you will admit, sufficient to ruin a land holder. All these things should be gone into by the proposed committee.

Mr. C. B. Elliott (Madras : European) : I am not an agricultural labourer, though, as a golfer, I have sometimes done my bit on the land. But I have listened to all the speeches with very real sympathy, because like most Englishmen land runs in my blood and in the blood of my ancestors. I have listened to some of the suggestions made, and I want to try and put one or two of them to the test of reality. First of all, let us take the idea of a moratorium. One speaker seemed to me rather to advise the Government to create a crematorium for creditors rather than a moratorium for debtors. (Laughter.) I take it that the ashes will be presented to the Sowcar's family. But what would be the result of a moratorium, especially if no suits were instituted for 2 years ? You would at once throw the whole of the legal profession on the dole, and the judges would be joining the ranks of the unemployed. One must be practical, and how are you going to stop suits being filed for two years ? And when you put those proposals to the practical every day test, then I think you will begin to see that the task of Government is not quite so easy as some people would think.

Then some people want to pay taxes in kind. Let me give you an example of that. A well known advocate the other day went down to Madura, and as usual the whole of the fee had not been paid in advance. The clients met him with a large supply of grains and told him, " Sir, will you take this instead ? " He said, " No. I want a fee, and not a feed ". (Laughter.) Let us apply the idea to ourselves. Instead of all these delightful sets of papers and cheques that have been distributed to us, if we had been told, " Three bullock carts or five rickshaws, or motor cars or motor lorries—but we have no lorries in Simla—are awaiting you downstairs with a large supply of millets in lieu of your allowances," what would you do ? (*An Honourable Member* : " That is only an alternative "). I wish to say that there must be practical results with regard to these propositions.

I want to say one word or two if I may about the agricultural labourer. After all he is rather an improvident fellow. What does he waste—I say it with some sacrifice as a lawyer—what does he waste very often on a lawyer ? How many of these crores we have been told have been taken from the *sowcar* for a mere faction fight and so on ? And I do think that those who have influence amongst the agricultural population might do a great deal to help the agricultural population by educating them in matters like that. Then, Sir, you come to this question of excessive interest. Every lawyer knows that in every country to limit the rate of interest by law has been regarded as a panacea. What does the agriculturist do ? He signs a note for Rs. 200 or Rs. 300, takes Rs. 100 or less and the *sowcar* gets the legal rate of interest three times over. The difficulty is to protect the agriculturist in this country from himself, and not from the Government. And I do think that while these Usury Acts are well worthy of consideration, the first thing is to try and educate the agriculturist to take advantage of them and not let them take advantage of him. Certainly one would have thought that they would have been educated by the hard test of experience of what they find in the courts.

Then, Sir, there is one other point. I know that many people have visions of a more contented thrifty and prosperous agriculturist when the rate of interest is reduced. May I tell the House a little story ?

A friend of mine who is a great co-operator and very keen on assisting the agriculturist said to a most esteemed Madras agriculturist not long ago, "What rate of interest do you pay?" "Sir", he said, "I pay 30 per cent." And my friend said, "Would it not be of great help to you if you paid only 15 per cent.?" "Oh yes" he replied "because then I could borrow double". (Laughter.) And in all these measures you must not forget the human factor. I have been listening to-day with very great interest—for I am a new Member and have come here to learn—I have been listening with great sympathy to the speech of my Honourable friend opposite because it is a subject on which you can wax eloquent and his speech came from his heart—there is no doubt about that. I am not a whit behind him in wishing to see the agricultural prosperity of India restored, but I asked myself, what about my own case? What about rubber which was fetching 4/6 pence a pound three or four years ago? We are now getting about 2 pence for it. It is no use sitting down and wringing your hands, but I must thank God that it is not a penny—ha'penny. That is the spirit in which to approach it, and I do think that the worst form of depression is the spiritual depression, the human depression which has so largely been underlying the speeches delivered to-day. A friend of mine, a Scoutmaster, not long ago sent out a card which I put up over my washing stand where I shall see it at least once a day. That card says, "Always plus, never minus". And I do think that when we stand here and cry out that the country is on the brink of a revolution, we are rather inviting it to revolt. If we cry out here, and say that all is wrong with agriculture, what is the good of that? The answer is this, that every one of us in the past has been unthriftly. What the world wants is a bit of more saving, a bit of more unselfishness and self-sacrifice. And what I think is the most bright and hopeful feature to-day is what I saw outside just now, that His Majesty the King has made a cut of £50,000 in the Civil List and the Prince of Wales has given £10,000 to the State. I am prepared to give ten rupees per centum if the hat goes round, or such proportion of my income as I can spare. That is the right spirit, and if we meet in that spirit and if we do not send out what I would call a minus cry to the country but a plus cry, I believe the spirit of the country will be elevated. But the more you encourage self-pity in the agriculturist, the more you are keeping him down and not raising him up. And I would like a much more encouraging message to go from this House to the agriculturists of India, and I believe that instead of appointing another committee, we should take other steps. I remember being once told a story of a number of people on board a ship which was sinking, and somebody said, "All hope is gone what shall we do?" and somebody else said, "Let us form ourselves into a committee"; and they went down, sitting, as a committee. Whereas if I have got to sink, I want to sink standing up.

Sir, I do not hold any brief to defend any Minister, but I do think that the idea that there was anything frivolous in the speech of the Honourable Minister was literally a mistake. I think it was valuable to hear what Government have done; and I think the best test of what people are going to do is to look back and see what they have done and what they are now doing. And although one knows that in the Punjab the conditions are bad, surely one word of thanks and of encouragement

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might have come from some of the speakers thanking that Government for what they have done and taking that as, if I may say so, an earnest of further remissions to come.

Sir, this proposed committee—I notice that experts come first and the Members of this House come next, but that is a small point—this Committee I suppose would not report for two or three years. Well, I am a man of law and yet I am going to indulge in a word of prophecy. I do believe that what is wanted to-day in the world is a return of confidence. Things cannot go very much lower and improvement is bound to come. I believe if you study all the curves of trade in the past you will find that the present depression cannot go lower. It is impossible, for example, for rubber to remain at about 2 pence a pound much longer. And if you get to that position and the people in the business world feel that the bottom has been reached, at once they start buying again and then you are going to see prices rising; and, if nothing else, what is first wanted is a plus feeling, as I call it, of confidence and not the minus of a spiritually depressed class. And I hope that in that way the suggestion made by the leader of our little Group with regard to silver may be considered. But I do feel, after all that has been said, that the general feeling in the House is simply a sort of gesture and not a practical proposition. The fact remains that the moment a committee is appointed, everybody says that nothing can be done until the committee has reported. This appointment of a committee is often like an old practice of old-fashioned pleaders in England when they used to enter in their defence a number of what were known as dilatory exceptions. I trust that Government in this case will not commit themselves to a plea which is really a plea of temporary exceptions, and say that they will appoint a committee and so they must wait, which they can very well say, until the committee has reported. Sir, I give my vote against, though I desire to say that every right-thinking man has a very deep and real feeling for the agricultural depression that exists in India. We do not shut our eyes to that fact and I know it. My pocket tells me that too. But if agricultural conditions in India to-day have dropped by 50 per cent., you may take it from me that in Ceylon which geologically once formed part of India, it has fallen by 200 per cent. And so I say, thank God for the fact that India is in a very much healthier and better position to-day than almost any other part of His Majesty's Dominions. (Applause.)

Sir Cowasji Jehangir (Bombay City : Non-Muhammadan Urban) : Mr. President, I think it will be admitted that this debate has served a most useful purpose. We have been hearing from all parts of the country the cry not only of trade depression but of agricultural depression, and every Legislative Council has discussed this question. And if nothing else, we have to thank our friend, Mr. Amar Nath Dutt, for having given this House an opportunity of giving vent to its feelings collectively and individually. Mr. President, as the Honourable Member said, this is very much a provincial subject. But the larger aspects can only be dealt with in this House, and I do not know whether my Honourable friends on the Benches opposite propose to do so or not.

It might be, in the opinion of the Finance Member, beating a dead horse to talk about the ratio. But I would assure him that although he would like to forget it, it is not possible for both agriculturists and industrialists to forget that all-important question in times of the greatest depression the world has ever seen. Again, Sir, we have been given

5 P.M. by the Honourable Member in charge a detailed account of what Provincial Governments have done, and really you can discuss these things most beneficially only in Provincial Councils, where circumstances vary so greatly from one part of India to another. Therefore to have a committee to effectively consider all the conditions that prevail throughout this country is a practical impossibility, but I do desire to point out one thing. Many of us have been sitting on Retrenchment Committees. We have been told by Mr. Ranga Iyer that salaries should be cut down by 50 per cent. I hope and trust that when the Reports of these committees come to be discussed in this Honourable House, Mr. Ranga Iyer will give his steady and valuable support not to imaginary cuts of 50 per cent., but to the solid and substantial cuts that the Committees may recommend. The time will come when the support of this House will really be required, and I trust it will be forthcoming. That time cannot be postponed very much longer. Therefore I would suggest that appointing a committee means further expenditure and if Mr. Amar Nath Dutt's committee is going to cost this country even one thousand rupees, I would vote against it. If Mr. Amar Nath Dutt can invent a committee that will not spend any money, I have no objection if Government agree to having such a committee.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt : Honorary committee.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir : I am perfectly certain that we would not advance very far if we had an honorary committee. If it gives satisfaction to my Honourable friend, let him by all means have it, but provided it does not spend anything like the amount spent on commissions in the past or committees in the past. I prophesy most reluctantly that the result will also be nothing at all. Nevertheless, Mr. President, I do desire that Government, if they are not already, should be alive to the position that has been created in this country. Poor as this country is, trade and agricultural depression have hit it harder than they have hit other countries. A note of warning has been sounded not only here but on other platforms, from the north to the south, and from the east to the west, that we are running on to a rock where the ship will founder and break up, if we do not take steps to see that the agricultural classes are enabled to live through this great crisis. That is all that is asked for from this side of the House. How is that to be done—relief from taxation to a much greater extent for the next year and a half, or it may be for the next two years, appears most advisable, and in order to do that, if we have to increase our debt, we shall be ready to bear the burden. But it must be a well thought out and well considered scheme of relief. The relief must go into the right pockets, and it must not last any longer than the critical time demands, and I venture to suggest that if that relief is given and the ship is prevented from going to the rocks as it might otherwise do, you must have a well considered scheme. You will have revolution if present conditions continue. The money will be well spent even if it is borrowed money. If we are alive to the position that it is not starvation alone that we are facing but complete and

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absolute ruin, I feel sure that Government will not hesitate to take the very extreme measure of giving relief from borrowed money. It may not be sound finance but in times like this, principles have sometimes to be forgotten and neglected. Such sound finance can await the day when normal times return and then sound finance can come back into its own, but to talk of sound finance and to talk of imposing greater burdens in critical times like this are only telling us, and telling us in stronger language than even the extremists, that Government do not realise their responsibility and their duties. It is not only in their own interests, it is not only in the interests of this country, it is in the interests of the Empire that Government should prevail upon Provincial Governments to look after the agricultural position for the next year and a half or so.

The Honourable Sir George Schnster (Finance Member) : I had not myself expected, when I read this Resolution, that it would be necessary for me to take part in this debate. I thought that the case about a further inquiry into general conditions would be easily answered, and I did not anticipate that the debate would range over such a wide field, and over a field with which I am so closely connected, as it has done in the course of the last half a dozen speeches. I should like to say at the outset that I entirely associate myself with those Members who struck what I might call a serious note in this discussion. It is a very serious matter. On the other hand I should also like to associate myself with my Honourable and learned friend who spoke from the Benches of the European Group, and whom I should like to congratulate, if I might, on his first contribution to the debates of this House, which I certainly hope will not be his last. I should like to associate myself with him in the note which he struck, which was that, although we must take this position very seriously, it is right and it is going to benefit the country in the end, if we do not go about it in an atmosphere of complete and hopeless depression. I do believe, Sir, that difficult as the times are, the conditions in India to-day are, compared with other agricultural countries, not so desperate, and compared with the industrial countries where millions of people are actually suffering starvation. I think it may be said that there is not the same misery in India to-day as there is in those highly industrialised countries. One thing at least has been fortunate for India and that is that recently crops have been fairly good, and except in the most distressed parts, except I believe just now in certain parts of Bengal, there is a sufficiency of food. The situation to that extent is not so entirely desperate as some of the speeches might have led us to believe. But, having said that, I wish to return to my first sentence and say that I entirely associate myself with those who regard this as one of the most serious problems which India has ever had to face—the condition which has come upon the country to-day. I should like to say also that we on these Government Benches have been taking the position very seriously. We are not, as my Honourable friend, Mr. Das, would have the House believe, sitting idly in the cool air of Simla, an air which he himself did his best to heat. (Laughter.) We are not sitting up here idly, and neglecting any thought of what is going on in the great plains of India and amongst the agricultural masses. We have been in constant touch with the representatives of the Provincial Governments. We started last summer at the beginning of August, with a conference of the representatives of all the provinces to discuss the economic situation, and since then we have been constantly, officially and unofficially, in close touch with

them, constantly receiving reports, asking them whether there is any way in which we can help them, whether they have any proposals which require action by the Central Government—endeavouring to find some means which lie in our power to improve the situation. But, Sir, I venture to say to the opposite Benches that there is a certain tragedy awaiting all those who may come to fill posts of responsibility in any Government. It is so easy, when you sit outside and criticize or when you indulge in dreams of ambition for the future—and possibly it will fall to Members now in the Opposition to hold posts of responsibility—it is so easy to think of all the great things that could be done. I venture to say that any one who comes to sit in one of these seats and to tackle the actual problems will have to realize the limitations which beset all human endeavour, and will find himself sadly disappointed when he tries to make good those brave words and bright hopes which he may have expressed in his days of opposition. Sir, we have to think not only of the possible advantages of any measure which it is so easy to bring forward and to parade in argument : we have to think of *all* the consequences ; not merely to the few who will benefit but of all the reactions all-round, of any measure that may be proposed. And I venture to say that, when one comes to examine the sort of practical measures that have been proposed to-day, and when one feels responsible for all the consequences, I venture to say that the task is not quite so easy as it looks. We have had several practical measures proposed ; I will take them in the order in which I have noted them down. The Honourable the Leader of the European Group asked whether anything could be done to improve the situation by rehabilitating the value of silver. I wish, Sir, that I had longer time in which to deal with the matter because it is a highly complicated and technical subject. But I am sure my Honourable friend will not take it amiss if I say to him that I think there is a good deal of nonsense being talked about silver to-day. I read in many papers articles on the subject, emanating very largely from the United States, from people who have interests as producers of or dealers in silver, who try to make the world believe that one of the main causes of the present depression is the fall in the value of silver. They write often in great ignorance. They almost always speak of India, for example, as a country which is still on a silver currency ; and they say, in explaining the causes of the present depression, “ Look at India and China, two countries whose purchasing power is entirely dependent on silver, that is to say half of the population of the world, whose purchasing power has been entirely destroyed by the fact that silver has fallen to this unprecedentedly low level ”. Now of course everyone here knows that India is not on a silver basis, as far as her currency is concerned. But China is, and let us take the case of China. People say that the purchasing power of China has been destroyed because of the drop in the value of silver. But the purchasing power of a country, that is to say, its purchasing power for the purpose which has been mentioned in all these articles, its purchasing power in the region of international trade, does not depend on the intrinsic value of its currency : it depends on the goods which that country can export. No country can really pay for imports except with exports, and that fact is very clearly brought out if one examines the condition of China's trade. And here I may refer to an address given by Sir Arthur Salter in New York of which he sent me a copy, and I would remind the House that after he left India Sir Arthur Salter went to China to advise the Chinese Government on their economic situation, and that he came back through New York where he was at once got hold of, and asked to speak on the silver question. In

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this address, he pointed out that in the case of China, although the amount that she has purchased of international trading goods in the last year has fallen, still the percentage drop in her purchases has been less than the average percentage drop in the case of countries that are on a gold basis. Now I think that fact brings out absolutely convincingly that you cannot ascribe the word depression to-day to any fall in the purchasing power of China caused by a drop in silver values. Undoubtedly, disturbances in China have affected the position, and there are other factors of that kind which are operating in the world to-day, but I do assure my Honourable friend that we could not suddenly restore prosperity to the world by improving the price of silver.

As regards India, conditions are of course much better known to all Honourable Members. They know of course that silver is held in very large quantities by the masses of the population of India. But, for the greater part, that silver is not bought in order to be sold again : it is bought mainly to comply with traditional customs—to provide people with ornaments, and it is only in times of distress that they have to realize their silver. It is quite true that if in times of distress they have to realize their silver, their position would be better if silver was highly priced. But it certainly could not be said that the position in India could be permanently improved by raising the price of silver. What India wants is better values for her cotton and her jute and her rice and her ground-nuts and her wheat : that is what is really going to improve the position in India, rather than an improvement in the price of silver.

But let me follow the situation up still further. I have always made it clear in speeches on this subject in this House that we are very willing to co-operate in any form of international action to improve the price of silver. But even if we try to do what we can, what is it that we can do ? We have thrown out sympathetic suggestions, we have been ready to receive proposals, but no proposals which we could possibly accept have ever been put forward ; and, without going into details in the matter or revealing secrets, I would tell my Honourable friend that, as far as I can see at present, there is no chance of getting any sort of agreement with the American interests which would offer any hope of a permanent improvement in the price of silver, or which we could enter into except upon terms which no one who was responsible for the interests of India could possibly accept. That, Sir, is all that I would say on silver.

Now, I come to that much more controversial question which has been raised by several speakers, of the ratio. I only want to make certain points clear about that. In the first place, a good deal of credit has been taken for those who are said to have prophesied what the results of fixing the ratio at 1s. 6d. would be. Talk of this kind presumably implies that if the ratio had been fixed at 1s. 4d. conditions in India to-day would have been quite different. It is further apparently implied that these " prophets " foresaw the unprecedented and totally unparalleled economic disaster which has come upon the world in the last two years. I venture to say that if they foresaw that, their speeches during the controversy on the question of the ratio did not reveal the knowledge. I also assert that if the ratio had been fixed at 1s. 4d. in 1927, the percentage fall in prices that would have come upon India would have been exactly the same as it has been in the last 18 months. Of course, if the ratio was *now* changed from

1s. 6d. to 1s. 4d. there would come to this country slowly and by degrees an improvement of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in the rupee prices of those commodities whose prices in India immediately reflect the international level. That is quite true. But that, Sir, is not going to solve the present trouble. What we are up against is a drop of 40 per cent. and more in prices. We have wheat selling at less than one-third of the normal pre-war price. If you are going to improve that merely by $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., you are not going to solve the troubles of India as they exist to-day. And, on the other side, what is going to be the result? The theory underlying all the arguments which are brought forward to-day on this question is that when a country has once adopted a stable currency—and by a stable currency I mean a currency which maintains stability as an article of exchange with other currencies—it is legitimate for that country to alter the value of the unit of its currency in order to meet a fall in world prices. If that is once accepted, then I maintain that the whole idea of a stable currency goes. India would, in fact, have said: "We are going to have a currency based for the time being on a certain quantity of gold to the rupee; but, if gold goes up in value and commodities fall in terms of gold, then, in order to maintain stability of internal prices, we are going to say tomorrow that our rupee is to be worth so much less in gold than we said yesterday it was to be worth". Once you adopt that principle you have got away from stability, and you have put into the hands of the currency authorities the power to manipulate the value of your exchange. Now, Sir, *theoretically* there may be a good deal to be said for that. If we could bring into India a group of supermen who had the prophetic knowledge of the future and whose integrity was entirely above suspicion and whose ability was far greater than the ability of any group of men that could be found in any country to-day, then I say you might perhaps safely go on to such a basis of currency. But I am afraid that ideal condition is not likely to be realised in India within any time which anyone of us can foresee, and that applies not merely to India but to any other country of the world. I wish again that I had more time to enlarge upon this subject, but perhaps I might refer Honourable Members to a speech that I made at the annual meeting of the Federation of the Indian Chambers in Delhi last April when I quoted from the evidence which had been put up before the last Currency Commission, and when I proved to them convincingly that the opinion of all the Indian Chambers in the days of that Currency Commission, whatever they thought about the level at which the rupee ought to be stabilised, was absolutely united that the one thing which they did not want was an unstable currency which might be manipulated up and down by a human currency authority. That, Sir, is an opinion to which India had come as a result of the experience of being for 150 years on a silver basis, and of having a currency which fluctuated according to the value of silver. A silver currency is a fluctuating currency, but it has at least one advantage. It fluctuates automatically and it does not give the power to manipulate the value of your unit of currency into the hands of a small body of men. But India said: "We do not want a fluctuating currency: we want to be on a stable basis, and not to have the international value of our currency varying from day to day". I do not know whether Indian opinion has changed from that view now. I am greatly puzzled, when I read some of the utterances of the leaders of thought on this subject, to understand whether they really want to stabilise at a slightly lower level, or whether they want to abandon stability altogether. I do not believe the question has been faced by them, and I do not think any people, except

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perhaps one or two, have made up their minds on that vexed question. But I do say to my friends opposite : " What exactly do you really want, in order to improve the condition of India in that way ? " They ought to know on their side what they want. Do they want merely to go down to 1s. 4d., and get that small percentage benefit for a few people to which I have referred, or do they want to abandon the whole system of stabilised currency and go back to a system which they themselves condemned as the result of all the experience of the last century ?

Now, Sir, before I leave this subject, I would also call the attention of those who speak on these matters to the lessons that can be learnt from the world around us to-day. I have said that India is not in such a serious position as some other countries. That is very true. And if you look at all the agricultural countries of the world to-day, I do not think that you will find one which has really so little trouble as India has, except possibly, on external evidence, Canada. Look at the Argentine, or any other South American country. They have been forced off their gold basis. Have they benefited. Far from it. Look at Australia : they have been forced, by weakness, off their gold basis. Now, let us just examine the position of Australia. The Australian pound stands at a discount of 30 per cent. to-day. That means that it is about equivalent to the rupee standing about at 1s. 0½d. According to the arguments which we hear from those who condemn the Government for their currency policy, Australia ought to be now enjoying a sort of millennium. They have had the so-called advantage of an exchange which has dropped by thirty per cent., a change which has therefore raised the internal price level of all their goods. But are their troubles any the less ? As far as I can see, judging from the reports, their troubles are far greater than they were before, and the greatest of all their troubles is that, with the conditions that have come upon them, their power of borrowing abroad has disappeared altogether. It is not a question of the terms on which they can borrow : it is a fact that they cannot borrow on any terms.

Now, Sir, I think all these questions are worth discussing. I certainly have never been able to turn a deaf ear to opinions which are so widely expressed and held in India. Therefore ever since I have been here, it has not been the line which I have taken to say " This is a ' dead horse ', I am not going to say a word about this subject ". I have always tried to argue and reason it out with people on the other side. But I come back to what I said at the beginning that when Honourable Members opposite, who merely have the pleasant task of criticism, come before us and put proposals before us, let them try and imagine what action they themselves would take if they sat in our places and had to face all the consequences. They, as I said, can point to one or two advantages, but we have to consider all the consequences, bad and good and let that thought be in the minds of all who try and make the Government change their policy on this question of currency.

Sir, I am afraid that I have kept the House beyond my proper time. I will not refer to the third suggestion which has been made as a remedy, namely relaxation of land revenue. That course is in fact been boldly taken and it has already been dealt with by my Honourable colleague, Sir Fazl-i-Husain. At the very last moment one suggestion was made by the last speaker, my Honourable friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, and I am sure

he will excuse me if I say that I was deeply shocked by the tone of his speech. I trust that it will not be widely reported. If the message goes abroad that a leading Member of this Assembly, the actual leader of one of the largest opposition parties in the Assembly, a delegate to the Round Table Conference, a man, I think I may say, of outstanding reputation in India, has said that when times are bad, we cannot afford to observe principles of sound finance, then, Sir, I think it will be a very bad day for India. What we want above all at present is to preserve our credit.....

Sir Cowasji Jehangir : And let the ship go to the rocks.

The Honourable Sir George Schuster : And these are times when we have to stick to principles of sound finance. We have to set our teeth, we have to make sacrifices, I entirely agree with that, but let us hold fast and stick to our principles of sound finance. We can never afford to abandon those. (Applause.)

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt : At this late hour of the day, I am not going to take up much of the time of the House in attempting to reply *seriatim* to the points raised by the Honourable Member in charge of the Department of Education, Health and Lands. It will be my duty to reply to the objections that have been raised to this Resolution as briefly as I can. He has asked us what this Committee is going to do. He said it will merely catalogue the grievances of all the provinces, and in the picture that he wanted to give us of the various provinces, he has drawn a very gloomy picture of his own province. But he characterises Bengal as fortunate and lucky, as if it is a paradise. I would ask him to come with me to this province. I will not take him to those devastated tracts and areas where flood has been creating havoc. I shall take him to that tract of country which is described as "*Sujalam Shupalam Shasya Shyamalam*". Let him come with me. I shall bear all the costs. I find most of the Members here think that this Committee of enquiry may cost the Government some money and that it is not possible to spend any money at the present moment. I do not think that people who enquire into the causes of agricultural distress need be paid any high salaries, such as Rs. 64,000 and Rs. 80,000 a year. I think they would not even charge for their own food and travelling expenses. But they must adopt the same standard which the poor people adopt, namely, they must travel in carts and pay a few annas for going from place to place. They must have only rice and a few vegetables for their diet, not the sumptuous dinners which they enjoy at the Viceregal Lodge, or for the matter of that at the place of one of the Honourable Members, or the Cecil Hotel. I simply want an enquiry to be made, and as my Honourable friend over there suggested—one of the richest Members of this House—they cannot even spare Rs. 1,000. I say let the Government not spare even Rs. 100. Simply just enquire into the causes and if you think the Committee will cost you say even Rs. 5, do not have a Committee. You had better yourself enquire and go through, not with the same attitude as some of my Honourable friends over there reveal before this House. I was really pained how people who are being fed at the expense of the poor agriculturist, how people who have no right to be in this country of ours, how they can talk so flippantly and in the way they do about the agricultural distress of the country. Are you going to continue that attitude still towards the poor people of this land? Don't you see the signs of the times? Don't you read the writing on the wall? (Laughter.) My friend over there

[Mr. Amar Nath Dutt.]

who laughs will have to pay the penalty one day for his light heartedness. In fact, I was surprised to hear one Member saying that the cause of the difficulty of the agriculturist was he himself. I fail to understand what he means by that. Probably he thinks that he is not thrifty, he is uneducated, he is accustomed to half a meal a day, he is accustomed to have simple rags and for all these things the poor agriculturist himself is to be blamed. It was said by him that this Committee might take two or three years to enquire. All these simply amount to arguing in a vicious circle. You assume something, and then with that assumption you want to demolish the arguments on the other side. Well, you have no reason to assume such a thing, as that, that this enquiry will take two or three years for being completed. This inquiry should not take an ordinary intelligent man more than a month and a half if he cares to travel through all places of the country.

Mr. K. Ahmed : How will it be possible within a month and a half ?

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt : It may not be possible for bulky individuals like the interruptor but quite possible for an ordinary human being. (Laughter.) The argument that has been advanced by the Member that the agriculturist is his own enemy or that this committee of inquiry will not do any good is not at all a sound argument with which to oppose this motion of mine.

I wish now to take up one by one the arguments adduced by my Honourable friend, Sir Fazl-i-Husain. He says that no Local Government can put things right. I was just reading the Report of the Agricultural Commission about which so much fuss has been made. You will remember that this great Commission was a Royal Commission and I am not going to say much about it because it might be thought that to say anything against a Royal Commission is almost tantamount to a sacrilege. That Commission had as members Maharajas and G. C. I. E.'s or professors who live in cloistered seclusion. What do they know of the condition of life of the agriculturists and of the ills they suffer from ? Whenever you have a commission, you always get men from palaces to inquire into the condition of life in rural huts. There are members of committees of enquiry who cannot believe that a man can live at less than Rs. 50 a month. I tried to impress upon them that if they would go and see the agriculturists in villages they would find that the poor man lives on Rs. 3 to Rs. 4 a month—sometimes they maintain whole families for that sum. That is the state of things. So I say it is impossible for men born with silver spoons in their mouths to appreciate this state of things. What is the real condition of this country, such men can never know. This Agricultural Commission, in spite of its having Maharajas and learned professors as members could not relieve the miseries of the agriculturists. One of their recommendations was about a Marketing Board. Have you taken that up ? Have you made any attempt anywhere in any of the provinces to have a Marketing Board ? That is the ill from which the agriculturists suffer. I do not know about the conditions in other provinces : it may be that remission of rent is necessary there ; but as far as Bengal is concerned, where there is a permanent settlement, the rent is an infinitesimally small portion of their liabilities. What they complain of is the low prices to which the agricultural produce has come down. Paddy used to be sold—there is my friend presiding over the destinies of a

district and he knows all about it—at Rs. 4 or Rs. 4½ per maund. I received a letter yesterday saying that the price had come down to Rs. 1-4-0 a maund. Take for example a poor agriculturist who has only 20 bighas of land. In order to grow paddy on that land, the cost amounts to no less than Rs. 20 per bigha or Rs. 400 in all. It produces 120 maunds of paddy and a certain quantity of straw which fetches something like Rs. 40, while the 120 maunds of paddy will bring him Rs. 150, or a total of Rs. 190 in all. That is the state of things in Bengal. I do not know the conditions elsewhere ; so the question of remission of rent which was brought out and mixed with this question does not arise in Bengal : it may be the case in the United Provinces and other provinces where there is no permanent settlement. Therefore I want a thorough and sifting inquiry by people who know the real needs of the people and who can sympathetically realise and understand how to give them relief. If you do not want to appoint a regular committee of inquiry, if you only give me an undertaking that you will inquire into the causes—not in the way in which you wanted to satisfy us just now by your speech, giving us annual figures of Assam, Punjab and so forth—but a real inquiry, which will benefit the agricultural people of the country who form according to your own statistics 73.9 per cent. of the population, I will not press for a division. But if you are not even willing to have an inquiry of that type, certainly I shall press my Resolution to a division. With these words, I commend the Resolution to the House.

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : I have not quite grasped what the Honourable the Mover of the Resolution desires me to agree to. If he wants me to agree to this, that the debate as it has taken place to-day should be duly despatched to each Provincial Government with the request that they should take such action as they consider is necessary in the case of each province, then I will be very glad to do so. As a matter of fact, Honourable Members know that Provincial Governments are already instituting such inquiries on their own. They are actually doing it. If he wants any action to be taken at the headquarters, so far as the provinces are concerned, it is obvious that for any Honourable Member of this House to say that half a dozen of us should go about to Burma or Madras and so on is impossible. But if he wants any action to be taken at the centre it can only be with reference to the controversial question of finance. The House has heard what has been stated about that matter. Can we now make any advance on the present position. So far as I can see, we cannot. Therefore what I have already submitted with regard to the provinces I am ready to do.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt : What I wanted was that the Central Government should make an inquiry. I find from the Madras Government that they say it is not practicable for the Local Government to deal as a whole with any of the causes of the depression. That is their report, and in view of this I thought that the Provincial Governments could not do justice to the question and therefore it was necessary for the Central Government to step in and do the needful.

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : I have now grasped the Honourable Member's meaning. What he wants is that the causes of the depression should be inquired into—depression with reference to agricultural produce, I presume. So far as that subject is concerned, I have no doubt that the House will be glad to know that as regards one

[Sir Fazl-i-Husain.]

item of agricultural produce, I mean cotton, we have already taken part in the all-world conference which was held in London a short time ago. I understand that another one is going to be held in Egypt during the next three months or so, and although we are most anxious to economise and not send men from here, if we can manage it economically we have already provisionally arrived at the conclusion that we should take part in the Egyptian conference when it takes place. Similarly, if there is any other international conference going into the matter of prices, I shall be very glad indeed to see that India is represented on that conference.....

(At this stage Mr. B. Das rose in his place to put a question.)

Mr. President : I cannot at this stage allow the Honourable Member (Mr. B. Das) to put questions. I have allowed Mr. Dutt, as the Mover of the Resolution, to ask one or two questions so that he may consider whether he should withdraw, but I cannot allow any other Honourable Member to rise and put questions.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer : May I ask one question.....

Mr. President : As I have said, I will not allow any more questions to be put. The Honourable the Mover has no right now to say anything when the Government Member is replying, but I am making an exception in his favour in order to smooth the matter and see whether an agreement can be reached. I cannot extend that concession to any other Honourable Member.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt : Enquiry by the Central Government into the economic distress,—that is what I am concerned with.

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : That is exactly what we have done twice, that is to say, written to Local Governments asking them to keep us fully informed of the economic distress in each province, and actually the extracts I gave to the House this morning were from those very reports of economic distress throughout India.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt : I want the Central Government to take the initiative.

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : I do not propose to give any lengthy reply. The matter is to my mind extremely simple. The Honourable Member wants a moving committee consisting of Members of the Assembly and some experts. (*Some Honourable Members :* "No, no.") All right. He does not want a roving committee. He wants a committee which will sit at headquarters in Simla, or if necessary, in Delhi and make an enquiry. Well, Sir, I am afraid I cannot understand what that committee is going to do as to the agricultural conditions of the villages of Bengal which the Honourable the Mover is so anxious about. They cannot do it in Simla or Delhi; they must go to the villages of Bengal, and if to the villages of Bengal, why not then to the villages of Lyallpur.....

Sir Cowasji Jehangir : Is not the Government of India holding an enquiry into those reports?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : We have made enquiries twice already, and we have requested the Local Governments to keep us informed from time to time.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir : And you will enquire in the future again ?

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : Of course, I will.

Mr. President : Will the Honourable the Mover make up his mind ?

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt : I have made up my mind if he really promises what is needed, *viz.*, " The Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to enquire into the causes ". I mean you.....

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : I cannot go and quarrel with the Local Governments and say, I must do it.

Mr. President : Let him finish reading the Resolution.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt : " This Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to inquire into the causes of the present agricultural distress and to devise means for improving the condition of the agricultural population ". If the Honourable Member in charge accepts this, then there is nothing else to be done.

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain : I must not mislead the Assembly in any way. If " inquire " means inquire from Local Governments, I will do it. If it means that I am going to institute an independent inquiry of my own, then I am afraid I cannot do it. If you mean the former, I am at your service. If you mean the latter, I cannot do it.

Mr. President : I do not think there is any room now for misunderstanding. The Honourable Member in charge gives an assurance that he will make enquiries from the Provincial Governments as regards the points mentioned in the Resolution. The Honourable Member has also made it clear that he will not constitute any definite separate enquiry. The Honourable the Mover has now to make up his mind whether he will accept the assurance or whether he will not. I cannot allow the discussion to go on indefinitely across the table.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt : Then I press my Resolution.

Mr. President : The question is :

" That this Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to form a committee of inquiry consisting of experts and Members of the Assembly to inquire into the causes of the present agricultural distress and to devise means for improving the condition of the agricultural population."

The Assembly divided.

AYES—23.

Aggarwal, Mr. Jagan Nath.
 Azhar Ali, Mr. Muhammad.
 Badi-uz-Zaman, Maulvi.
 Bagla, Lala Rameshwar Prasad.
 Bhuput Singh, Mr.
 Brij Kishore, Rai Bahadur Lala.
 Das, Mr. B.
 Dutt, Mr. Amar Nath.
 Harbans Singh Brar, Sirdar.
 Hari Raj Swarup, Lala.
 Ismail Ali Khan, Kunwar Haji.
 Mitra, Mr. S. C.

Murtuza Saheb Bahadur, Maulvi Sayyid.
 Pandit, Rao Bahadur S. R.
 Puri, Mr. B. B.
 Baghubir Singh, Kunwar.
 Rajan Bakhsh Shah, Khan Bahadur
 Makhdum Syed.
 Ranga Iyer, Mr. C. S.
 Sant Singh, Sardar.
 Shah Nawaz, Mian Muhammad.
 Sohan Singh, Sirdar.
 Yamin Khan, Mr. Muhammad.
 Zulfqar Ali Khan, Sir.

NOES—51.

Abdul Qaiyum, Nawab Sir Sahibzada.	Knight, Mr. H. F.
Ahmed, Mr. K.	Lall, Mr. S.
Alah Bakhsh Khan Tiwana, Khan Bahadur Malik.	Leach, Mr. F. B.
Anklesaria, Mr. N. N.	Misra, Mr. B. N.
Azizuddin Ahmad Bilgrami, Qazi.	Moore, Mr. Arthur.
Bajpai, Mr. R. S.	Morgan, Mr. G.
Banerji, Mr. Rajnarayan.	Mukherjee, Rai Bahadur S. C.
Chinoy, Mr. Rahimtoola M.	Parsons, Mr. A. A. L.
Crerar, The Honourable Sir James.	Rafuddin Ahmad, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Dalal, Dr. R. D.	Rainy, The Honourable Sir George.
De Souza, Dr. F. X.	Rajah, Rao Bahadur M. C.
Dyer, Mr. J. F.	Rama Rao, Rai Bahadur U.
Elliott, Mr. C. B.	Row, Mr. K. Sanjiva.
Fazl-i-Husain, The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir.	Roy, Mr. S. N.
Fox, Mr. H. B.	Sahi, Mr. Ram Prasad Narayan.
French, Mr. J. C.	Sama, Sir Hubert.
Ghuznavi, Mr. A. H.	Schuster, The Honourable Sir George.
Graham, Sir Lancelot.	Sher Muhammad Khan Gakhar, Captain.
Griffiths, Mr. G. I.	Shillidy, Mr. J. A.
Heathcote, Mr. L. V.	Studd, Mr. E.
Hezlett, Mr. J.	Suhrawardy, Sir Abdullah.
Howell, Mr. E. B.	Sykes, Mr. E. F.
Ishwarsingji, Nawab Naharsingji.	Tait, Mr. John.
Jadhav, Mr. B. V.	Todd, Mr. A. H. A.
Jawahar Singh, Sardar Bahadur Sardar.	Yakub, Sir Muhammad.
	Young, Mr. G. M.

The motion was negatived.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, the 11th September, 1931.
