

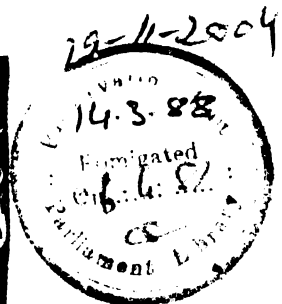
Thursday, 14th March, 1935

THE
COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES

VOLUME I, 1935

(11th February to 17th April, 1935)

NINTH SESSION
OF THE
THIRD COUNCIL OF STATE, 1935



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COUNCIL OF STATE.

Thursday, 14th March, 1935.

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

ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY (AMENDMENT) BILL.

THE HONOURABLE KHAN BAHADUR MIAN SIE FAZL-I-HUSAIN (Education, Health and Lands Member): Sir, I move that leave to introduce:

"A Bill further to amend the Aligarh Muslim University Act, 1920, for a certain purpose"
be granted.

Honourable Members will have seen from the statement of objects and reasons attached to the Bill what has led to the present Bill being brought. Under section 16 of the Act the appointment of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor is obligatory on the University. For some time past there has been a good deal of difference of opinion in the University circle as to whether two Vice-Chancellors, one Vice-Chancellor and one Pro-Vice-Chancellor, are really necessary, and then, in this case as in many others, financial considerations have accentuated the problem, with the result that a proposal was made that the post of Pro-Vice-Chancellor be abolished and that steps be taken to give legislative effect to it. On the other hand, some people thought that the financial stringency is not everlasting, we hope so anyhow, and there may be cases when a Vice-Chancellor with academic qualifications is not available, because under the Act a Vice-Chancellor is elected from amongst the members of the Court, and within the limited field of choice, it may be that a suitable man with requisite academic distinction and experience is not available, and the Court may itself wish to appoint an officer to do the work of Pro-Vice-Chancellor. However, the opinion within the Court was fairly equally divided, and we were thinking what we could do to meet the wishes of the Court as a whole and not only a section. If we refused to carry out the proposal, then we would be meeting the wishes of half the Court who want the position to remain as it is and refuse to act in accordance with the opinion of the other half who want to abolish the post. While, if we abolished the post by legislation, we would again be carrying out the wish of only half the Court and the other half who want to retain the post would say we had acted wrongly. So we struck upon this device of making the post discretionary with the Court and not compulsory. So I trust we have thus found a way of meeting the wishes of the Court as a whole. If at any time the Court feel that they ought to have a Pro-Vice-Chancellor, they can appoint one. If they feel they do not want one, they need not have him. That is, Sir, the object of the Bill and our Legislative Department has struck upon the plan of achieving that object in a very simple manner as set out in clause 2. Sir, I move.

The Motion was adopted.

THE HONOURABLE KHAN BAHADUR MIAN SIE FAZL-I-HUSAIN: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

RESOLUTION *RE* ENLISTMENT OF THE SAYYID COMMUNITY IN THE INDIAN ARMY.

THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN (West Punjab : Muhammadan) : Sir, I beg to move the following Resolution :

"That this Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to direct His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief to issue instructions to the officers commanding Indian regiments which recruit Mussalmans to remove the restrictions which they have placed on the enlistment of the Sayyid community".

Sir, at the very outset I would ask your permission to explain that my friends on the right should not consider that there is any inconsistency in the attitude which I am adopting towards this question of recruitment of Sayyids and the speech which I made yesterday. On principle I am not prejudiced against any particular community or class in regard to enlistment in the army. It was only on practical grounds, and also considering the fact that the number of recruits enlisted every year is very limited, that I was opposed to trying the experiment of getting recruits from those communities whose capacity for soldiering had not already been tried. But that is not the case with the Sayyid community about which I am moving this Resolution. The Sayyid community is still in considerable numbers in the army and this restriction on their enlistment in the army is only of recent application. I am not aware of the reasons which led the Army Department to issue instructions from Army Headquarters to recruiting officers that they should not in future take Sayyids.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. D. CHARI (Burma : General) : How many Sayyids are there in the army now ?

THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN : The number of Sayyids in the army at present is, I believe, about 1,100. The number of Sayyids in 1924 and 1928 was practically the same. I am not at present asking for any special favour to be shown to the Sayyid community. I am not complaining that their number in the army at present is very small and should be increased. I am simply bringing this before the House, that we should ask the Government to remove the restriction or disqualification which has been placed on this particular community. This question has been agitating the Mussalman community of the Punjab for the last many years. There are different local bodies which have passed unanimous resolutions that this restriction should be removed. Almost all the soldiers' boards in the districts have passed similar resolutions. The representatives of the Sayyid community tried to approach His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief in 1934 when they asked his permission for a deputation of Sayyids to wait upon His Excellency for the purpose and His Excellency's Private Secretary wrote to them that the matter concerned the Adjutant General more than anybody else and that they should approach the Adjutant General. They then submitted a memorandum to the Adjutant General, which was signed, amongst others, by the following persons :

Honourable Nawab Sir Sayyid Muhammad Mehr Shah, who is himself a Sayyid ; Khan Bahadur Nawab Chaudhri Fazal Ali, O.B.E., M.L.C. ; Captain Sayyid Ghulam Jaffar, A.-D.-C. ; Captain Sayyid Muhammad Shah ; Lieutenant Sayyid Ajaib Ali Shah ;

Subedar-Major Sayyid Sardar Shah, Bahadur, O.B.I.; Subadar-Major Sayyid Hussain Shah; Risaldar-Major Sayyid Alam Shah; Subadar-Major Sayyid Rang Shah; Risaldar Muhammad Shah; Risaldar Sayyid Ashraf Shah; Subedar Sayyid Nawab Shah, Bahadur, O.B.I.; Subedar Sayyid Alam Shah; Subedar Sayyid Muhammad Shah; Subedar Sayyid Alam Sher and Woordie-Major Sayyid Hamid Ali Shah, and so on.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. D. CHARI: Is the Honourable Member a Sayyid?

THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN: I am not. Therefore I hope my friend will at least give me credit for not advancing my own personal interest, but I am just doing it in the interests of a community who by virtue of their loyal service to the Government during the Great War and on all critical occasions have really won credit all round. I am pleading for a community which is held in very high respect and esteem throughout the Muslim world. It is the Sayyid community which is to be found in almost every part of India. I do not think there is any other community amongst Mussalmans who are to be found in every corner of the country as Sayyids. The Sayyid community, moreover, is considered as the greatest martial community amongst Mussalmans. They, being the direct descendants of the Prophet, are descendants of the community which at a time was instrumental in conquering practically the whole world; and therefore I am bringing to the notice of the Government that it is a source of great disappointment to all the Mussalmans of India that such a restriction should have been placed upon this community.

THE HONOURABLE SIR PHIROZE SETHNA: Since when has this restriction been imposed?

THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN: The first time we came to know of this restriction was in 1924. I would rather say we came to know of it much later. The first time these instructions, as far as my information goes, were issued by the Army Department in 1924 when in a confidential circular to the Recruiting Officer, Rawalpindi, they said—it was not confidential because when a recruiting officer receives information that he is not to enlist a particular community he cannot keep it confidential from the members of the particular community.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: You need not dilate on that; it is unnecessary.

THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN: This circular said:

“Please note for future guidance that Sayyids should no longer be recruited under the heading of Punjabi Mussalmans for the 10th Baluch Regiment”.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. D. CHARI: On a point of order, Sir. I now understand that the Honourable Member's object in moving this Resolution is the same as that of the Resolution moved yesterday by my friend Mr. Sapru. The question of restriction of recruitment has been discussed in that other Resolution. This discusses only the restriction with reference to a particular community. I should like to have your ruling, Sir, whether

[Mr. P. C. D. Chari.]

in view of the fact that the other Resolution which comprised this Resolution also was disposed of yesterday the Honourable Member is in order in moving this Resolution now ?

THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN : May I submit, Sir,—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : In the first instance the Honourable Member's objection comes too late. He ought to have raised this objection when the Honourable Member moved his Motion. Secondly, I am distinctly of opinion that this Resolution is not barred under Standing Order 69 by reason of the Resolution which was moved yesterday. Yesterday's Resolution was in general terms. It referred to the recruitment to the Indian Army and said that recruitment should not be confined to certain classes only, but should be thrown open to all castes, creeds and communities, while this Resolution is of a specific nature. The Sayyid community is not ineligible for recruitment, but under certain alleged orders of the Army Department there is a restriction imposed on their recruitment and this Resolution seeks to dispense with that restriction. Therefore it does not raise substantially the same question which was raised in yesterday's debate. I therefore allow the Resolution to be moved.

THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN : I thank you, Sir, for the ruling you have given. As you have already said, Sir, this is not a question of including a community which is not already included in the list of martial races for enlistment to the army, but this really concerns a community which is already eligible, and I will just read an extract from a letter written by the Adjutant General to the President of the Punjab Soldiers' Board in 1929. He said :

"The Sayyids are a sub-class of Punjabi Mussalmans and as such are eligible for enlistment in the Army under the general heading of Punjabi 'Mussalmans.' It is not proposed, therefore, to issue any general or special instructions giving preferential treatment to Sayyids in the matter of recruitment of Punjabi Mussalmans".

Therefore, Sir, it appears to me that there is some inconsistency in the attitude adopted by Army Headquarters in relation to this particular subject. The Adjutant General writes that there is no restriction. On the other hand, recruiting officers have been writing to various Sayyids, subedar-majors, and subedars, that they are not enlisting any Sayyids in the regiment. I have now in my possession and I have seen letters written by at least half a dozen commanding officers of training battalions that they are not enlisting Sayyids in the regiments at present. In view of this, and in view of the fact that even now there are 1,200 Sayyids in the army, this new discrepancy, for which I do not know who is responsible, and which has crept into Army Headquarters of issuing instructions to the officers commanding not to enlist Sayyids any more should be removed and I am sure the Government will see the justification of this demand and will remove this restriction.

Before I conclude, Sir, I may just say one sentence. As far as I have been able to ascertain why this restriction was placed on the Sayyid community, it seems it was due to the wrong impression which was created by some self-interested persons in the minds of officers commanding that the Sayyid community is looked upon with very great respect and reverence by the Mussalmans and therefore even a subedar-major who is a non-Sayyid shall have to

call a Sayyid sepoy as *Shahji*, and that is why it is inadvisable to enlist Sayyids in the army. I am surprised, Sir, that such a flimsy plea should have carried so much weight with the Army Department. Therefore, I may assure them that they will be showing more regard for the Sayyid community if they allow them to come into the army and to earn their bread by honest means than by telling them that they are a respectable community and therefore it is better for them to starve than to enlist.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Resolution moved :

“That this Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to direct His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief to issue instructions to the officers commanding Indian regiments which recruit Mussalmans to remove the restrictions which they have placed on the enlistment of the Sayyid community”.

I will request Honourable Members to strictly confine themselves to today's Resolution and in argument not to refer to matters discussed yesterday.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM (Bihar and Orissa : Muhammadan) : Mr. President, the Resolution which my Honourable colleague, Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan, has moved is distinct from the Resolution of yesterday's in certain respects but there is no doubt about the fact that there is an inner similarity between the two. We are both aggrieved at the action of the Army Department and I welcome the re-affirmation, though it is late. The complaint which is general about the recruitment of the army is that there is a distinct advantage for those who want to enter and have already relations in the army. What is called the *braderi* system is a great stumbling block in the way of those whose relatives have not been in the army before. This is one reason, Sir, why, although restrictions for recruitment may have been issued for only certain battalions and regiments, but because of the fact that Sayyids have no *braderis*. Sayyids are not recruited into other regiments, even if they take “Musalmans”; they are not eligible because of this system of giving preference to *braderis*. We know, Sir, that even in the case of persons belonging to the same caste or community, if two persons apply of whom one has a relation in the army and the other has not, the one without a relation has no chance of being admitted. This system, which is reminiscent of the old days of autocracy, ought not to find a place in the present administration of the army. No doubt I do not wish that there should be any bar to admission because of relationship. That would be penalising those who have relations. But in making a comparison between man and man, that should not be regarded as an additional qualification. Let them have equal opportunities, and if this *braderi* system is abolished, the Sayyids will become automatically eligible for admission to all the other regiments where specific orders of restriction have not been issued.

Then, Sir, coming to the great Sayyid community, the fact that there are only 1,200 Sayyids in the army speaks for itself. The mover of the Resolution did not enlighten us nor could I find from the papers of the Army Department what has been the number of Sayyids who have been admitted into the army.

THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN: Sir, may I give this information to the Honourable Member because he asked for it? The number of Sayyids in the army in 1924 was 1,268, in 1928 it was 1,228, and in 1934 it was 1,108.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : That means that there has been no recruitment in recent years, as there has been a decrease in numbers. In this connection, Sir, I should like to draw His Excellency's attention to the fact that the long term service we have in the army makes it necessary for us to have a bigger army than we should have if we had a shorter term system ; we could with ease and with perfect security manage with a smaller number of men because we would have a better first line reserve and a more effective second reserve. As it is at the present moment, a man has to have 15 or 20 years service and even if you stop recruitment for 12 years you will find that there are some persons in the army. It is only for this purpose that I have brought this question forward.

THE HONOURABLE MR. BIJAY KUMAR BASU (Bengal : Nominated Non-Official) : Sir, if I desire to speak on this Resolution it is only for the purpose of getting some more information on the subject. I acknowledge that in this matter I am more or less an ignoramus. Sir, one thing that strikes me at the very outset is that, so far as the Muhammadan community is concerned at least in India, there has never been any such thing as caste distinctions. This Resolution, I am afraid, will bring into that homogeneous community, which has hitherto been an example to the other communities living in India, an element of discrimination. (*An Honourable Member :* "It is the Commander-in-Chief who is doing it, not we".) As a matter of fact, I want that information. Is this Resolution meant to be a sort of caste distinction between the different sections of the homogeneous community of Mussalmans in India ? (*An Honourable Member :* "No".) We have been told time and again, we have been told practically from all sides of the country, that we Hindus, owing to our caste system which we have had from time immemorial, have not been able to combine or to take any united action ; and in this respect we have been twitted by the Mussalman community who have pointed to their homogeneity with pride saying, "We Mussalmans of this country are a homogeneous body but you people have your caste distinctions". I feel, Sir, that this Resolution at least presents to me the same caste distinctions that we have in the Hindu society of the country. I do know and I would like my friend to enlighten me on the point—but Sayyids, I understand, have been described by the Honourable mover as the direct descendants of the Prophet. Therefore, it is expected that that community will be the repository of the ancient culture, of the ancient goodness, and the ancient knowledge of Islam. If that is so, their proper place, I should have thought, would be in schools and educational institutions where they could work for the advancement of learning and the propagation of Islamic culture, and not in the army where they would hardly have an opportunity of using their culture to the best advantage. As has been pointed out by the Deputy Leader of the Progressive Party, would you like to have your Pandits and your Shastris going into the army to fight battles ? I for one would not. Secondly, Sir, the Sayyid community in effect, I take it, come within the category of the bigger circle of Punjabi Mussalmans and are therefore eligible for recruitment in the army as coming under the bigger heading. Therefore, as a sub-community of the Punjabi Mussalmans they have no place for recruitment. If I am wrong, I hope His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief will correct me in his reply. But if they were enlisted in former years under the bigger heading of the Punjabi Mussalmans, supposing the army authorities found that the recruits were not good enough for the purpose, is there any wonder that they put a ban on the enlistment of such people ? If, as a class, it is found that this community is not suitable, is it any wonder that the authorities would put a ban on it ? Of course, I do not know what the exact reason

for this ban was, but I take it that when the authorities put a ban on a particular community as a class, you can almost expect that they must have found something in that class which does not suit them. Whatever that may be—

THE HONOURABLE NAWAB KHWAJA HABIBULLAH OF DACCA (Bengal: Nominated Non-Official): I suppose that applies to all others whom they have refused?

THE HONOURABLE MR. BIJAY KUMAR BASU: I daresay that it applies to others whom they have refused. I heard the other day in the other House—I do not remember who said it—it may be the Army Secretary—that martial and non-martial races—they are merely the creations of politicians, and that the army has got nothing to do with the distinction between martial and non-martial—

THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN: The words “martial” and “non-martial” are a creation of politicians!

THE HONOURABLE MR. BIJAY KUMAR BASU: I do not understand why my friend is so anxious for a particular community of a handful of men—if I may say so, a small community of the Punjab (*An Honourable Member*: “No”) which may come and did come under the larger category of the Punjab Mussalmans before.

THE HONOURABLE MR. MOHAMMAD YAMIN KHAN (United Provinces: Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I support the Resolution moved by my Honourable friend Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan. I think that this Resolution has got great force behind it. The Sayyid community of India have proved themselves very fit for military purposes. It was the Sayyid brothers, Abdulla and Hussain Ali Khan, of Bara, who came to be called later on in history as Kingmakers. The Sayyids of Bara are famous in history for being the best fighters of that time. They used to fight in such good manner that the Sayyids of Bara were enlisted by the Moghul Emperors in their armies to a large extent, and whenever they found that there was a difficulty in war, the Sayyids were put up to fight and the battle was always won. They made a great name in the past. Most of the Sayyids of Bara have been living in the Meerut division and I am personally acquainted with them. They are very good fighting people. They have got fine physique. They have got all the things which go to make them good soldiers. I do not know why a class which has made its name in the past from Bengal up to the Punjab should be banned? Their armies fought under Prince Muazzam and his son Azim-ush-Shan after whom Patna is called Azimabad. Their army came up to the Punjab and fought and conquered at the time of Furrukhsiar. That is well known to historians. I think, Sir, a good case has been made out. If my Honourable friend Mr. Basu wants to know what the cause is—I do not know it myself—most probably it is the cause explained by my Honourable friend Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan, that the Sayyid wants to be treated with great respect in the army. If a Sayyid wants to come in as a recruit and if he satisfies the officer that he will obey the commands and abide by the discipline of the army just like any other soldier, then there ought to be no restriction on him. If he wants to come in as something higher, and if a Sayyid wants to imitate the ways of the Brahmans, as a high community, then certainly he has to be shut up.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. D. CHARI....(inaudible).....by the other Mussalmans ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : With self-respect.

THE HONOURABLE MR. MOHAMMAD YAMIN KHAN : Unfortunately, in India, there was a caste which was superior to the other castes. That was the Brahman.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. D. CHARI : You do not admit the distinction of caste in the army ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. MOHAMMAD YAMIN KHAN : My friend is taking a side issue.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Do not answer him at all. You go on, please.

THE HONOURABLE MR. MOHAMMAD YAMIN KHAN : When the Sayyids began to imitate the ways of the Brahmans, then this restriction came in. I remember, Sir, that when Aurangzeb passed orders on the application of his own second son, Ali Jah, when he asked for the Governorship of Gujerat, he said, "I am ready to give you the Governorship provided you forget that you are a Prince, and you work like other people". I would therefore say that if any Sayyid is found to be willing to work under the same conditions and in the same manner as others, there should be no restriction on them. At the present time, I suppose this is the feeling which is coming on. There are very few Sayyids who would come into the army with an idea that they should command their own officers, or that they may be treated equally with officers. That is not the feeling now. This was the feeling some time ago, but now everybody is beginning to realise that if a Sayyid enters into the army, he will abide by the discipline imposed on him as well as any other person. I do not think, Sir, that if that be the case, there should be any restriction placed on him.

With these words, Sir, I support the Resolution.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF : Sir, I am afraid that much of the eloquence of the Honourable mover and his supporters has been wasted on the somewhat vitiated atmosphere of this Chamber, because his main contention has no relation to facts. His main contention seems to be that there has been a definite plot in Army Headquarters to restrict the enlistment of this particular class he is speaking of for the day, the Sayyid caste of Punjabi Muhammadans. I tell him definitely that there has been no restriction whatever placed on their enlistment by Army Headquarters. He quoted letters which he says people in villages and recruiting officials have had from recruiting officers to say that they do not want any more, or so many, of this particular community. I have no responsibility for what those officers send out, because they are sending out the instructions of their own commanding officers for whom they recruit and they have complete freedom in this matter. The general policy with regard to recruitment, as the Honourable mover knows quite well, is to prescribe the area in which Punjabi Mussalmans are recruited for any one particular unit, but to make no restriction whatever

as to the particular sub-classes which are to be recruited in that area. Discretion as to the sub-classes which are recruited is left entirely in the hands of commanding officers who are empowered to decide whom they will and whom they will not accept as recruits into their own units. The net result of that is that units, very naturally, select recruits in larger numbers from the sub-classes that have done them best in the past and have proved the most suitable sort of men for the needs of their units. It follows therefore that every sub-class has an equal chance with any other to prove that it is the best or better than others and that the numbers enlisted from any one sub-class depends on how far that particular sub-class has proved itself to be desirable from the point of view of the unit concerned.

Having said that, I will quote the true figures with regard to this particular sub-class. On 1st January, 1928, there were 933 Sayyids serving in the regular army. On 1st January, 1934, which is the latest date for which I have figures available, there were 813 serving in the regular army. In these six years therefore there has been a drop of 120 on the 1928 figures. But if we take into consideration the Sayyids who are enlisted into the military police and Indian State Forces, with which I have nothing to do, as well as those enlisted in the regular army, the figures would be approximately, in 1924, 1,268, in 1928, 1,228, and in 1934, 1,018, or a drop of 210 in the last six years. But having read those figures, I would point out that there has been a very large general reduction in the army, and owing to this reduction in strengths and other causes there has been a reduction in the number of Punjabi Mussalman in the army from 44,043 in January, 1928 to 39,862 in January, 1934, or a drop of no less than 4,181 from the 1928 figures. With those figures before us, Sir, I claim that the representation of Sayyids in the army does not appear to have deteriorated in comparison with any other class. I must therefore ask the Honourable Member, if he sees fit, to withdraw the Motion, with one proviso, that if he can send me any letter which has issued from Army Headquarters directly giving my orders that this particular class should be restricted in their enlistment, I will see that the officer who issued it hears from me.

THE HONOURABLE SAYYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR (Madras : Muhammadan) : Sir, I feel that there is no necessity for us now to make out a case for removal of the bar. From what His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief has said, we find that there is no bar, and if Sayyids are kept out of the army in some places, it is because the matter is left to the discretion of commanding officers. It is not on the merits of the question that I wish to take part in the debate. It is merely to correct some misunderstandings that seem to exist in the minds of some Honourable Members here who have taken part in the debate.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : That misunderstanding has been cured by His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief.

THE HONOURABLE SAYYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR : I wish to speak on what has been said about the caste system among Mussalman and on the statement that the Sayyid community claim respect from other sections of Muslims because they are Sayyids. No Sayyid family makes this claim for, according to our religion no man deserves to be honoured unless he proves himself worthy of it by his character and conduct. So if people do show some regard to the Sayyid community it is not because the Sayyids make it a point to extort this respect and homage, but only because, possibly in view of the fact that the Sayyids are descendants of the Prophet, they are

[Saiyed Mohamed Padshah Sahib Bahadur.]

Careful to see that their conduct is such that it does not bring discredit on the family to which they belong. If therefore a Sayyid is respected for his character, that does not mean that he habitually demands that kind of respect from other people.

Now, Sir, as regards the caste system, my friend the Honourable Mr. Basu appeared to deliberately misunderstand the position. The complaint was that this caste system has been imposed on us by somebody else. Whether that is a fact or not is another matter. But the case made out by the Honourable Mover was that this caste system was one which was being introduced into the Muslim community from which it has always been free, so that it is not the Mussalman who has to be blamed for it. So I feel that there was no justification for my Honourable friend Mr. Basu to think that the Mussalman community has also been infected with this disease. If he has any knowledge of the history of Islam he would know that there is no caste distinction at all among the Muslims.

THE HONOURABLE MR. BIJAY KUMAR BASU: Sir, on a point of personal explanation. I pleaded my ignorance at the beginning of my speech.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I think all this is superfluous.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR: Just one word about the undesirability of Sayyids taking to the profession of arms. My Honourable friend appears to be labouring under the misapprehension that the profession of arms is one not suited to a noble or respectable man. In thinking this, he very conveniently ignores the very plain historical fact that from the very beginning of man's history the greatest nations have always regarded the profession of arms as being the noblest profession of all. For when a man becomes a soldier it is not for the purpose of waging war, of carrying death and destruction to the peoples of other lands, but for the purpose of defending the hearths and homes of his own land, to resist tyranny and redress wrongs. Therefore this is a noble profession and has always been so regarded by all the great nations of the world. And the Sayyids took to this profession, and they distinguished themselves in the art of war as much as they distinguished themselves in scientific and other fields. If any of my friends would like to know about the history—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: There is no occasion to go into the history of the matter. The only question before us is whether Sayyids should be recruited or not. All this is superfluous.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR: My only purpose is to show that among the Sayyids there have been people who could wield the sword with the same ease and skill with which they wielded the pen. There have been among them men who were both warriors and statesmen, warriors and scholars.

THE HONOURABLE LIEUTENANT-COLONEL NAWAB SIR MAHOMED AKBAR KHAN (North-West Frontier Province: Nominated Non-Official): I just wanted, Sir, to say a few words on this matter. To the best of my recollection a similar point was put to the late Commander-in-Chief Sir William Birdwood in this House by Sayyid Mehr Shah in connection with the recruitment of Sayyids, and to the best of my recollection Sir William Birdwood

tried to answer that question in Urdu, and his words were that the commanding officers of several units had written reports against the Sayyids, that they could not be made into good soldiers, and that was why he could not enlist them. You see the wording of Sir William Birdwood's reply here. Sayyid Mehr Shah put this question to him. Apart from whether they are good soldiers or not—that has got nothing to do with me and as a Muhammadan I have great respect and regard for them. It seems to me that the proper position of a Sayyid is to teach the Muhammadan his religion. I do not know why the Sayyid insists on a military career? His work is to preach as a missionary of Islam and see that Muhammadans stick to its principles.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Order, order. The Honourable Member is raising controversial questions.

THE HONOURABLE LIEUTENANT-COLONEL NAWAB SIR MAHOMED AKBAR KHAN: This question was dealt with in this House and to the best of my recollection that reply was given. I know nothing about the subsequent orders. As regards their merits or demerits as a military people, I do not want to say anything.

THE HONOURABLE SIR PHIROZE SETHNA (Bombay: Non-Muhammadan): I do not want to make a speech, but I may be permitted to refer to a point made by His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, I think he told the House that recruitment rests entirely with commanding officers and he asked the Honourable Mover if he could show any letter from Army Headquarters in regard to the exclusion of Sayyids—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The Commander-in-Chief also added that there was no order from him to that effect.

THE HONOURABLE SIR PHIROZE SETHNA: Yes, Sir. May I know if the commanding officer has *carte blanche* in this matter? Can not Army Headquarters interfere as the Government of India do when they issue circulars in regard to appointments?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: The commanding officer has *carte blanche* as regards sub-divisions only within the area allotted to him.

THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN: Sir, I had no mind to make any long speech in reply. What I wanted to do was just to express my thanks to His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief for telling us in very definite and clear terms that there is no restriction on the enlistment of Sayyids, and that was enough for my object. But unfortunately one or two Members have made certain remarks which are quite unnecessary and I feel, Sir, with your permission, I must reply to those remarks. As regards my Honourable friend Mr. Basu, I have nothing to tell him except this, that if he studies Islamic history he will find that our Prophet was both a statesman and a soldier, an orator and a learned person. He possessed all the qualifications. In almost all the battles the armies were commanded by himself. Therefore it is not that his descendants should confine themselves to literature and to offering prayers in the mosques. He is probably thinking of the Mullah, who more corresponds to the Brahmans than the Sayyids. As regards the remarks made by the great Colonel from the North-West Frontier Province, the fact that a man has just become a Colonel is not proof that

[Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan.]

he can speak with authority about all the castes and their fitness in war. I can assure you, Sir, that I have a large number of majors in my constituency and it is not the first Colonel that I have come across, and they have all told me that on the battle-fields in Mesopotamia, France, and in other parts of the country they found the Sayyids were the bravest soldiers—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : No apology is needed at all.

THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN : He has maligned the name of the great Field-Marshal and the most popular Commander-in-Chief, His Excellency Sir William Birdwood. I knew him since he was in the Northern Command. The Colonel has not told us what was the question, he has not quoted the answer and I am not prepared to accept such an irresponsible statement which the Honourable Member has made in this House that a certain question was put by Sayyid Mehr Shah and a certain reply was given by the Commander-in-Chief in Urdu. I can assure you, Sir, that if he will point out to me or to this House that officers commanding some regiments have reported that Sayyids were bad soldiers, I will certainly accept what he says, but not without his substantiating the statement. Am I to understand that the Colonel knows more than His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief about the state of affairs in the army? Here is a gentleman hailing from a part of the country where there is no education, where the people are most backward, most illiterate, who thinks he knows more than His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief about the fitness of Sayyids. Does he mean to say that in spite of those reports from officers commanding that Sayyids were not good soldiers His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief will get up on the floor of this House and say that there are no restrictions on the enlistment of Sayyids? I am surprised that some of the Honourable nominated Members, who have no responsibility and who are not answerable to their constituencies, make irresponsible statements.

THE HONOURABLE LIEUTENANT-COLONEL NAWAB SIR MAHOMED AKBAR KHAN : I say look up the debate and you will find Sir William Birdwood answering the question.

THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN : I hope my Honourable friend will not be angry with me when I tell him that even in his part of the country Sayyids are looked upon with great respect. I heard a story that a Sayyid happened to go to a village in his part of the country. They perhaps had never seen a Sayyid before. So they entertained him and were very kind to him. He stayed there four, five or ten days and then for a month. He wanted to go. "Well", they said, "this man is going; we will be deprived of all the blessings which accompany him"; but as he would not listen, they decided to kill him; they murdered him and built a huge tomb over his dead body, so that they may worship the tomb at least. This is the kind of respect which the people belonging to my Honourable friend's country hold for Sayyids, and I am sure when they learn that the great Colonel has made such a speech they will not approve of it and they will ask him to show more respect to this community.

Well, Sir, I am very grateful to His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief. I have only one request to make. I entirely agree with him that it is not wise to restrict the choice of the officers commanding in getting the best young men

who come before them for recruitment, but at the same time if there is a general complaint, that for some reason or other, there is a tendency amongst the officers commanding to leave out those young men who are otherwise eligible from one particular community or caste, I think it is the duty of the Army Department to draw their attention to this fact. Now, the proceedings of this debate I am sure will be printed in the press, but as I think His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief remarked on another occasion that these military officers do not read papers and do not bother about such things I wonder whether they will read that His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief has said that there is no restriction on the enlistment of Sayyids and if His Excellency will devise some means by which these officers commanding will know that His Excellency said that there is no such restriction, I will be quite satisfied.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : You have not informed the Council whether you are going to press the Resolution ?

THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN : I am not going to press the Resolution. I will only request His Excellency to adopt some means by which this misunderstanding may be removed. I ask the leave of the House to withdraw the Resolution.

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

BALLOT FOR THE ELECTION OF THREE NON-OFFICIAL MEMBERS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR ROADS.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Honourable Members will proceed to elect three Members to serve on the Standing Committee for Roads for 1935-36.

(The ballot was then taken.)

BALLOT FOR THE ELECTION OF TWO NON-OFFICIAL MEMBERS TO THE STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE INDIAN POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Order, order. Members will now proceed to elect two non-official Members to serve on the Standing Advisory Committee for the Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department.

(The ballot was then taken.)

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : The result of these two elections will be announced later.

* Vide page 574, ante.

**ELECTION OF TWO NON-OFFICIAL MEMBERS TO THE STANDING
COMMITTEE FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE.**

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I have to inform the House that the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam has since withdrawn his candidature for election to the Standing Committee for the Department of Commerce. As there now remain the following two candidates for two vacancies I declare them to be duly elected:

The Honourable Sir Phiroze Sethna, and

The Honourable Mr. Satyendra Chandra Ghosh Maulik.

The Council then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, the 18th March, 1935.