

Monday, 18th March, 1935

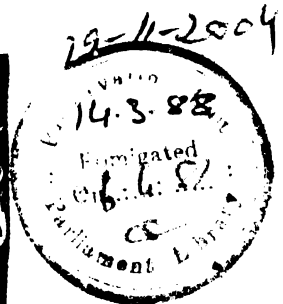
THE  
COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES

VOLUME I, 1935

*(11th February to 17th April, 1935)*

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NINTH SESSION  
OF THE  
THIRD COUNCIL OF STATE, 1935



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# COUNCIL OF STATE.

*Monday, 18th March, 1935.*

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

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## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

### REVISED SCALES OF PAY FOR THE ALL-INDIA AND THE SUPERIOR CENTRAL SERVICES.

79. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: Will Government kindly state their decision regarding the lower scales of salaries of future entrants into the superior and covenanted services of Government? If no decision has yet been arrived at, why not? When will it be arrived at?

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. G. HALLETT: The scales of pay for future entrants to services under the rule-making control of the Governor General in Council have already been revised, and I would refer the Honourable Member to the Revised Rates of Pay Rules, a copy of which is placed in the Library. As regards the revision of the scales of pay for future entrants to the Indian Civil Service and the Indian Police, the Secretary of State has decided to postpone further consideration of the question until after the passing of the Constitution Act.

### ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SUPPLY OF FOOD TO PILGRIMS ON BOARD PILGRIM SHIPS

80. THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN: (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether the Persian Navigation Company called for tenders for supplying food to the Hajis travelling by their boats? If so, how many tenders were received and whether the contract was given to the person whose tender was lowest?

(b) Is it a fact that the Director of the Persian Navigation Company gave a contract for supply of food on the boat to one of his own relations who is also his partner and that the contractor's charges for food from Hajis were excessive? If so, do Government propose to ask the aforementioned company to call for tenders in future?

THE HONOURABLE KHAN BAHADUR MIAN SIR FAZL-I-HUSAIN: (a) Government understand that the shipping company did not call for tenders.

(b) Government have no information regarding the relationship between the contractor and the directors of the company. They do not consider that the charges for food fixed during the current pilgrim season are excessive.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM :** Do Government fix rates without consulting the tendered rates or after consulting the tendered rates ?

**THE HONOURABLE KHAN BAHADUR MIAN SIE FAZL-I-HUSAIN :** Government does not fix rates for food which are to be charged by the Company from the passengers. Government try to bring the shipping interests and the Haj interests together to enable them to arrive at a fair menu as well as the charges for it.

**CASUAL LEAVE ALLOWED TO SUPERINTENDENTS OF POST OFFICES.**

**81. THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN :** (a) Will Government be pleased to state how much casual leave is allowed to Superintendents of Post Offices in a year ?

(b) Is it a fact that while other officers of the Government of India are allowed 21 days' casual leave in a year the Superintendents of Post Offices can get casual leave for 12 days only ? If so, what are the reasons for this differential treatment ?

**THE HONOURABLE MR. D. G. MITCHELL :** (a) Twelve days.

(b) I am not aware of the authority for the Honourable Member's statement that officers of the Government of India are allowed 21 days' casual leave in a year. In the Secretariat casual leave is normally limited to 10 days in the year. In the circumstances no question of differential treatment arises. I might add that casual leave is given entirely as a matter of grace and not of right.

**THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN :** Is it a fact that when the Superintendents go on casual leave, the *dak* follows them and they are responsible for the office work ?

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT :** How does that arise from the reply given to this question ? I do not think it arises.

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**RESULT OF ELECTION TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR ROADS.**

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT :** I have to inform the Council that as a result of the election held on the 14th March, 1935, the following three Members have been elected to the Standing Committee for Roads for 1935-36 :

The Honourable Mr. E. Miller.

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur G. Narayanaswami Chetty, and

The Honourable Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan.

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**RESULT OF ELECTION TO THE STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE INDIAN POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT.**

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT :** I have also to inform the Council that as a result of the election held on the 14th March, 1935, the following two non-official Members have been elected to the Standing Advisory Committee for the Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department :

The Honourable Mr. Mohammad Yamin Khan, and

The Honourable Mr. Jagadish Chandra Banerjee.

## RESOLUTION *RE* DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE SALT RANGE AND KHEWRA SALT MINES TO AGRICULTURAL LANDS.

THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN (West Punjab : Muhammadan) : Sir, with your permission, I would like to read once again the Resolution\* which I moved the other day.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : It is not the practice. You have already read the Resolution when you moved it, and you can now proceed with your speech.

THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN : Thank you, Sir. Before I proceed to give to this House the history of this question, I would like to acquaint them with the locality of the Khewra salt mines and how the damage is caused. The Khewra salt mines are situated on a hill which extends over an area of about 50 miles. On the south of this hill is the river Jhelum. The mines were being worked during the time of the Sikhs too and before the British came, but on a very small scale. The damage which has been caused to the lands dates back to the last 20 years, as has been admitted by the Government themselves, in replying to the debate on the same question in the Legislative Assembly. I was responsible for bringing this matter to the notice of the Government of India originally in 1927 and again in 1930. When I moved the Resolution on the subject in 1927, I had two objects, first the grievances of the Khewra salt miners and the other, the damage caused by the salt mines. The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett, the then Finance Member, showed a very conciliatory attitude and at once agreed to the appointment of a committee, which met twice at Simla. But the committee was able to solve only the question of the grievances of salt miners and the second part of their work was left unaccomplished. This question was again brought before the Legislative Assembly by moving a cut under "Salt" in 1930. The then Finance Member, Sir George Schuster, at once agreed to the holding of an enquiry on the lines suggested by me. On that assurance, I did not press my Motion to a division. A committee was actually appointed which consisted of one Member of the Central Board of Revenue, the Salt Commissioner, Mr. F. L. Brayne, the then Deputy Commissioner of Jhelum and myself. This Committee held two meetings, went over the affected area and saw things for themselves. Unfortunately, Sir, Mr. Brayne, I was informed, was busy with some other important work and was unable to take part in the further deliberations of this Committee. On receiving this information, I wrote back to the Secretary saying that as Mr. Brayne had been Deputy Commissioner of Jhelum for three years, and as he had studied this problem very thoroughly and had all the facts and figures in his possession, it would therefore not be any use holding the meetings without him, and I wrote to the Government that I had no objection to the postponing of the Committee meeting until Mr. Brayne was available. Since then, Sir, I have heard nothing about this meeting. This was in September, 1930. I was no more in the Legislative Assembly and therefore I naturally could not pursue this question any further. Unfortunately, the man who was representing this constituency in the Assembly

\*" This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to appoint a committee to inquire how much damage has been caused by the salt range in general and by the Khewra mines in particular to neighbouring lands and villages in Jhelum and Shahpore districts and to report what compensation should be granted to zemindars and cultivators who have suffered on this account and what steps should be taken to stop further damage to cultivable lands and villages".

[Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan.]

did not take any interest in this matter and so nothing was done after 1930. This question was again raised in the other House only during the last week when a token cut was unanimously carried demanding that an enquiry committee should be appointed. But, Sir, I must confess that I was extremely shocked to see the difference in the attitude adopted by the two previous Finance Members on this question, and the one adopted by the Government at present. In the first place, Sir, it was rather unfortunate that the Honourable Finance Member could not find time to deal with this question himself as was done by the two previous Finance Members. This matter was entrusted to the charge of a Secretary who, as he said in his speech, saw the file for the first time during the lunch interval and after half an hour's study got up on the floor of the House and made a speech. So the House can imagine what knowledge the Honourable Member in charge of the Resolution on the Government side could have about this question, and that is the reason why some of the statements made by him were not quite correct.

Now the question can be divided into two parts : first, the damage caused by the negligent working of the Government department concerned, and the second is what I would call the natural consequence of the presence of salt mines in that area. These questions must be considered separately, and here I have no hesitation in admitting that my Resolution, as it is worded, is liable to a certain amount of misunderstanding, because when I talk of damage and of a committee reporting what compensation should be paid to the people for the damage caused by the salt mines, what I really intend is the damage caused by the working of the Khewra salt mines. As regards damage caused by the existence of the Khewra salt range I can assure the Government I have no desire to ask them to pay any compensation. This question, Sir, concerns only a small part of one province but that should not be a reason why Honourable Members in this House should not sympathise with these poor agriculturists who have suffered greatly. That will I think be admitted by the Government, that even if there is a single citizen whose land has suffered even to a very small extent through the negligent working of the Salt Department, it is both the legal and moral duty of the Government to hold an inquiry and to pay compensation. The damage caused is due to two causes. Firstly, some years ago a spring suddenly appeared in the mines and the department started pumping out this water.

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT :** Is it an actionable damage ?

**THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN :** Certainly, Sir. The Government started pumping out this brackish water impregnated with salt and they let it flow on to the fields, without constructing any channel for it or taking care that salt water should cause no damage to the lands and to the wells. I ask the House whether it was not the duty of the Government to see that that salt water was properly conducted along a channel to the river Jhelum, which is only five miles distant from these mines, instead of letting it do all this damage to the land and wells. The second way in which the salt mines are responsible for causing damage directly is that a lot of refuse is accumulated outside the mines, which has now taken the shape of small hillocks. During the monsoon when the floods come the water passes over these hillocks of salt refuse and becomes saltish, with the result that it deposits salt and causes damage to the adjacent lands. To illustrate the extent of the damage which has taken place I may submit here that a town at a distance of five miles from the Khewra salt mines which was famous some time ago for



its beautiful gardens and its fruits and which had a population of 35,000, has now a population of 7,000 and it looks like a heap of ruins. A result which is entirely due to the Khewra salt mines and the salt range. Then, Sir, there are a number of villages, at least 100, where, you will be surprised to know, the people cannot get water for drinking purposes, and the women have to walk ten or eight miles to bring drinking water from the river. And that also is only for six months in the year when the river is flowing. When the river is not flowing then these poor village girls go to the railway stations, a distance of four or five miles and entreat the station master to give them a little water from the water wagons which bring the railway station supplies. I wonder if there is any other part of the country where people suffer to this extent and yet have their grievances unredressed. It is just possible that the Government may take the attitude that this is primarily the concern of the Punjab Government. To some extent that is right, but when the Salt Department are deriving a benefit of Rs. 40 lakhs per annum, and who post guards all over the area to prevent cattle grazing or the taking of any salt, is it not their responsibility and moral duty at least to contribute something towards removing the legitimate grievances of these people? The other attitude which the Government may take is that they have addressed the Punjab Government on this matter and the latter propose to appoint an expert to find out how this damage is caused and what remedies are necessary. If the Government take that stand it will mean nothing less than shelving the question, because I may inform them, as they may not be aware of it, that in 1922 the Punjab Government did appoint two experts to investigate the matter.

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT:** Why do you anticipate objections?

**THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN:** Because similar objections were raised in the other House, so I have the advantage of knowing what the Government might say, unless they have reconsidered the question and their attitude is different now. These two experts were appointed in 1922, and I speak from personal knowledge because I toured with them in this area. They submitted a report to the Punjab Government, so that a report by experts is already there and it would be no use saying that the Punjab Government are appointing an expert and we should wait till the expert has reported.

Then, this is not a question which is being considered in this House for the first time. The Punjab Government I must say have not been blind to this problem. They have been busy trying to solve this problem since 1900. There are at least half a dozen different schemes which have been prepared, but none of those schemes were put into practice. One scheme was to dig a canal from the river Jhelum and to pass it through this area to irrigate these lands, and experts were of opinion that through this canal water the lands which have become salted up would again become culturable. This matter was twice or thrice investigated by the Government, and the canal was actually started and dug for half a mile, but again the scheme was abandoned, probably because the Government thought that the return from this scheme, which they were going to finance out of capital, would not be adequate. The scheme therefore was not carried out. Then, Sir, this is most unfortunate for those people that on the same hill there are springs, quite a large number of springs, which contain pure sweet water, extremely beneficial for agricultural lands. That water is continuously flowing down, and is perfectly sweet until it reaches the saltish area of the Khewra salt mine. The moment it reaches that area;

[Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan.]

it becomes saltish and when it flows down to those lands it becomes absolutely saltish. Supposing the Government undertook certain schemes to see that water from those springs flowing down into the lands passed through the lands without touching the saltish area, it would be beneficial for those people. There are several schemes and the Government have not done anything, and our patience is now exhausted, because this thing has been going on now for 35 years. Even if we assume for a moment that the presence of the Salt Range or the falling of rain is an act of nature and the Government cannot be held responsible for that, is it not the duty of the Government of India to make a contribution to help the people even if they have suffered on account of an act of nature for which they are not responsible? They set an example only the other day with regard to the earthquake in Bihar. I am not prepared to imagine that that was an act of Government; it was an act of nature, but still the Government of India made a considerable contribution to relieve the sufferings of those people. The object of my Resolution is a very simple one and the demand made therein is very modest. I do not want a committee consisting of a majority of non-officials. I want a committee, Sir, consisting purely of officials. If they would care to have me on that committee, it is for them to decide. I do not mind if they do not have Indians on the committee. Let it be a purely official committee, but let them pay attention to this problem. The committee I propose should consist of a Member of the Central Board of Revenue, one Irrigation Engineer to be nominated by the Punjab Government, the Deputy Commissioner of Jhelum, who is an Indian Civil Service officer and Mr. F. L. Brayne, who is now the Commissioner for the uplift of rural areas and who has studied this problem. I shall be quite satisfied if this committee meets and meets preferably under the presidency of the Honourable the Finance Member provided he can find time or feels that he has not done all that was his duty by providing just one crore of rupees for rural people or if his brain is not always thinking of how gold can be exported from India more quickly. If he can find time and if he does not consider it below his dignity to personally look into this matter and not let the matter be dealt with as casually as it was in the past, I am sure he will find that without paying any direct compensation to the people but by just providing a little financial help to the Punjab Government, he will be able to remove the grievances of these poor loyal citizens.

THE HONOURABLE KHAN BAHADUR CHAUDRI MUHAMMAD DIN (East Punjab : Muhammadan) : Sir, the villages near the Khewra salt mines are in a sad plight owing to the spread of saltpetre and most of the area has been rendered uncultivable during the last 25 years. The zemindar in the hope of getting something out of his land takes the trouble and expense of ploughing and sowing in the fields in the shore area. The seed does not germinate and if it does somewhere it brings a very poor crop. All the labour is wasted and he thus acts against the maxim :

“Zamin-i shore sumble bar niard. Daru tukhm-i amal zaia magardan ”

which means that shore land will bring nothing; so do not waste your time on it. This has become a serious problem for the zemindars on the salt range, especially in the Pind Dadan Khan tehsil. The zemindars in that part deserve sympathy in their terrible sufferings owing to this constant spread of saltpetre. I therefore support the Resolution proposed by my friend the Honourable Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan and hope that steps will be taken to investigate the disease and find a remedy.

**THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS (Punjab : Non-Muhammadan) :** Sir, I rise to support the Resolution which has been so ably moved by Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan. Sir, I take it purely as a business proposition that an industry which is run by the Government ought to fulfil and be carried out on the same footing as a private person would carry it out. The discharge from the mines is the cause of the damage to the land of the agriculturists near the Khewra mines and I think it is the duty of the Government of India to discharge that saltish water in a manner in which it may not cause the damage which it is causing now. Therefore, Sir, I request the Government to treat their own concern in the same manner in which they expect a private enterpriser to keep his concern. Committees, as the Raja Sahib has already pointed out, have already sat on this question, but no suitable solution has so far been found. The only solution which is to be found is in the discharge of that water into the Jhelum river or into a barren place. If some drainage scheme is devised to get rid of that saltish water into the river or into some other place where the lands are not cultivable, a solution can be easily found. Therefore, Sir, I support the Resolution of the Raja Sahib.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. TALLENTS (Finance Secretary) :** Sir, the Honourable Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan said that he first raised this question in the year 1927, but I find looking back through the papers in the Finance Department that he actually had raised it one year before that and that he then approached the Member of the Central Board of Revenue with certain grievances connected with the Khewra mines, one of which was connected with the problem of the lands in the neighbourhood of the mines—the problem of the loss of their fertility owing to the action of the salt water. The grievances represented by the Honourable Raja Sahib in the year 1926 were sent to the General Manager of the mine for his opinion and he stated that the water of the stream with regard to which complaints had been made was already brackish long before it reached the mine owing to the fact that it flowed over exposed surfaces of salt. The other allegation was that rain falling on certain refuse heaps of salt carried the salt in solution down to extensive areas of cultivated land below. Again, his opinion was that the allegation could not be substantiated : he did not think there was anything in the complaint. That was where the matter ended in 1926 but the Raja Sahib again took it up in 1927 as he states. The then Honourable Finance Member, Sir Basil Blackett, gave an undertaking that there would be a conference at which he himself would attend as well as the Member of the Legislative Assembly, as the Raja Sahib then was, the Commissioner of Northern India Salt Revenue, and one of the Members of the Central Board of Revenue. A conference was held, as the Raja Sahib says, in July, 1927 in Simla, at which the various grievances which had been formulated by him were discussed. I find that when they reached this question of the state of the agricultural land, the note of the proceedings of that committee runs as follows :

“ This matter was not pressed. Mr. Wilson (I think he was at the time Deputy Commissioner of Jhelum), pointed out that all salt range gorges discharge saline waters deleterious to lands below ”.

The Honourable Raja Sahib said that this part of the proceedings of the committee was left unaccomplished. I think it would be more correct to say that the Raja Sahib himself at that time did not wish to press this point.

The third occasion on which the Raja Sahib brought this matter up was in connection with the budget of 1930-31, and the Honourable Sir George

[Mr. P. C. Tallents.]

Schuster, who by that time had become Finance Member, promised that he would take the earliest possible opportunity to have the matter inquired into. He accordingly instructed the Senior Member of the Board of Revenue, Sir Alexander Tottenham, to proceed to Khewra in the course of his tour and hold an informal investigation on the spot. This was done and Sir Alexander Tottenham met at Khewra the Honourable the Raja Sahib, the then Deputy Commissioner of Jhelum, the Commissioner of Northern India Salt Revenue, and the General Manager of the mine. So far as damage due to the operation of the salt mine is concerned, I find that, as the Honourable the Raja Sahib has said this morning, there were two grievances. One was the flow of water in the mine and the other was the flow of water from the dumps of refuse. Well, the note recorded on the spot in connection with the temporary flow of salt water from the sub-soil into the mine is to the effect that in 1925 this water began to flow, that the flow led to subsidence, that costly works were undertaken and it took three years to stop the flow. Certain houses were damaged and destroyed and the people were compensated. I find it recorded that this was not the damage which was then complained of. Therefore, if this damage was not complained of in the year 1930 and the flow of water has been stopped and compensation given to those whose property was affected by it, I do not think this can any longer be regarded as a substantial ground of complaint against the method of operation of the mine.

The second ground of complaint was connected with two dumps of refuse, one of which was at the entrance to the mine and the other one lower down, near the entrance to the gorge. These are described as quite small affairs and it was recorded, after the committee had met on the spot, that any rain water which fell on these dumps of refuse must fall into the gorge stream which was already saline. The effect was stated to be negligible.

After this informal discussion on the spot, Sir George Schuster tried to arrange another meeting at Simla, at which again the Raja Sahib was asked to be present. Mr. Brayne, the Deputy Commissioner of Jhelum, was to be there and various other officials. A letter was written to the Raja Sahib asking him specifically whether he attributed the damage to the mine or to the presence of the salt range and to give his reasons so that there might be a discussion in this committee. Actually, as the Raja Sahib says, Mr. Brayne was not able to be present at that committee and so the whole meeting fell through and nothing more was done. As the Raja Sahib attaches considerable importance to Mr. Brayne's opinion, it may interest the House to know what Mr. Brayne's opinion about the result of the operations in the salt mine was. He thought that the work of the Salt Department could not have a very large effect on the salinity of the country around. Again, in another communication, he said that he did not see how the damage to the neighbourhood could be traced to the salt operations in the Khewra gorge. That was the opinion of the Deputy Commissioner of Jhelum, Mr. Brayne, to which the Raja Sahib evidently attaches considerable importance.

There is another opinion of another official, Mr. Crump, who was once Sub-divisional Officer in Pind Dadan Khan and also Deputy Commissioner of Jhelum. There is no doubt that something has occurred in that neighbourhood since about the year 1894, that is to say about 40 years ago. Mr. Crump thought it might be due to a saline efflorescence due to the heat in the dry season drawing up sub-soil saline water. He did not ascribe it to the operations in the salt mine.

Since then, that is to say since 1930, until the present year, Government had received no further representation about this trouble in Khewra. A cut Motion was moved in connection with the salt budget in the Assembly the other day and the Raja Sahib says that it was unanimously carried. Actually that was not so. The Motion was challenged by the Government Members but it was not carried to a division. It was not unanimously carried.

Now the points that I should like to make at this stage are first that, if the meetings of these committees ended without any definite conclusion, it was primarily due to the Raja Sahib's own action in saying that he did not want this committee to meet until Mr. Brayne could be present. The second point which I would make is that *prima facie* there is no reason to believe that the damage in the neighbourhood of Khewra is due to the way in which the salt mines are worked. There are considerable exposed surfaces of salt on the hill sides; the salt is washed down by the rain and by streams which are most of them,—all, I think, except one,—unconnected with the mine. This mine is worked below ground level and rock salt is excavated,—solid rock salt. There is no cultivated land, I understand, within about a mile and a half of the mine. The Commissioner of Northern India Salt Revenue, whom I have consulted, tells me that in the course of his tenure of his office he has often visited Khewra and received many complaints but he has received no complaint about the matter which has been raised by the Raja Sahib this morning. Therefore, *prima facie*, it does not seem that the mine is playing a very large part in causing this damage to the neighbouring land. There is, I may say, no drainage channel leading from the stocks of salt to the culturable lands. There is no question of the discharge of salt water directly from the mine, as the Honourable Lala Ram Saran Das has suggested. There are depots for storing salt from the mine: one is surrounded by a wall, one is partly surrounded by a wall: but in the second case a part of the wall has been left to stop any possibility of the flow of saline water. For this water to reach any cultivated land, it must drain out of the depot, pass through a bazaar, over or under a railway, and then cross a considerable distance of flat and barren country.

There is no desire on the part of Government to minimise the importance of this problem. The belt affected is about 50 miles long and several miles broad and it is not possible surely to attribute the damage which has been done on such a very large tract of country to two small heaps of salt. Moreover, this is a provincial and not a central subject. Whether you regard it as a matter of water supply or land revenue or agriculture, in any case it is a matter for the local Government to deal with and for the Government of India to interfere, except in so far as it may be due to their method of operating their salt mine, would be an encroachment on what is properly the sphere of the local Government. What is required at the present time is a careful scientific investigation, I understand the Raja Sahib himself has already represented this matter to the local Government. The local Government have said that they are already considering the possibility of putting an expert on special duty to look into this matter and to ascertain the causes of salination. If the local Government require our assistance, we shall of course give it, and if they recommend the appointment of a committee and want assistance from the central Government in that matter, the matter will of course be very carefully considered when their communication is received.

As regards compensation, the Raja Sahib says that he only wishes to press this claim so far as the faulty operation of the salt mines is concerned. I hope I have been able to satisfy the House that Government cannot admit that it is owing to the method in which they work these mines that the lands in the neighbourhood have been affected. The problem is a very much larger

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one and cannot possibly have been caused by any action or failure to take action on the part of the central Government. The Raja Sahib does not press the claim for compensation (which, I may say, Government themselves would not admit) on the ground of the presence of the salt range. After all the salt range was placed there by an act of God, and Government are now doing their best to remove it. Again, the argument that Government derives an income from this salt range will not hold water. The revenue which Government desires from the salt comes not from the range but from the consumers. The salt is sold to the consumers at cost price *plus* the duty; there is no case for allocating the duty which they pay to the district of Jhelum. I may also point out that, although the lands may be suffering, the presence of the mine in Khewra confers a very distinct benefit on the neighbourhood. There is a labour force of just under 1,000 men on the average which receives wages amounting to about Rs. 3½ lakhs a year. If agriculture in the neighbourhood is suffering, at least they have this very appreciable source of income to help them out. Government, therefore, are not prepared to admit that *prima facie* there is any case for compensation. They do not consider that the method in which the salt mine has been worked can possibly be held to have caused more than possibly a very small part of the damage which has been done to the lands in the neighbourhood.

The Honourable Raja Sahib says that an expert had already been appointed in 1922 and that no practical results were obtained. To that argument, I think I may reply that two committees have already been appointed and no practical results have been obtained by that means either. I am afraid, therefore, that I must oppose this Resolution on the grounds that this is a provincial subject and that if the provincial Government in due course come to the Government of India and say that a committee should be appointed, and that practical benefit will be derived from such a course, then of course the Government of India will consider the proposal most carefully.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I would like you to say how the labour is provided with water.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. TALLENTS: I am afraid I have never been to the Khewra mines. I therefore cannot tell you exactly. But I understand that part of the stream which flows down through the mine is carried down in pipes and the coolies who work possibly drink from that source.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: They drink saltish water?

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. TALLENTS: That is so possibly; I cannot say.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I would like to know about another point. In the last 30 years, has any civil action been brought against Government for damages?

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. TALLENTS: Not to my knowledge.

THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN: Sir, I must admit that I am not very much surprised at the attitude taken up by Government. It was not unexpected, because I knew that these four days will not change

the mind of the Government. Unfortunately, Sir, Government, as it is constituted at the present day, is so irresponsible that even the most moderate demand, coming from any quarter,—it may be from the Congress or it may be from the moderates or it may be from the loyalists,—carries no weight as far as the Government benches are concerned. You will be interested to learn that this cut was moved by a man in the Legislative Assembly who always votes with the Government on every matter. It was supported by nominated Members. Practically all the Members who spoke on this Resolution were those who think it a sin to go and walk in the opposite lobby to Government. Then, what I said was that this Resolution was unanimously passed. The Honourable the Finance Secretary says that Government did not challenge a division—

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT :** He said that it was not unanimously accepted. It did not go to a division. That is what he said.

**THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN :** It did go to a division because Government knew that excepting the 26 official Members, there was not another Member who was going to vote with them, and that is why they did not have the courage to call for a division. I am sure that even this House, situated as we are, and with all the handicaps we have got, will be able to carry this Resolution. I am sure, Sir, that if the Secretary had been left to himself, his attitude would have been entirely different. He has read out opinions from Mr. Brayne. I am at present handicapped. He has read out from some private letter or some confidential document. He has read out only three or four lines. I am sure that if he reads out the whole opinion of Mr. Brayne, you will find that he has exposed the Government in perfectly clear terms. He has said that unless the Government are prepared to do something to relieve the legitimate grievances of these people, he will consider that these people are out to exploit the Indians. That was the reason why, I may tell you frankly, I insisted on Mr. Brayne being on this committee. In the Statutory Commission Report you will find that they mention the name of only one Indian Civil Service officer and that is of Mr. Brayne. The Statutory Commission say that unfortunately the men who are sent out to India do not know what self-government is—

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT :** Please do not digress.

**THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN :** This is a most important point that vitally concerns the Resolution before the House. They say that the Indian Civil Servants who are sent out to India know nothing except "law and order." They do not know what really constructive work means, and the commissioners say that the only one exception they found in India was Mr. Brayne, and that is why I insisted that Mr. Brayne, who has been given such a good certificate by the Statutory Commission and who has been Deputy Commissioner of the Jhelum district must be on this committee. I deliberately avoided attending that meeting unless Mr. Brayne could be present. The present Deputy Commissioner is Mr. Innes, the son of Sir Charles Innes, who was our Commerce Member some time ago. I am prepared to tell the Government that if they ask Mr. Innes to report on this matter, I will be quite satisfied with what he says. What is the use of somebody here getting up who admits that he has never been to the Khewra salt mines, and who does not know what the country he is talking about is like and who can never form a true opinion of these matters? You asked certain questions,

[Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan.]

Sir. What was the reply ? You asked him how the water is provided in the mines. You asked whether they drink saltish water. They do not drink saltish water. They drink sweet water.

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT :** You have said that in your opening speech, that they bring the water from eight to ten miles away.

**THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN :** It is brought to them there in the mines through waterworks. Now, as regards the new theory started by the present Finance Member that this is a provincial matter. I say that Sir Basil Blackett and Sir George Schuster both admitted that this was a central subject and it was the duty of the Government of India to hold an inquiry, and there was no word in their speeches about the provincial Government. If he wants me to tell him whether the Punjab Government have taken part in this matter and have approached the Government of India on this subject or not, I may inform him that they have done so. I cannot tell him the exact number and date of their letter but I know it was in the time of Mr. Crump, whose opinion the Honourable Mr. Tallents himself mentioned. And what they said was that if you are not prepared to give us compensation it is our legitimate right that a part of this income should be given to this district board annually, and that claim was supported by the Punjab Government who approached the Government of India on the subject. If somebody were to challenge me to substantiate this, I must confess that I have no direct evidence except that in a speech of Sir Basil Blackett on a different subject he gave us a sort of hint that such a request was made. This I will read from Volume 8 of the Legislative Assembly (Simla) debates of 1926. Talking on the Taxation Inquiry Committee Report, Sir Basil Blackett said :

“ A case came to my notice recently in which a local authority proposed to put a heavy duty on goods exported from within its jurisdiction in an area in which the main export is salt ”.

From this passage in his speech I concluded that he was referring to the District Board, Jhelum, and their claim, which was supported by the Punjab Government.

Now, Sir, what is the use of coming here and saying this is a provincial subject when you know perfectly well that the Punjab Government have been addressing you on it all this time and asking you to do something for them. And what is the object of my Resolution ? It is only to bring together the officials of the Government of India and the officials of the Punjab Government to devise some means and propose some remedies. They will never otherwise come together. When you approach the Punjab Government they say that salt is really the concern of the Government of India and those who derive benefit from it should be responsible and do something ; and when we approach the Government of India they reply that it is a provincial subject. It is said that so far as this income from salt is concerned—

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT :** You need not dilate on that point, because if it was a purely provincial subject I would not have admitted this Resolution.

**THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN :** Thank you, Sir. I need not say anything further on this point. But I may assure my Honourable friend that if a portion of the tax which is paid by consumers of salt is devoted to the relief of the sufferings of these poor people, the consumers will



not grudge it, because they know it will be usefully spent, more than in many other directions in which it is being wasted.

I hope I have convinced the House that the demand is reasonable. The Government do not deny that the evil is considerable and that the people are suffering. They also do not deny that it is due to the existence of the salt-range. Therefore I am sure every section of the House will support me in passing this most moderate Resolution, and I trust that the Government will not treat this Resolution with the same contempt with which they treated the Resolution in the other House.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. TALLENTS :** A considerable part of the Raja Sahib's speech was concerned with the constitutional position as to whether this was a provincial or central subject. He said that Sir Basil Blackett and Sir George Schuster both treated it as a central subject. They did, because the Raja Sahib alleged that most of the damage was due to the method in which this mine was operated. Well, as I have tried to explain, thanks to the Raja Sahib bringing this question up, certain informal inquiries have been made, from which the central Government are satisfied that there is an entire disproportion between the problem of the salination of the lands in this part of the Punjab and the alleged cause. They are satisfied that the cause which the Raja Sahib originally alleged cannot possibly have led to this very widespread deterioration of the lands over a belt which extends for about 50 miles in length and several miles in breadth. Therefore, if Government have reason to suppose *prima facie* that the method of operation of the salt mines is not the cause of this deterioration of the land, they say that it is not a central subject, and that it is a matter for the provincial Government to deal with. If the provincial Government go into this matter and come to the conclusion that anything the central Government could do would alleviate matters, then of course the central Government would do all they can to help. If they want to appoint a committee and want employees of the central Government to assist, the Government of India would do their best to meet them in this matter.

The Raja Sahib quoted from an opinion of Sir Basil Blackett about a certain tax which the Jhelum District Board were proposing to impose. I think he rather gave the impression that Sir Basil Blackett was in sympathy with the Jhelum District Board ?

**THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN :** No, Sir, he was not.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. TALLENTS :** I merely wanted to make the point that he held the diametrically opposite view. However, if that point is clear I do not want to labour it.

Sir, I am quite prepared, if the Raja Sahib would like, that the central Government should send a copy of the proceedings of today's debate to the Punjab Government.

**THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN :** Nobody would read them !

**THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. TALLENTS :** It seems to me rather curious that the Raja Sahib should suppose that the Punjab Government will take no interest in the matter, when the officers he mentioned as taking such a deep interest are serving under the Punjab Government, Mr. Brayne and Mr. Innes. How after all will the central Government get in touch with these officers except through the Punjab Government ?

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Well, Sir, there is nothing more to be said on this matter. So far as the central Government are concerned they do not consider that there is justification for appointing a committee at the present time. They are quite prepared to refer the matter to the local Government whose business it is and if the local Government desire to have a committee the central Government will give them all the assistance they can. I feel bound, Sir, having stated the case of the central Government as clearly as I can, to oppose this Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Resolution moved :

"This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to appoint a committee to inquire how much damage has been caused by the salt range in general and by the Khewra mines in particular to neighbouring lands and villages in Jhelum and Shahpore districts and to report what compensation should be granted to zemindars and cultivators who have suffered on this account and what steps should be taken to stop further damage to cultivable lands and villages".

The Question is :

"That this Resolution be adopted."

The Council divided :

AYES—22.

Akuran, The Honourable Mr. Shantidas.  
Banerjee, The Honourable Mr. Jagadish Chandra.  
Barua, The Honourable Srijut Heramba Prasad.  
Buta Singh, The Honourable Sardar.  
Chari, The Honourable Mr. P. C. D.  
Chetty, The Honourable Diwan Bahadur G. Narayanaswami.  
Ghazanfar Ali Khan, The Honourable Raja.  
Gounder, The Honourable Mr. V. C. Vellingiri.  
Halim, The Honourable Khan Bahadur Hafiz Muhammad.  
Hossain Imain, The Honourable Mr.  
Jagdish Prasad, The Honourable Rai Bahadur Lala.  
Kaliker, The Honourable Mr. V V.

Khaperde, The Honourable Mr. G. S.  
Mehrotra, The Honourable Rai Bahadur Lala Mathura Prasad.  
Mitha, The Honourable Sir Suleman Cassim Haji.  
Muhammad Din, The Honourable Khan Bahadur Chaudri.  
Naidu, The Honourable Mr. Y. Rangana-yakalu.  
Padshah Sahib Bahadur, The Honourable Saiyed Mohamed.  
Ram Saran Das, The Honourable Rai Bahadur Lala.  
Sapru, The Honourable Mr. P. N.  
Sethna, The Honourable Sir Phiroze.  
Suhrwardy, The Honourable Mr. Mahmood.

NOES—27.

Basu, The Honourable Mr. Bijay Kumar.  
Charanjit Singh, The Honourable Raja.  
Choksy, The Honourable Khan Bahadur Dr. Sir Nasarvanji.  
Commander-in-Chief, His Excellency the Devadoss, The Honourable Sir David.  
Fazl-i-Husain, The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Sir.  
Ghosal, The Honourable Mr. Jyotsnanath.  
Gladstone, The Honourable Mr. S. D.  
Habibullah of Dacca, The Honourable Nawab Khwaja.  
Hafeez, The Honourable Khan Bahadur Syed Abdul.  
Hallett, The Honourable Mr. M. G.  
Johnson, The Honourable Mr. J. N. G.  
Kameshwar Singh of Darbhanga, The Honourable Maharajadhiraja Sir.

Menon, The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir Ramunni.  
Miller, The Honourable Mr. E.  
Mitchell, The Honourable Mr. D. G.  
Muhammad Hussain, The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Ali Baksh.  
Pandit, The Honourable Sardar Shri Jagannath Maharaj.  
Philip, The Honourable Mr. C. L.  
Russell, The Honourable Sir Guthrie.  
Spence, The Honourable Mr. G. H.  
Sprawson, The Honourable Major-General C. A.  
Stewart, The Honourable Mr. F. W.  
Stewart, The Honourable Mr. T. A.  
Tallents, The Honourable Mr. P. C.  
Ugra, The Honourable Rai Sahib Pandit Gokaran Nath.  
Yamin Khan, The Honourable Mr. Mohammad.

The Motion was negatived.

## RESOLUTION *RE* STEPS TO CHECK THE INCREASE IN POPULATION.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM** (Bihar and Orissa : Muham-madan) : Sir, I rise to place before the House the following Resolution :

“ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to take practical steps to check the increase in the population of India ”.

This Resolution which I have just read has not been brought forward in pursuance of a fad, or as a means of copying what others have done. Because it is a necessity for India, a dire necessity, that this increase in population should be checked, that I gave notice of this Resolution. Mr. President, it is a matter which primarily concerns the masses, the dumb millions, whose voice is never heard in the councils of the Government. Representing a fairly large electorate indirectly in this House, I claim, Sir, that it is our duty to place before the Government and the House the evil results of the increase in the population which is going on at the present moment. I should like, Sir, first of all to say exactly what I wish the Government to do and what I do not want them to do at the present moment. In the present condition of the country when this proposition has not been widely discussed, it is not proper for me to ask the Government to bring forward any legislative enactment for this purpose. We can only ask them to make the country conversant with the evils of the unchecked increase and to inculcate in their minds the possibility of using birth control.

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT** : Is that the sentiment of the masses ?

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM** : The masses do not know. There are many things which the masses have got to be taught. First of all, they do not know how to read. Do you mean to say that they should not be taught ? It is not what they want, but what is good for them.

Sir, the problem of the population in India is that during the 30-year period from 1891 to 1921 the population increased by 32 millions, while in the last decade, between 1921 to 1931, the actual increase in population was 34 millions,—two million more men than there was in the previous 30-year period. That in itself will show how acute the present condition is. Knowing also, Sir, that it is a sort of recurrent increase and that it increases in geometrical progression, I would not be an alarmist if I were to say that by the beginning of the fourth decade we will have an increase in population of very nearly 150 millions. May I ask, Sir, whether the Government are ready to give a pledge that they will find employment and subsistence for 15 crores more in less than 40 years. As it is, the Government cannot find employment for the present population, then what will they do when 15 crores more mouths are to be fed and bodies to be clothed ? Sir, knowing the economic conditions of the world in general and of India in particular, one cannot view this influx of population with equanimity or with any favour. As it is, the problem of unemployment is acute enough in India. Only the other day we discussed a Resolution on the subject of unemployment. What was the net result of that discussion ? The Government said they had no statistics of the unemployed in agriculture. The only statistics, and that too partial statistics,

[Mr. Hossain Imam.]

that they possessed was about those employed in the industries. Let us take that as a barometer. The Honourable Mr. Mitchell told us that the number employed in the major industries in the period 1929—1933 fell by 200,000 from 2·5 millions to 2·3 millions. That means, Sir, that there was a drop of 12 per cent. A further fact which came to light from the census report was that the actual proportion of the persons employed in the industries has also fallen. The proportion that they had in the population of India in 1921 was 10·45 per cent. but in 1931 the census showed that their percentage had fallen to 9·95 per cent. which means that a fall of ·5 (which amounts to about 5 per cent.) has already taken place. Even with the increase of industrialisation we are not employing as many men, even that proportion of men which we were employing in 1921. Acting on that principle, Sir, we would not be pessimistic if we were to say that the number of unemployed at present only in agriculture will also be in that proportion because the agricultural prices have fallen much more steeply. Sir, the census shows that more than 100 million persons were dependent directly on agriculture. Therefore, a 12 per cent. fall will show that there are 12 million people dependent on agriculture who do not get their subsistence from that industry. Has the Government done anything to relieve these teeming millions? Have they taken any steps so far to alleviate their sufferings? Do they propose to take steps in the near future to find employment for the existing unemployed in agriculture? The Government will tell you clearly, that they have no means to do this, that it is beyond their power, that their income is too small to allow them to give any sort of dole to the unemployed as is done in England. Therefore, Sir, I ask, is it possible that in the short space of 30 years the Government will become so rich as to give doles to all the unemployed? Or will it become so national in character that it will think it to be its bounden duty to support all those unborn citizens of India who are bound to be born in the near future? With our proverbial poverty, our vanishing balance of trade in merchandise, with restricted trade, with foreign domination, with ever-increasing foreign commitments, it is idle, it is foolish, it is almost criminal negligence on our part to let things drift. It is our duty to tell the people of India and its Government that unchecked increase of population will bring us all on the brink of violent revolution. It is this unchecked increase of population which has so much accentuated the class warfare and added to the terrorist movement in Bengal because the pressure of population in Bengal, Sir, is the highest in British India. Let us look at the world facts. Productivity was pressed and preached in olden times because it was the only yard-stick with which to measure the military strength and the only standard of any bearing for computing the earning capacities of nations. Both these measures are now out of use. In the army organisation and equipment are the deciding factors. In trade, mechanisation is now the main theme. We know how Japan has by means of perfect mechanisation, marketing control, and planned trade conditions, dumped the markets of the world. It is not the population which counts but it is the brain and machine behind the industry which make the industry a success or failure. (*An Honourable Member*: "Have they resorted to birth control measures?") Mr. President, the Japanese nation are no doubt a leading nation but it does not mean that whatever they do is good and whatever they do not do is bad. I may say, Sir, that about eight or nine years back, a Resolution was moved in their House of Lords but unfortunately not carried. (*An Honourable Member*: "What measures do you suggest?") Sir, I do not wish to bind the hands of the Government to any definite action. It is for them to decide, they have Major-General Sprawson to advise them on the medical aspect and tell them what ought

to be done. (*An Honourable Member* : "What about child marriage?") *Mr. President*, the Government thought it its duty to bring forward a measure — (*An Honourable Member* : "It was not the Government who brought it".) Had it not been for the support of the Government the measure would not have been passed. We know that in this House the Muhammadan Members almost unanimously opposed this measure but still in spite of that it was passed, and although Muslims have been agitating for a long time against this measure, Government has not thought fit to heed them. They did it because they thought it was their duty. Well, in the same way, I want them to do this from a sense of duty too.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. MOHAMMAD YAMIN KHAN** (United Provinces : Nominated Non-Official) : Is child marriage a practical step towards this ?

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM** : When we are discussing child marriage, we will consider the question whether it is practical or unpractical. At the present moment we are considering the human labour as a factor in production. Every day, mechanisation is increasing and replacing human labour. With increased production, the number of unemployed is on the increase. To those who think that industrialisation is the remedy for the increase in population my reply is this. England with a population of 4½ crores, and in spite of a world empire and of a century's lead in trade and commerce has still 2·5 million unemployed. How can we even dream of giving employment to 40 crores ?

**THE HONOURABLE MR. BIJAY KUMAR BASU** : What is the remedy you recommend ? You do not recommend anything !

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM** : My remedy is, as I said in the beginning, birth control.

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT** : Birth control—in what shape ?

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM** : That is for the Government to say.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. BIJAY KUMAR BASU** : Do you want the police to mount guard ?

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM** : The Government have got experts ; this House has also got experts to advise, like Dr. Sir Nasarvanji Choksy. From the economic point of view it is plain that the increase in population, if it goes on, cannot be supplied with the power to purchase means of sustenance. After all, the foundations of all wealth is labour. Unless there is human labour, you cannot give to these units the purchasing power. All the labourers in the rural areas are agricultural, and they are employed only for three or four months in the year. Afterwards, they have no employment. Therefore, their purchasing power is very much reduced, and they are not able to take care of themselves. Sir, Government have imposed on us imperial preference, protection, quota and the other paraphernalia of economic nationalism. They have ruined our export trade on which depends the prosperity of the great masses of India. Our industries no doubt supply the home market but they are not the things which supply us with material

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to purchase our foreign goods and to finance our external commitments. For all these purposes we have to rely on our production. In this field the coming in of Russia and the economic self-sufficiency of other countries is having very harmful results on the Indian export trade. Every country wishes to be self-sufficient, as we ourselves are trying to be. We cannot blame them if they do not want to purchase from us. Russia has gone in for mass production on a large scale without capital and on the principle of State ownership. That is a country which has no unemployment problem at the present moment. Every one there is employed. Unless Government is anxious to bring India to the state of affairs which prevails in Russia, they must be up betimes and take care of these things. When there are hungry hordes who cannot find employment, who cannot find bread and butter for themselves, what will they do? They will clamour for their right by violent and armed rebellion. It is for the safety of the British Government itself that they ought to take steps now, otherwise, they will be swamped by the coming hordes.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. BIJAY KUMAR BASU :** How can these people who cannot have bread have birth-control contraceptives?

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM :** It is an economic proposition. The cost of rearing children from the time of their birth to the time when they are units in the labour market will be more than the cost of contraceptives.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. BIJAY KUMAR BASU :** It is spread over a long period.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM :** The Government can give them loans if they like to purchase these things, and thereby give some scope for the money market in Calcutta and Bombay to gamble upon. I wish now to explain the humanitarian aspect of this question.

**THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS (Nominated : Indian Christians) :** What about the religious aspect of it?

**THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. KHAPARDE (Berar Representative) :** I would like you to speak about the remedies. We would like to know how you propose to stop it.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM :** We all know that the expectation of life in India is very low. We all know that within the first year of life, nearly one-fifth of the children die.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. MOHAMMAD YAMIN KHAN :** Do you want all the children to be killed as soon as they are born?

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM :** Do you suggest that? Did you ever hear me suggesting that? Or are you suggesting it?

**THE HONOURABLE MR. MOHAMMAD YAMIN KHAN :** I am asking you whether it is your suggestion?

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM :** Did you ever hear me say that ? If you did not hear me, why impute motives ? It is a wrong policy. Of course, Sir, the nominated Members, who have no constituency to represent, who are repudiated by the Treasury benches, and not accepted by the non-officials, they can indulge in anything they like. They are neither fish, flesh, nor good red herring !

We know, Sir, that at the present moment, the number of persons above 50 is below 10 per cent. of the population, whereas the proportion of the people between the ages of 0 to 15 is 40 per cent. That shows how small is the expectation of life, and how great is infant mortality. We know that in the countryside, there is great female mortality during first conception. I am sorry, Sir, that no statistics exist about this. From my own personal experience, in certain towns, I was able to find that almost 20 per cent. of the women during the first conception period or within a month of first labour pass out. That brings us to the pertinent question, that when we are unable to take care of even the children who are born, whether it is right to go on producing at the rate at which we are now doing ? To my friends who may say that contraceptive methods are used by debauchees, may I say that there is nothing to prevent people from indulging in these things ? Contraceptives are available in the market and they know all about it. Only moral teaching can inculcate in the brains of the people a forbearance and it is not the mechanical things the want of which will prevent them from going on with licentiousness to their heart's desires. After all, human beings are also animals, we belong to the same mammalian groups.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. BIJAY KUMAR BASU :** Brutes !

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM :** It is only civilisation and the teachings of the different religions and the fear of the law which keeps in check the brutal instincts in us and brings forth the human out of us. Mr. President, there is no use of fighting shy of the problem. It is no good trying to hide our heads like ostriches. We have to face facts like men. The facts are there ; you have to face them and to find a cure for them. It is very easy to let things drift and to do nothing. But if you really think that there is a prospect of unemployment for the coming generations, if you feel that your purses do not allow you to take care efficiently of the health of the present generation, what is the good of adding to the burden ?

Now, Sir, I come to those of my friends who say they have religious scruples. In Lobby talks I came to know that many of my friends have doubts. I am however going to follow your advice, Sir, and will not anticipate criticism. I will reply to them when they come forward with their dogmas and rules. But I would only point out to them that they will only be bringing themselves and their religion to judgment if they just take shelter behind religious rules and do not substantiate them on economic, social and humanitarian grounds.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. KHAPARDE :** What are the practical steps you recommend ?

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM :** I am coming to that, Sir. At the present moment there is no doubt that with the exception of the educated few this question has not filtered down to the masses and it is for that purpose, because they are ignorant of it, that I have asked the help of the Government. As I said in the beginning, I do not want any legislative enactment limiting the size of the family or anything of that nature. *I simply*

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wish them to take steps that in the curricula of secondary education, along with the newly introduced hygiene, chapters may be introduced on the disadvantages of a too considerable increase of population, and a few hints on contraceptive methods may be given to these children. Mrs. Grundy is dead and buried. There is no need taking refuge behind her broad back and saying we cannot talk of these things to the children. If you do not talk of these things to them, it is not that they will not learn of them, they do know of them, but they imbibe the information in quite a wrong way and get wrong ideas about them.

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT :** What percentage of the population go to secondary schools ?

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM :** At present about 7 or 8 per cent.

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT :** How will the masses benefit ?

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM :** *It is for that purpose that I desire the Government to have travelling clinics.*

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT :** Then you want the Government to teach them contraceptive methods ?

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM :** Mr. President, there is no harm in it.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. BIJAY KUMAR BASU :** Would there be any good ?

**THE HONOURABLE SIR PHIROZE SETHNA :** Distinctly so.

**THE HONOURABLE LIEUTENANT-COLONEL NAWAB SIR MAHOMED AKBAR KHAN (North-West Frontier Province : Nominated Non-Official) :** Charity begins at home ; then start it.

**THE HONOURABLE NAWAB MALIK SIR MOHAMMAD HAYAT KHAN NOON (Punjab : Nominated Non-Official) :** What has your constituency to say about it ?

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM :** First, let me tell you what my constituency is. My constituency, Sir, is wrongly thought by many persons to consist of only a few landed and aristocratic persons. I refute that charge. My constituency is the widest constituency of any legislature. We elected Members of the Council of State, although directly representing only a few, indirectly represent millions of persons. (Hear, hear.)

**THE HONOURABLE MR. BIJAY KUMAR BASU :** But if there is birth control the millions will disappear !

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM :** Millions may disappear but lakhs will still be left. *Perhaps very few people know that Members of the Council of State, although elected by communal electorates, nevertheless are indirect representatives of other communities too, inasmuch as one of the qualifications of the elector is the chairmanship or vice-chairmanship of*



a local body, men who reach that position come through a joint electorate, and therefore I can claim to represent even some Hindu interests, just as my friend Mr. Sapru can claim to represent a good few Muhammadans of the United Provinces. Now, my friend the Nawab Sahib said, "What does your constituency say?" I said in the beginning that I have no mandate from my constituency and I have brought this Motion because I think it is my duty to do so, just as it is the duty of every man with eyes to point out to a blind man his danger when he is moving towards a well. It is our duty to stop the blind masses from going on to their ruin. Therefore, Sir, I ask the House to endorse and the Government to accept the demand for birth control in India.

Sir, I move.

THE HONOURABLE SIR PHIROZE SETHNA (Bombay: Non-Muhammadan): Mr. President, I regard my friend the Honourable mover as a very bold man to have had the courage to bring forward this Resolution for the consideration of the Council of State, when he knows—and we have had evidence of it here today—that there is a great divergence of opinion in the country on this question. My friend was twitted by several members on my left who treated the subject with a considerable amount of levity. I do hold, Sir, that the subject deserves very serious consideration, not only at the hands of Government but at the hands of Members of the Council of State, who in their turn are regarded as leaders in their different constituencies. In support of the Resolution I will not depend upon any *obiter dicta*. I will not tell you what I think or others like me think. I will quote the opinions of Government officials themselves and I trust that will satisfy those who are Doubting Thomases in regard to this proposition.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. KHAPARDE: On a point of order, Sir. The Motion is about the steps to be taken, not the desirability or otherwise of this measure, and if the Honourable Member will kindly tell us the steps he proposes I should be very glad to hear them.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: You cannot take steps without considering their desirability.

THE HONOURABLE SIR PHIROZE SETHNA: Sir, if my friend did not in his Resolution include the specific practical steps to be taken by Government, he certainly made them clear in the course of his remarks. This is indeed a very grave problem to which we must give considerable attention. We have in India today a population of 35½ crores of people. If I am not mistaken, according to the latest estimate of the population of China the population of India beats that of China. Therefore India is today the most populous country in the world. Let me give you some figures in regard to the increase in our population. In 1901, according to the Census returns of that year we had 29 crores and 43 lakhs. Ten years later there was an increase of 6½ per cent. and the figure rose to 31 crores 50 lakhs. In the next decade, however, there was a very slight increase of only about one per cent., the figure being 31 crores and 89 lakhs in 1921. But in the decade ending in 1931 the increase was as large as 10·5 per cent. and the total population of British India and the States amounted to 35 crores and 28 lakhs. (*An Honourable Member*: "A good sign!") A good sign? With what production we have and with the unemployment which you yourself referred to and complained of only the other day? This increase is of 10½ per cent., but what I want to point out is that the increase in the Indian States is not 10½ per cent. but

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less, and perhaps it may be worth while to inquire as to the reason why the increase in the Indian States is not as large as in British India. All eastern countries have a higher birth rate as compared to western countries. Some of the western countries deplore their lower birth rate and no country today deplores it more than France as we read in this very morning's papers. The strength of the peace army in France is 230,000. There is conscription there, as Honourable Members know. Those who are in the conscript class today may be called the "war babies" having been born during the war, and because the birth rate during the war was particularly low there are not enough men in the conscript class in France today to make up the total of 230,000 for the standing peace army. It is therefore that from October next France has decided to increase the period of conscription from 18 months to two years which, if they do not do, will mean that by 1940 the strength of the peace army will be reduced from 230,000 to 118,000.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. KHAPARDE : This is very interesting, but not a step for controlling population !

THE HONOURABLE SIR PHIROZE SETHNA : If my Honourable friend has no patience, I refuse to answer his interruptions. I am leading up to my point.

Birth control is what my friend the mover has strongly advocated. You, Sir, enquired if birth control was the sentiment of the masses. May I answer that question by informing the House that the well known firm of book-sellers, Taraporewallas in Bombay, have produced several editions of a book on contraception, which sells for Re. 1 per copy. Every edition is bought up as soon as it is published. These books are bought like ripe cherries, and by whom ? By the middle class and the lower middle class and it is through them that the idea of birth control or contraception will permeate to the masses, and it is the duty of the Government to see that it so permeates to the masses by means which they may well adopt after due consideration. I admit that the question is controversial, but the balance of considerations is certainly in favour of promoting birth control under proper Government supervision. I do not know if the Government in reply will say that this is a provincial subject, but I know that Government of India officers have not treated it as such. Let me refer to what Mr. Hutton, the Census Commissioner, has said on this subject. His views deserve careful attention both at the hands of Government and leaders of public opinion. This is what he says :

"It appears to be the general opinion of Indian economists who discuss the population problem of the country that the only practical method of limiting the population is by the introduction of artificial methods of birth control, though it is not easy to exaggerate the difficulties of introducing such methods in a country where the vast majority of the population regard the propagation of male offspring as a religious duty and the reproach of barrenness as a terrible punishment for crimes committed in a former incarnation. It is justly pointed out by the Census Superintendent of Mysore State that the practice of universal and of early marriage is a social custom and is not, in fact, followed from religious motives, but it is almost always religious arguments which are put forward in opposition to a change in social custom by any society anywhere, and though the religious sanction may be the result rather than the cause of the social custom, this fact only gives the sanction greater force. Nevertheless a definite movement towards artificial birth control appears to be taking place and is perhaps less hampered by misplaced prudery than in some countries which claim to be more civilised ; thus not only is artificial control publicly advocated by a number of medical writers but Madras can boast a Neo-Malthusian League with two Maharajas, three High Court Judges and four or five men very prominent in public life as its sponsors".

My friend Sir Malik asked whether they practised birth control is so advanced a country as Japan.

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT :** You have got two minutes more only.

**THE HONOURABLE SIR PHIROZE SETHNA :** With your permission, Sir, I would like to quote the Public Health Commissioner and Major-General Sir John Megaw. If you will allow me that latitude, I will go on otherwise I will have to stop. Japan is a very advanced country. It is said of Japan and the Japanese that they are ever ready to adopt what they see good in others, they adapt themselves to the same and subsequently become adepts, and I would like to assure my Honourable friend the Nawab Sahib that if Japan found that they did not produce enough for the increase in their population they will be the first to enforce birth control, and as I have said, they will become adepts in this matter as well as they have become in various others.

I have said that I have the authority of the Public Health Commissioner as also that of Major-General Sir John Megaw. In the last Report for 1932 the Public Health Commissioner says :

"For the health and welfare of the peoples of India are the most important problems with which the new Governments—federal and provincial—will be faced almost as soon as they are brought into being. By some that statement may be looked upon as an exaggeration ; it is, on the contrary, a plain statement of fact made without any suggestion of personal or departmental aggrandisement. It is one moreover which is becoming more and more evident to those who have examined actual figures and who have the vision to realise their implications".

Sir John McCarrison speaks about the poor quality of food and says :

"My own concern has been mainly with nutrition ; and my researches have led me to the conclusion that the diet of many millions of the Indian people is not such as can maintain physical efficiency and health. They are condemned, from their mother's wombs, to a subnormal or diseased existence as certainly as is the engine of the best motor car when not provided with efficient lubrication or when supplied with an improper fuel".

I will now quote the former Director General of the Indian Medical Service, Sir John Megaw. He says :

"How are additional and improved food supplies to be obtained ? How is the general standard of living to be raised ?"

That is a point which Government should see to that the standard of living is increased. He writes of the gloomy outlook for the future and says :

"Not only for the masses of the people who must face an intensified struggle for bare subsistence but also for the upper classes whose incomes depend on the production of a surplus of crops and other commodities".

He also recommends :

"The suggestion has been made that in order to review the situation before India reaches disaster, a commission of experts should be appointed to examine every aspect of economic life of India to make an accurate survey of the present position and a reliable forecast for the future".

That is the underlying meaning of the Resolution which my Honourable friend has moved and that is its significance. I have very great pleasure in supporting it. It is an admitted fact that fecundity in all countries is on a heavier scale amongst the lower than amongst the upper classes. Intellectual activity

[ Sir Phiroze Sethna. ]

checks fertility. Therefore intellectual activity must be one of the means which Government ought to cultivate not only for the middle classes but also for the lower.

With these words, I very strongly support my friend's Resolution.

**THE HONOURABLE KHAN BAHADUR DR. SIR NASARVANJI CHOKSY** (Bombay : Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I congratulate the Honourable mover of the Resolution for his courage in bringing it forward on a subject which is of considerable and vital importance but has not hitherto received adequate consideration at the hands of economists or political leaders. We are faced with hard facts. The main fact is that the population of India is increasing but the cultivable area for foodgrains if not diminishing is at any rate not keeping pace with it. The inevitable result must be that we should face circumstances and be prepared to meet them if the population goes on increasing at every decennial period and India may not produce sufficient food to feed them. Already on the floor of this House, on more than one occasion, I have dilated upon the various data of vital statistics and have quoted Sir John Megaw, Dr. Hutton, the Census Commissioner, and others, all of whom have expressed the same opinion, namely, that some measures, adequate measures, should be taken in the matter. There can be no two opinions about the desirability of necessary steps to reduce the birth rate. The question however, is, who should do it? We have no experience to fall back upon. The only experience that is available to us is that of America and England. America is, of course, far ahead and Great Britain followed suit. Great Britain had however enormous difficulties to contend against. Private and voluntary organisations, such as the National Birth Control Association and the International Information Bureau that were organised had to fight for several years and to knock at the doors of the Ministry of Health for permission to work. It was not till 1930 and again 1934, when Lord Horder, who is Physician Extra-Ordinary to His Majesty the King and Physician in Ordinary to the Prince of Wales, intervened, that that Government department yielded to their reasonable requests. An Order in Council was issued to the effect that wherever it was certified that pregnancy in women was destructive to health and likely to endanger life, that technical advice should be given at those local institutions that received a Government grant. The result has been that nearly 1,200 centres are in operation in England, where education and propaganda are conducted and appropriate means placed within the reach not only of the middle class but of the poor who can ill-afford the same and do not fully understand their utility.

Then, Sir, the words "birth control" does not taste well in the mouth of some people. It is anathema to them. They have religious or economic objections. But birth control does not connote complete abrogation of births. It means fewer births but better in quality. If one were to visit a children's hospital, one would find therein children with rickets, wizened, semi-starved and with all kinds of infirmities that human flesh is heir to. The result is that for every two children born, one dies before it attains the age of five. Is it not our duty to prevent such a holocaust of innocents brought into the world under grime and penury for the salvation of India and its population? The average number in a family in England was  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in 1911 while at present it is  $3\frac{1}{2}$ . I do not claim that that has been brought about entirely by the methods advocated but they have had a great share in it. Infant mortality there is only 58.5 per 1,000 live births, whereas it is 120 to 180 and over in India. As regards maternal mortality, it is only four:

per 1,000 births, whereas in India it is 24. Even this low rate is not considered altogether satisfactory. Strenuous efforts are being made to reduce it. Sir, conditions in India are quite different. The ground has not been prepared. The people are generally full of prejudice and ignorance; all that has to be overcome, and it could be done only through propaganda and education and not by Government agency, because their motives will be impugned. The opponents of Government would see a sinister purpose behind it. The work must be done by voluntary organisations in order to spread the propaganda and show what can be done. In England there is a movement for the education of doctors; in two of the colleges in London medical students are given a course of training in the subject. Sir, as this Honourable House is not a medical society, I have no desire to inflict upon it the application of methods in this connection as has been suggested to me by several friends. India has however produced one apostle of birth control in Mr. Gandhi who once advocated celibacy, not on economic or social grounds but to prohibit the bearing of slaves for the satanic Government! Unfortunately, however, his sons do not appear to have followed his precepts! What we want are centres all over the country, not only to give advice to women, but to the husbands as well, because unless they are made to realise the gravity of the subject, there is not much likelihood of improvement in the present situation. In Bombay, Sir, there exist several voluntary organisations like baby and health welfare, maternity welfare, child and infant welfare, together with a large number of maternity homes, public and private, who could undertake propaganda and education work. An attempt made some years ago for this purpose met with opposition. A film was prepared showing two families, one of a husband and wife with two children and another a husband and wife with 14 children. That film was censored and it was only through the intervention of the Governor of Bombay that it was eventually allowed to be exhibited. That film was instructive inasmuch as it showed the condition of a woman who bears children year after year, most of whom die within a short period of their birth and all the trouble and travail in rearing them is thus lost in addition to the unbearable strain the mother has to suffer. The Bombay Medical Union has taken a keen interest in the subject. It has considered the subject at more than one meeting. An association is being formed and a journal devoted to this cause has been published. It is the poorer classes to whom education and propaganda should appeal as they are the greatest sufferers through sheer ignorance. There can be no prejudice, and they are sensible enough to realise the benefits.

As a rule, Sir, when this question is brought up for discussion, it is treated as a joke, with levity and coupled with ignorant and irresponsible criticism and finally dropped! Only the other day, for instance, at a meeting of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, the proposal for establishing clinics came up for discussion. It was argued that as the poor classes had no money to go to theatres or cinemas and their only amusement was to play with their children, ergo why not let them beget children! It was to be their only amusement! The speaker failed to realise what a drain that was upon the scanty resources of the wage earner and the tax upon the woman. In this connection, one incident comes to my mind and that was when Queen Victoria gave birth to her first child, the King of the Belgians wrote her a letter congratulating her upon it and expressing the hope that she would be the mother of a large family. Her reply was:

"Men never think, at least seldom think, what a hard task it is for a woman to go through this very often".

[Khan Bahadur Dr. Sir Nasarvanji Choksy.]

And thus it is not only for the sake of reducing the population but for the sake of humanity, for the sake of the women, the mothers of our children, that we have to consider this important question. I believe, Sir, that it is not Government's business. It must be the work of voluntary organisations as they alone can inculcate such education among the masses. I would therefore ask my Honourable friend to divert his attention to these voluntary associations rather than to ask Government to take steps when, as I said, their motives would be impugned.

THE HONOURABLE MR. JAGADISH CHANDRA BANERJEE (East Bengal : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I am surprised that a man of such a religious temperament, as my friend the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam is, could bring forward such a Resolution, as is being discussed in the House. It is an open secret that Asia is the original abode of practically all religions and therefore we Asiatics and the orientals are more philosophically minded than the men of the rest of the world. I am not ignorant of the fact that the present age has brought in many new alluring theories such as that of birth control and of nudism in the west. We in India at least thought that such cultures as those of nudism and of birth control which are better suited for the sophisticated minds of the materialist west, will not have any reverberation in the east. The theory of birth control and its spread amongst the nations has had a ruinous effect on many of the nations of the west, especially just before the great European war. I admit that if multiplication goes on unchecked in the world, probably a day might come when there will not even be sufficient standing room on the face of the earth, not to speak of the availability of sufficient food and clothing for such an over population. But we must not at the same time forget that we are the creation of nature and it is for nature herself to provide outlets from this world. As it is we find nature has provided birth as well as death. My friend probably forgets that there is such a word as death against the word birth. He forgets that nature has provided volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, typhoons, cyclones, famines, plagues, black deaths, epidemics, wars and various other means, by which the surplus population of the world may be reduced, and is actually reduced.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Would you abolish them ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. JAGADISH CHANDRA BANERJEE : How can we ? It is not for my friend or others of his way of thinking to devise ways and means for birth control. In this connection I may remind my friend that if birth control is necessary for reducing world population then there would have been no necessity of devising means of death control by the advancement of the science of medicine and surgery. Science is striving every day to control death and increase the longevity of persons. If, on the one hand, birth is controlled and, on the other, death is also controlled, then, Sir, the world will be stagnant and monotonous, as we will all live without any new additions or reductions. Year in and year out we will see all these faces through eternity. I know in England and in several other western countries birth control clinics are being established but there the question is different. These clinics are being established in those countries in the west for a class of men who are proportionately more literate and educated than those in India. The men of the west can very well assimilate such theories for the betterment of society as a whole. On the contrary Indians are mostly conservative in

their temperament. The Indian masses are mostly orthodox in their beliefs and are mostly illiterate. It is no use propounding the theory of birth control amongst them which, if not properly assimilated, will bring in its train only evils and disasters without any corresponding good for the society. In this universe we forget as to how small our power is when compared with the power by which the whole universe is being controlled and guided. It is beyond human power to control the population of the world by controlling births and deaths. The great and famous economist Malthus pondered over this question long before this question of birth control was ever thought of by any man in this world. I think I need not dilate on the Malthusian theories of population. Sir, every Indian of whatever caste or creed will admit that there is sanctity within the bounds of every Indian home. If my friend desires that publications of the type I hold in my hand—

THE HONOURABLE MR. BIJAY KUMAR BASU : What is that book ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. JAGADISH CHANDRA BANERJEE : *Practical Birth Control* by Ettie A. Hornibrook. It contains several illustrations. (*An Honourable Member* : "Have you read it?") I have read it through and through. If my friend desires that publications of this type are to be broadcasted in such a way that they may reach the hands of our wives, daughters and sisters, then I think there was no better method than to bring this Resolution before this House. I think every Indian will condemn the idea of this birth control by means of legislation or through the help of legislatures. If it was the intention of my friend to gain notoriety by bringing this Resolution before this House—

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Never.

THE HONOURABLE MR. JAGADISH CHANDRA BANERJEE— I think he has achieved his object and therefore he would be better advised to withdraw the Resolution with good grace.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Never, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE MR. JAGADISH CHANDRA BANERJEE : Before I resume my seat I would request my friend always to remember that east is east and will always remain east, and it is beyond the power of my friend or any body of his way of thinking to convert east into west as the twin can never meet !

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : They will, Sir, and they have !

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU (United Provinces Southern : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I desire to congratulate my Honourable friend Mr. Hossain Imam on the courage which he has shown in tackling this great social problem. The Honourable Mr. Banerjee just now stated that Mr. Hossain Imam was a religious man and he wondered why a religious man like Mr. Hossain Imam has brought the question before the House. I am not a religious man. I have no hesitation in making that confession before the House. I do not know whether I have any faith in institutional religion. But in any case I do not understand what religion has got to do with a problem of this character. Religion, Sir, determines our attitude towards our Maker. It has nothing to do with social problems of this nature. My Honourable friend Mr. Banerjee indulged in some cheap sneers against western materialism.

[Mr. P. N. Sapru.]

I do not understand this word "materialism". I find, Sir, that the spirit of social service is much more highly developed in the west than in our country. We say that we are a very spiritual people. But what does our spirituality consist in? One should honestly go through a process of introspection in these matters. It is not necessary for us all the time to be talking in terms of spirituality when we are in fact really spiritual. The real difficulty with us is that our spirituality finds scope in abstract speculation, not in social service which is real spirituality.

Coming to the Resolution itself, I think few will deny that the population of this country is increasing at a tremendously rapid rate, and if this increase continues, what is going to happen? What are the facts which stare us in the face? Marriage in this country is practically universal. Only we condemn widows to perpetual celibacy, if I may so put it. That is one of the injustices of our society. There is no standard of living so far as the people are concerned. We marry early. Some of us believe in early marriage. I dare say my Honourable friend Mr. Banerjee who is a progressive also believes in early marriage. We have been able to conquer to some extent at any rate, disease. We have our Health Department, and if it goes on improving, the conquest of disease may at one time become an accomplished fact. Is it not necessary in these circumstances for us to tackle this problem with courage? Women's Organisations want this problem to be tackled with courage. Modern woman, even the Indian woman has revolted, and I know there are a great many women who are very much interested in this birth control problem. We all the time think in terms of masculine or man-made morality. We never think in terms of what child-bearing means for the women. (*An Honourable Member*: "You mean belonging to the upper ten?") Upper ten or lower ten. And also because the masses never enter our horizon. We may talk of the masses for political purposes when it suits us to do so, but really when it comes to putting those practices or those ideas into actual practice, we take refuge behind some religion or behind some sage who wrote 4,000 years ago something we do not understand or, if we understand it at all, do not care to understand in the right way. Now what is it that we can do? We can do something I think. We can take part in active propaganda in favour of birth control. I think the State ought to assist financially the societies and voluntary organisations which are doing propaganda for birth control. It is no use denouncing artificial methods of birth control. We do not want a neurotic society and I think it is necessary that we should be frank and straightforward in this matter of sex. I do not believe in delicacy in matters relating to sex, and there is no social danger, no harm, in our standing up and making a bold and straightforward stand for contraceptive methods of birth control. We ought to encourage societies and women's organisations engaged in this work. I know there are some women's organisations which are taking an interest in this matter, and one thing the State can do is to make a financial contribution to these organisations.

Then, Sir, you can use the cinema also for this purpose, or magic lanterns, for the people in the rural areas. I think the ordinary villager in this country is a fairly intelligent and shrewd person, and you want to approach him and tell him that if he wants the future of the race to be better than it is today he must help in seeing that this problem of birth control is tackled in a right and serious manner. Of course you are up against the difficulty here that most of our villagers are illiterate and superstitious. But we have to fight illiteracy and superstition. I do not say that progress in this direction will be very rapid. I am prepared for slow progress. But I want a definite policy in regard to this matter, and I think, Sir, one of the ways in which the



State can come to our aid is by giving a grant to voluntary birth control organisations in centrally administered areas. There are these areas and you can find out whether there are any voluntary organisations which are doing work in this direction in those areas and assist them financially to the extent that you can.

Then there is another way in which the State can help us and that is by raising the standard of living of the people of this country. You can raise the standard of living by improving their economic efficiency, by developing in the people a desire for a higher and better standard of living. Sir, in the report of the Public Health Commissioner with the Government of India I find a suggestion that, in order to review the situation before India reaches disaster, a commission of experts should be appointed to examine every aspect of the economic life of India, to make an accurate study of the present position and a reliable forecast for the future. It goes on :

“This is no place to discuss in detail the measures which are required. These must necessarily include energetic steps for the prevention of disease and equally energetic measures for the education of the people in regard to mastery over environment”.

Now these words “mastery over environment” I would like to emphasise, because my friend the Honourable Mr. Banerjee was pleased to refer to nature on more than one occasion. Sir, modern science has been trying to conquer nature ; we have been trying to battle against nature, and if we were to accept all that he says as correct, then we should really do nothing. The philosophy for which my Honourable friend Mr. Banerjee stands is a fatalistic philosophy, is the philosophy of what we Hindus wrongly call *karma*. And when we call it *karma* we do not really understand *karma* because I believe, rightly understood, *karma* means something very different from what we have been led to believe it means. Therefore, Sir, we ought really to tackle this problem as brave men in a brave manner, in a manner which befits men who want to build up a greater India and a greater Asia. My Honourable friend Mr. Banerjee referred to Asia as the home of religions, and he seemed to think that Asiatics in this matter have a very different outlook to the western peoples. Well, I do not understand these differences between Asia and Europe, but I will say this, that we need in this matter to take a lesson from the west. In the west they are trying to grapple with these social problems. If the birth rate were to go up in England at an alarmingly rapid rate, people would begin to wonder what the matter was and to inquire what would happen to the country 10 or 15 or 20 years later. But we do not seem to think in those terms at all. We accept these things as being beyond our control. That is the mentality which we must battle against. We must fight this mentality, and I would suggest that, though there is not much that the State can do and though I recognise that the principal effort in this direction must be made by us, there is something that the State can do and I would say that the State should do that something which it can and do it immediately, namely, give some grant, as I have said, to these voluntary societies which are trying to grapple with this problem in right earnest. The State should declare itself on the side of the reformers in this matter. These are the observations, Sir, that I have to make in support of the Resolution of my friend, the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam.

THE HONOURABLE MR. BIJAY KUMAR BASU (Bengal : Nominated Non-Official) : Sir, when I read the Resolution as tabled by my friend Mr. Hossain Imam I thought it was not a serious one, but from the speech of the Honourable mover and from those of his ardent supporters I gather that it is meant to be a very serious proposition. First of all, Sir, the Motion as it

[Mr. Bijay Kumar Basu.]

is moved is to ask the Governor General in Council to take practical steps to check the population. From the speech of the mover and his supporters I have not been able to find what they have to say about the practical steps to be taken to check the population.

**THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS :** They have left them to the Government.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. BIJAY KUMAR BASU :** The Honourable mover mentioned the words "birth control" and left the means to the Government. The Honourable Mr. Sapru just went a step further and said that the Government should pay some money to some voluntary organisation and let them propagate the theory of birth control. As was pointed out,—I think it was by the Honourable mover,—birth control and the methods of birth control could be taken advantage of by people living in the towns, by people who have the education, who have the culture to think about it and who know the proper use of such contraceptives. It is needless for me to remind the House that there is only about 7 per cent. of literate people in our poor country and the 93 per cent. are illiterate people whom we generally call "the dumb millions," whom we generally call "the masses", when we have the opportunity of talking about them in these well furnished and well decorated legislative Houses. Those people as you know, Sir,—and I think the Honourable mover and his supporters also know,—have not the means to have two square meals a day, not to talk of their ability of buying contraceptives to have birth control. It is possible, as I said, for the upper ten of our society to practise those methods and probably have birth control, but it is not so with out 93 per cent. of our illiterate dumb millions—a very pet phrase of the legislators. But simply making a grant to some particular voluntary association—and I think if I remember rightly Mr. Sapru referred to voluntary associations of women—just to carry this idea to the remote villagers is a thing which I for myself think to be absolutely impracticable. I have known ladies' organisations in my part of the country. I have never known them to carry propaganda to the outlying villages, to these dumb millions with whom we are very much concerned. Then there are other points to be looked into. For example, the laws under which we are governed. I am a Hindu. I can marry any number of wives I like, so long as I can feed them. My friend Mr. Hossain Imam is a Mussalman. His law would allow him to have four wives.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. MAHMOOD SUHRAWARDY :** It is unlimited in your case. You can marry a hundred wives.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. BIJAY KUMAR BASU :** Quite so ; that is what I said. If my friend will not listen to me, I will not take any notice of his interruptions. These are the laws. You want to restrict birth, but you do not want to restrict your marriages.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM :** Is there not a law of polyandry?

**THE HONOURABLE MR. BIJAY KUMAR BASU :** I have not known a law of polyandry so far as Hindus are concerned. There may be polyandrous tribes living in the Himalayas whom my friend may know, but not I. I have heard about polygamy amongst Hindus and Muhammadans and that is a matter that I was referring to. Therefore the proper step to have taken

about checking the population would have been for my friend to move amendments of the Hindu and Muhammadan law, and to begin with his move about birth control is something like putting the cart before the horse! It is quite all right, Sir, in a country where there is no caste or communal distinction, where monogamy is the rule, where if anybody marries two wives, he is brought before a magistrate for bigamy and punished. So far as we are concerned, we have no such law and therefore the proper thing for my friend to have done was to have moved for amendments of the Hindu and Muhammadan laws to begin with.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM :** Would you support it ?

**THE HONOURABLE MR. BIJAY KUMAR BASU :** I may or I may not! I may not be supporting you in this matter either! That is neither here nor there. The proper way of dealing with this in a country like India is to bring about some sort of reformation in the Hindu and Muhammadan laws of marriage. There is another argument which I think as a Bengali I should put forward. Take the case of Bengal. I am told by Mr. Hossain Imam that the pressure of population is the highest in Bengal. The higher population is of Muhammadans; we the Hindus are in a minority there. So far as birth control is concerned, I will advise my Bengali Muhammadan friends to practise it! So far as Hindus are concerned I will tell them, "Go along, propagate; you must have a majority; you better have a majority, if not for anything else but to have a political predominance over the Muhammadans!" There are lots of questions to be considered. You cannot possibly straight off lay down the proposition that birth control is the panacea for all evils. It is not. I am sorry, Sir, that of all people Mr. Hossain Imam, whom I always gave credit for much better—I do not say sense but—intelligence has disappointed me by bringing forward this proposition. I say, Sir, I am pained, I am not surprised.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM :** Have you any constructive suggestions ?

**THE HONOURABLE MR. BIJAY KUMAR BASU :** I have none, neither have I found the Honourable Member making any constructive suggestion. The only constructive proposition that Mr. Hossain Imam has put forward, *viz.*, travelling clinics is a proposition which if scrutinised even for a minute will not hold water. The only suggestion that has been a constructive suggestion, that has been put forward in this matter, is by my friend Mr. Sapru about the financial grant to be made, and that also he has restricted—and I am glad that he has done so—to the centrally administered areas, because those organisations may act under the very eye of the Government of India. That of course is a proposition which has got the merit of a constructive proposition. There is no other suggestion before the House today which I have heard that has the merit of a constructive suggestion. Then I was told—I think it was my friend Sir Phiroze Sethna who said that—that in Madras an organisation has been set on foot by two Maharajas, several High Court Judges and I think a good many business magnates or advocates with a very large amount of money for birth control. Now, Sir that organisation, I am sure if one comes to examine it, reaches only Madras city proper; it cannot possibly go into the remotest villages, where more than elsewhere we want this sort of propaganda to reach. I do not for one moment say that birth control is not desirable. It is desirable. But I only ask you what practical steps you

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want the Government to take? Government cannot do anything effective; at least, I cannot see what the Government can do as practical steps for birth control, in a practical manner. One thing has occurred to me, that the Government can do—and perhaps it is that which is at the back of my Honourable friend's mind—that is that they may possibly reduce the import duty on contraceptives and rubber goods. If that is what he wants, that is a practical scheme and a constructive suggestion. In my opinion, Sir, I really do not understand how Government comes into the matter at all. It is a social matter. It is a matter in which the leaders of communities who have the ear of the public, who have the chance of going into the remote villages to propagate these various principles may do something, at least may do something which the Government cannot possibly do. As Sir Nasarvanji Choksy has pointed out, if the Government wants to do anything in the matter as suggested there will not be wanting people who will come and say: "These people are doing something for an ulterior motive of theirs to restrict man power, a motive which may or may not exist. Therefore, Sir, if Mr. Hossain Imam's idea was to have the Resolution discussed, I think it has sufficiently been discussed and will be discussed further by other speakers, the object has been achieved, but seeing that it is not possible for Government to take any practical step, or impracticable steps, and as I am not convinced either by his arguments or by those of his supporters, that anything could be done, I think, Sir, he would be well advised not to press this Resolution.

The Council then adjourned for Lunch till Half Past Two of the Clock,

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

THE HONOURABLE DIWAN BAHADUR SIE RAMUNNI MENON (Madras : Nominated Non-Official) : Sir, whatever the opinions of individual Members of the Council may be on the Honourable Member's Motion, I think all will agree that he has rendered a very useful service by bringing forward this Motion before the forum of this Council and thereby bringing it before the public. The fundamental assumption in his proposition is that it is necessary to check the growth of population and he has made it perfectly clear that the check which he has in mind is artificial control. This assumption is so important that it deserves to be examined somewhat closely, and it will perhaps facilitate our viewing the question in its proper perspective if we remember one or two lessons from history. I believe it is no exaggeration to say that in the realm of economics there is no subject in regard to which there has been a more complete change of opinion among economists than in regard to population. One of the economic scares of the 19th Century was that the world would soon become over populated and that the people would die of starvation because production could not keep pace with the increase in population. What is the position today? The total population of the world is estimated at 2,000 millions, and it is now not a question of over population but of over production. With the improved methods of cultivation and of industry which science has placed within the reach of man, it is now possible to assert with certainty that there need be no longer any fear that the growth of population will outstrip the growth of production. The problem today is one of over production as the world slump has clearly demonstrated, and in most countries in Europe the feeling is one of alarm at the declining birth rate

It is apprehended that in a few years' time the population of these countries will come to a standstill. If this has been the result of historical development I think we may well pause before we decide to apply drastic remedies to the malady as it presents itself in India.

What is the position in India? It is generally asserted that India is over populated, and that if the population goes on increasing at its present rate, we shall soon reach a state of affairs from which there will be no escape except perhaps by death or by starvation. In recent discussions on the subject, this viewpoint has been considerably reinforced by the argument based upon the rate of increase which has been disclosed by the recent census. That rate as we all know, during the decade covered by the last census, was more than 10 per cent; that is to say, roughly about 100 per cent. in a century, or roughly again, a little less than one per cent. in a year. On this basis the calculation has been made of the future population of this country. The population in 1941 has been estimated at 400 millions and in the year 2,000 at 700 millions, and imagination is left to picture the appalling state of the country which these stupendous figures will produce. I venture to suggest that these figures are open to very grave doubt. It is quite clear that this rate of increase did not prevail during the last 50 years for which we have census figures, and it is quite easy to convince ourselves that it could not have prevailed during the long historic past. A simple calculation will show that at the rate of increase postulated, we shall have to conclude that the population of India in the year 326 B. C.—I take that year because during a discussion the other day, an Honourable Member referred to the invasion of Alexander the Great; we may take that as an early authentic date in history—consisted of between 50 and 60 people. That is surely an absurd result. It is quite obvious that such a rate of increase cannot be assumed for any great length of time. The fact really is that from our limited knowledge of the growth and decline of populations, whether the movement takes place in cycles or not, we cannot say with certainty how long the present rate of increase will continue, when it will reach its maximum and when it will decline bringing the population to its equilibrium. Therefore I think there is no reason at all why we should allow ourselves to become a prey to pessimism, even in the face of the most imposing figures.

Now, with regard to the question of food, I think all will agree that the recent slump in prices and the difficulty of finding a market for agricultural products are a sufficient indication that there is really no shortage of food in India. It has been calculated—a reference to this statement will be found in the Census Report—that in Bengal, which is one of the most densely populated areas in the world, with improved methods of agriculture, with all improvements which science places at our disposal, it will be possible to produce food sufficient to maintain double the present population at its present standard of living.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM:** How will that affect the purchasing power of the people?

**THE HONOURABLE DIWAN BAHADUR SIR RAMUNNI MENON:** I cannot answer that. I am only stating that a calculation has been made and a reference to it will be found in the Census Report. I readily admit that food is not the only consideration when we are dealing with the question of population. There are the important problems of health, work, leisure and culture, in fact all those elements on which the social and economic progress of man is based, and it is quite clear that the solution of these problems

[Sir Ramunni Menon.]

is very considerably jeopardised by the problem of numbers. Therefore any check on the present rate of increase, if not an actual diminution in the existing number of the population, is to be welcomed.

The question is, what are the best ways of securing a reduction in the rate? It is quite clear that we cannot reduce the rate of increase except by reducing the birth rate. In this matter we can usefully take the experience of other countries into consideration. It is now fairly well accepted that the progress of education will almost automatically bring about a reduction in the birth rate. We can easily understand one way in which this result will be produced. An educated man, and particularly an educated woman, will certainly postpone the age of marriage, and postponement of the age of marriage is one of the primary factors which will lead to a reduction in the birth rate. Now in India we are just on the threshold of this great movement of education—and I really wish that the Government would take a little more interest and spend a little more money in the furtherance of it—and I have no doubt that as education progresses, particularly female education, we shall have in operation a very important factor in bringing about a reduction in the birth rate. Another factor is industrialisation. It is well known that this acts as a potent factor in the reduction of the birth rate. Another factor is urbanisation. We have therefore in this country now in operation several processes which have in other countries brought about a reduced birth rate and we may expect the same result in India. In view of these considerations, whether it is necessary for us to adopt any artificial system of birth control is a matter which should be considered on its own merits.

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. G. HALLETT (Home Secretary): I have listened with great interest to this debate. We have heard varied opinions expressed, and of the speakers three or four have spoken for the Motion and three or four against it. When I first saw this Resolution I rather asked myself why I should be called upon to speak on it as the representative of the Home Department. It seemed to me that it might more suitably be done by, for instance, the Secretary for Industries and Labour, who dealt with the kindred problem of unemployment the other day. The two problems are very much inter-connected. It might equally suitably have been dealt with by my friend the Director General of the Indian Medical Service sitting on my left. He no doubt will intervene in this debate if the need arises. Still more suitably it might have been dealt with by the Honourable Leader of the House if he were with us today. He is responsible for health and it is largely due to the activities and the efficiency of the Public Health Departments of India that the population has increased in recent years. He is also responsible for lands, for agriculture. He might have quoted figures, which I shall quote later, to show that there is no chance of the country becoming starved owing to the increase of population if methods of agriculture are improved and there is an extension of cultivation. He might even have dealt with another subject of which he is in charge, the question of emigration. It might have been suggested,—though we have not heard that proposal today—I think it was discussed some time ago in this Council,—that emigration to some foreign country should be encouraged. No, Sir, I have been left to deal with it, and I had at one time a lurking suspicion in my mind that the Home Department, being rather an unpopular department in certain quarters as being responsible for repressive policy, repressive legislation and repressive action, was going to be asked to produce more repressive, or, as I should prefer to call it, preventive legislation! However, I have not been asked to do that.

The Honourable mover of the Resolution has been very mild and has definitely repudiated any idea of legislation. His proposal,—and I must say that I agree with Mr. Basu that it is a somewhat vague and uncertain proposal,—comes down to this, that we should do a certain amount of publicity and propaganda work over the question of birth control.

Well, Sir, perhaps I may seem to be treating this matter with some levity to begin with, but I assure you I recognise fully the importance of this problem. I am not attempting to be an expert on it, but I have read a great deal in these two volumes of the Census of 1921 and 1931, which contain very interesting opinions on this very difficult problem. We have had the figures showing an increase in population quoted to us by Sir Phiroze Sethna. Those are quite correct figures, but to a certain extent they are a trifle misleading, especially the earlier figures, because in the early days of the Census, between 1872 and 1891, the increase was largely due to an increase in the area and to improved methods of enumeration. It was not due to a real increase. However I recognise that between 1901 and 1911 there was an increase of 6·4 per cent. That fell in the next decade, 1911 to 1921, the decade of the war and the influenza epidemic, to 1·2. It rose again in 1921—1931 by 10·6, as has been quoted before.

I would like to quote to this Council a remark made by the Census Commissioner in the year 1921. This is relevant to the calculation which one Honourable Member, Sir Ramunni Menon quoted. I think it was about increase in population and the remark that India would after some decades be in a condition in which there would be barely standing space in any part of India. He says :

“ My predecessor pointed out in 1911 that the rate of increase of population between 1872 and 1921 was equivalent to about 19 per cent., and that at this rate the population would double itself in about a century and a half. We have seen . . . . . that the real increase in the last fifty years in the population of India is just over 20 per cent. At this rate the doubling will take another 190 years. But calculations of this kind, though of interest, can hardly be taken seriously. Almost every one of the last five decades has witnessed some special disaster. A severe famine in South India checked the increase in the decade 1872—1881. The decennium 1891—1901 was dominated by the great famines of the closing period. Growth in Northern and Western India was checked in the succeeding decade by plague and we have had in the past decennium an epidemic which has caused more concentrated mortality than any previous calamity ”.

It may be said of course that we are not likely to have again famines which will increase the mortality to the same extent as in the earlier years to which I have referred, 1872 and 1900 ; but, Sir, what guarantee is there that we shall not have or may not have any epidemic like the influenza epidemic of 1918, which was calculated to cause mortality of no less than 12 to 14 million persons and which, apart from that, also reduced to a very large extent the birth rate, which was particularly the reason why between the years 1911 and 1921 there was only a small increase of about 3½ million people. I would like to ask General Sprawson to give me a guarantee—I think he would be very rash if he did so—that medical science has so improved that there cannot be another plague of that kind to reduce the population to a very large extent. I have heard it said—a medical officer will speak with much more authority than I can—that bubonic plague goes in cycles ; that cycle may recur and that will mean that it will produce a heavy death rate, though not such a heavy death rate as in the days when plague first came to India when prophylactic methods were not so well known as now. It is also a fact that certain diseases prevalent in Africa, if they came across to this country, would spread very rapidly and might decimate the population. We must also not leave out of account other calamities that may occur. Take, for example,

[Mr. M. G. Hallett.]

the earthquake in Bihar about this time last year. Supposing that earthquake had taken place at 2-30 A.M. instead of at 2-30 P.M. I can well imagine that instead of 20,000 people being killed we might have had two or three millions killed; it might have made a very considerable reduction in the population of that very densely populated area. Even though famine is not probable in these days, yet failure of the monsoon would undoubtedly reduce the vitality of the people and that again in itself would, I understand, have the effect of reducing the birth rate and so of diminishing the population. These are the ways by which nature asserts herself and I do not think we can say that she will cease to assert herself in this way with any degree of certainty.

Now, Sir, I consider that we have got rather pessimistic ideas about over population, because of the very large increase in the years 1921—1931. The Census Report of 1931 was published just at the time of the economic depression and I think that has made people take an unduly pessimistic view of the increase which had occurred during that decade. During that period I remember I was in the district from which the Honourable mover of the Resolution comes and in that district landholders frequently came to me and said they had great difficulty in getting enough coolies to work on their lands. Those were the days of high prices and there was plenty of employment in the coal mines and elsewhere and people had great difficulty to find enough labour for the cultivation of their fields. At the same time there was another district with which I was acquainted and from which a large number of coolies are recruited for the tea gardens of Assam. The tea gardens were forced to pay enormous sums of money even to get a single cooly. Very often it cost them very nearly Rs. 200 to get a cooly from Chota Nagpur to Assam. There was full demand for labour and the supply was not equal to the demand. I quite admit there is, so to speak, over population of certain castes or certain classes of the population. That is an entirely different problem. That is much more the problem with which my Honourable friend Mr. Mitchell was dealing the other day, the problem of unemployment. There is no doubt over population of the middle classes, but whether we can say that India as a whole is over populated is a matter—though I have no expert knowledge as an economist—which is open to doubt. The very expression “over population” is a very vague one. It is one of those expressions which are trotted out from time to time and people do not stop to analyse exactly what is meant by it and it sounds very serious. I should like to read what the Census Commissioner said on that point. It is difficult to define and one has got to be careful to say exactly what one means. What he said was :

“The conception of over population is however itself full of complexities. It expresses an economic relation between the population of a certain area and the means of production in that area which is meaningless without a clear definition of each related element and of the area considered. Population is merely man considered in a quantitative sense, and man may include anything from a naked aboriginal to an industrial plutocrat. Again means of production may range from the gathering of edible fruits in the jungle to the digging up of nuggets out of a gold mine, while the area populated and exploited may be a village, a district, a province or the whole country. If we try to express the idea of pressure of population more precisely we are still faced with difficulties”.

I quote that to show that that is a term which is used freely, but it is rather difficult to say definitely that a country is over populated. It may appear at first sight that certain parts of the country are over populated. The Honourable Sir Ramunni Menon has clearly read the Census Report from which this is a quotation and referred to the investigation which they made at that time in Bengal. The population of Bengal in some areas was 800 or 1,000 to the



square mile, and no doubt it appeared to be over populated, but the calculations then made showed that it would be quite possible to maintain an even greater population in some parts of Bengal. I need not go into that in any great detail. I have seen another comment which was made by another census officer, who though he referred to Burma, put forward very much the same considerations. But I would make another point; even assuming that India taken as a whole, not merely any individual tract or area, is over populated, is this a menace to the well being of the country? I do not claim to put forward my own opinions, but I was very much impressed by a remark made by the Census Commissioner in 1921. What he said was this:

“In the various forms in which it (over population as defined by him) occurs the situation as here described, viz., the overtaking of the existing material resources by the expansion of population, provides the chief stimulus to progress. It forces the population to enhance the food resources by increasing the productivity of the tract and to overcome the limitations of area by improving the facilities of communication. The enterprise involved, reacting on the mental and moral equipment of the people, widens the scope of their lives and, by raising their standards, creates a new economic stress and thus establishes a continuity of progress by a succession of reactions. In the historical life of a nation or a people the moral benefits of over population in this sense are probably worth the temporary difficulties and sacrifices which result from the inevitable delays and imperfections in the adjustment of resources to growth”.

That, I think, is a very significant observation and I have no doubt that is a view also held by other economists. We are, as I have said, going through a period of economic distress and difficulty. That makes this problem of over population look the more serious. But a brighter time is ahead of us and five or ten years hence we may have our employers of labour and big landholders crying out for labour. This is an obvious possibility.

Now, Sir, the Honourable Sir Phiroze Sethna has quoted in support of this Motion the views of certain Government officers. I admit those views have got to be treated with respect. He quoted Mr. Hutton, the Census Commissioner, and he read out a paragraph which I had intended to read out but, as he has already anticipated me, I will not read it. In that paragraph he appears to be in favour of the introduction of artificial methods of birth control but he recognises the difficulties of introducing such methods into this country. But, Sir, if the Honourable Member will turn over the page, he will find that Mr. Hutton also puts forward a somewhat contrary view. It is no doubt a view with which he does not sympathise very much himself, but it is the opposite view and I think it is worth quoting:

“There are perhaps other methods of checking an excessive increase in population. It has been clearly demonstrated in Europe that a rise of the standard in living is normally accompanied by a fall in the birth rate, and the same principle no doubt operates in this country; but, even while we must admit the truth of Bacon's aphorism that ‘Repletion is an Enemy to Generation’, a mere superfluity of food supply is not enough, as it only enables the possessor to breed up to the subsistence level again. In order that a higher standard of living may affect the rate of reproduction it is apparent that not only is an increase in education and culture involved, since it seems definitely established that intellectual activity acts as a check upon fertility, but also the psychological appreciation of a higher probability of survival”.

That is one opinion. Then there is another very interesting article in this volume by the Census Officer of Bengal,—Bengal being, as I say, a province where this problem of over population appears to be and probably is far more acute than elsewhere. He deals with the subject from the point of view of an expert economist and quotes Malthus, Doubleday and Raymond Pearl's

[Mr. M. G. Hallett.]

logistic curve. I do not intend to follow him into all these economic discussions but I would like to read what he does say about Bengal :

"The prospect or even the possibility of so considerable an increase in a population already one of the densest in the world may lead to apprehension that the population of Bengal is rapidly approaching numbers which cannot be sustained at any reasonable standard of living upon the means of subsistence which Bengal can produce for long" ..

"What is suggested here (he goes on) is that these potentialities are such that pessimism as to the future condition of its population if considerable increase takes place is not necessarily justified. Like the rest of India, Bengal is notable for its undeveloped resources and the inefficiency with which such resources as it has are exploited. The soil is probably unlikely to deteriorate further and the general opinion about areas such as Bengal, where scanty manuring necessitates small crops, is that a dead level of yield was reached long ago and is conditioned by the rate at which plant food constituents are made available by weathering",

and so on. He points out that there could be a very large increase of production. Well, Sir, there are these very contrary views of economists themselves who know far more about the question than I do. That shows that at least artificial methods of birth control is not a universally accepted remedy for this evil, if indeed over population is an evil, and that again is a matter of doubt. That being so, as the matter is a matter of some doubt, why should Government step into the picture? On that point I entirely agree with the remarks that have been made by the Honourable Sir Nasarvanji Choksy that any action should be taken by voluntary agencies and with the Honourable Mr. Banu that nothing practical has been suggested for the Government to do. Further, as Sir Nasarvanji Choksy observed, Government's action is always apt to be viewed with suspicion and we may be accused, if we take up vigorous propaganda in this matter, of attempting to reduce India to a third-rate nation. (*An Honourable Member* : "Is it a first-rate nation now?") Yes, Sir, in my opinion it is a first-class nation. That is the difficulty of the problem. It is inter-connected, as has been observed by some Members, with the marriage laws of the various communities out here. It is inter-connected with social customs. And with an irresponsible Government such as the Governor General in Council is at present, it is very difficult and dangerous for them to step in and take an active part in measures of this kind. I entirely agree with Sir Nasarvanji Choksy that it is a matter for voluntary effort. We have heard the quotation that Sir Phiroze Sethna read from the Census Report of 1931 about the Neo-Malthusian League in Madras, consisting of two Maharajas, three High Court Judges and four or five men very prominent in public life. By all means, let all those who believe in this as being a real cure for over population get together and spread their ideas broadcast. If the Honourable mover of this Resolution wishes to do anything, why does he not set up a birth control clinic in the city of Gaya from which he comes? I do not know what reception he would get there but I am inclined to think that, Gaya being a very orthodox place, it might be a very bad one.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Would the Government give any financial support?

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. G. HALLETT : We would give you police protection if you were attacked! Now, Sir, as I say, in a matter of this kind, where the experts differ as to what measures should be taken, surely it is right for Government, especially Government as at present constituted, an

irresponsible Government which is always liable to be attacked and misrepresented, to hold its hand and let the volunteers go ahead. Why cannot this be taken up by the National Congress? If it is really for the good of the country, they have an organisation which they could use for this purpose. I believe, however, that Mr. Gandhi himself is not convinced of the desirability of a measure of this kind, though I have seen from reports in the papers that many advocates of the measure from Europe and America have been trying to convert him.

A reference was made to a suggestion put forward by Major-General Sprawson's predecessor, General Megaw. I have not seen that report myself but judging from the extract which was read out by Sir Phiroze Sethna he did not recommend any definite step—certainly no such definite step as has been proposed or suggested today, that Government should give small grants to birth control organisations or should do something to help them to put forward their ideas. I understand that he did suggest that there should be a committee of experts appointed to examine the whole problem, the general problem of public health, and to find out after careful examination of all the statistics and data what exactly was best to be done. That problem, I have no doubt, is still being dealt with by his successor and by all other officers of his department and will continue to be dealt with by them. That work Government are certainly prepared to undertake, but further than that I do not think they can go. They cannot undertake to take such practical steps as have been suggested in the course of this debate. They must leave that to voluntary workers for if they undertake that work, they will be accused of interfering unduly with the liberties of the subject, and with the social and religious customs of the people. Further, even though we might take courage in our hands if we were really convinced of the solution to the problem, yet, as I have tried to show in dealing with this problem—very superficially no doubt, but still I have tried to do my best—it is doubtful whether this is in any case the real solution. It may be solved by other methods less drastic and less repugnant to a good many of the people of this country.

For these reasons, Sir, I oppose this Motion.

**THE HONOURABLE MAJOR-GENERAL C. A. SPRAWSON** (Government of India : Nominated Official) : Sir, I had not intended to speak in this debate, and there is but little more to be said on the subject. But as I have been personally appealed to by more than one speaker, I feel that I should represent what I consider to be the scientific aspect. The Honourable mover asks for steps to check the increase of population. How do we know that the population is too much? It may appear so because many of the population have apparently not sufficient to eat. But how do we know that India has reached the limit of what she can produce in the way of food? It appears likely that India could produce much more and better food than she has already done. In other words, I think we have been asked to take action without sufficient information and without sufficiently reliable data on which to work. Reference has been made both by the Honourable Sir Phiroze Sethna and again by the Honourable the Home Secretary to what Sir John Megaw said in his investigation of village life. Sir John Megaw said, and any Census Report will confirm, that there has been a very rapid increase of population and that it is rapidly increasing still more. He also apprehended that the state of nutrition of a large number of the population was poor and he looked with some anxiety to the future. Sir Phiroze Sethna quoted quite correctly Sir John Megaw's finally recommendation that there should be a commission

[Major-General C. A. Sprawson.]

of experts to make a survey of the present position. But I do not think we can say that Sir John Megaw for one moment implied that there should be any birth control. I cannot read that into anything he has written, except that there should be a committee of experts to make a survey of the present position. That would be a most welcome event to the Medical and Public Health Departments, and if that be carried out, we shall have nothing to do but to welcome that investigation. That would give us some facts on which we might act. Supposing this Commission did find out that the population was too much, it does not follow that the exercise of the methods in the minds of most Members would be the most suitable for the occasion. It might even be, as has already been suggested by the Honourable Sir Ramunni Menon, that the position would tend to cure itself. I think it was Sir Ramunni Menon who said that other nations in Europe and elsewhere did pass through a phase where they appeared to be over populated, that they raised their standard of living and their birth rate has fallen down, until now they apprehend that they will have a diminution of population or a stationary population. In fact, it is a well known public health axiom—I might say—that if you have a high death rate, the birth rate will be high, and if you have a low death rate, you will have a low birth rate. Since these European nations have raised their standard of life in the last 80 years, have produced a better state of nutrition for the people and better state of manhood and womanhood, have put an end to epidemic diseases and produced a lower death rate, they have also produced a lower birth rate. You might reply that the lowering of the birth rate was due to active mental processes from that intelligent animal, man. But such appears not to be the case, because, if you experiment with the lower animals, you get a similar state of things. Experiments have been made with a large population of mice on these lines. When these mice populations have been well fed and well protected from epidemic disease, they have flourished and waxed fat and their death rate is low and similarly, their birth rate also is low. That may appear strange, but that has evidently occurred without any active mental process on the part of the mouse. Similarly, we might expect the same sort of thing to occur in a large human population under similar conditions. That, Sir, is all that I have to say on the scientific aspect of this question.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Mr. President, I am thankful to those of my orthodox friends who have thought discretion to be the better part of valour and have not come out to give us their conscientious and religious objects on this proposition. The only opposition which I received in this House was from my Honourable friend Mr. Banerjee, Mr. Basu though favourable to the idea of birth control, did not think that Government was the suitable agency to carry it out. Similarly, Sir Ramunni Menon also thought that although the question was of great importance, it was not probably fit for Government to take up. The attitude of the Home Secretary was also of a like nature. He was an agnostic. He said that birth control might or might not be necessary, but probably the balance may be otherwise; and that the differences in the communities would not allow him to interfere in this matter. May I say a few words in reply to all these criticisms.

Our colleague Sir Phiroze Sethna dealt in a very pertinent manner with the necessity for taking steps to check an abnormal increase, and he rightly said that it is not a subject which should be treated with levity. He also stressed on a very fundamental thing, that the standard of living cannot be increased if this increase in population goes on. That is the cardinal principle

which must be understood by all. If we have an inexhaustible supply of cheap labour it is impossible to increase the standard of living. It seemed to me, Sir, that most of my Honourable colleagues who had any doubt about this matter were obsessed by the Malthusian theory. That seemed to be the bee in the bonnet of all of them. Now the theory of the population outstripping production has been refuted, but *the new problem that is before us is whether production can give purchasing power to the masses or not?* That is the new aspect of the question on which I expected to find some light thrown by the House and by the Government benches, but I did not get it. We know that at the present moment this depression is not due to failure of supply but to glut of supply and failure of purchasing power. This is the problem of the day and on this no light was thrown by any of my opponents. Even though we are producing foodstuffs in plenty, sufficient even to export, is it not a fact that Indians themselves have not the money to purchase the products which lie so near home to them. Is the Indian population at the present moment being fed as it ought to feed itself? Do they have a square meal twice a day even? *The production is there, the people are there, and it is only the lack of purchasing power which is standing in the way.* Therefore, Sir, all the arguments brought forward as to production increasing simultaneously with the population are beside the point. That is not the problem. My main contention was that there is no purchasing power. We cannot, in spite of mechanisation and scientific improvements in industrial and agricultural methods, inject purchasing power into the people. An Honourable colleague of mine suggested making scientific improvements in industries and agriculture. Recourse to such methods in other countries, in Canada for instance, had resulted in less and less employment for the people. Mechanisation of industry and agriculture in fact created unemployment.

Now, Sir, I come to the very "constructive" suggestion of my Honourable colleague Mr. Banerjee that the best cure for the increasing population is recurrent epidemics—and he was quoted by the Honourable Home Secretary—that we must wait for epidemics, diseases, and natural calamities to come and help us to decrease the population. (*An Honourable Member*: "Leave nature alone".) Leave nature alone, if we follow that advice to its logical conclusion, the British might as well leave India and let nature have its way. Are they prepared to do that? When Mr. Gandhi sought to abolish all hospitals as Satanic institutions did the Government act upon the suggestion? No, but now they are taking shelter behind the fact that Gandhiji is not in favour of mechanical contraceptives. He advocated abstention. A much better way, an ideal way, a method which is a real cure, but unfortunately our human infirmities do not allow us to follow it. No one can deny that that is the best and surest cure. Gandhiji went to the root of the matter. He suggested an ideal method, but the ideal is difficult of attainment in the case of ordinary frail human beings. It is because of human weakness we have these other mechanical methods.

My Honourable friend Mr. Sapru gave a very good constructive suggestion that cinemas should be utilised for the purpose of propaganda. Perhaps a few of my friends have seen the pictures and cinema shows which the Soft Coke Cess Society of Bengal are giving. It is a new method and a very good method of publicity. The Department of Health may take it up and thereby give a lead to the provincial departments in regard to propaganda on these lines. Government complain sometimes that we do not make constructive suggestions. The trouble is that when we make concrete suggestions, they are ready to find fault; and when we rely on them to think out ways and means they turn round and say, "You do not make suggestions".

[Mr. Hossain Imam.]

Now, Sir, the Honourable Mr. Basu was very much touched by the poverty of the masses. He said that it is impossible for them to go in for contraceptives because they have not the money with which to buy them, and therefore we should do nothing. As I have said, the cost of rearing a child from its birth till it becomes self-supporting is high enough, and if you capitalise that you will find that the cost of contraceptives will not be greater. (*An Honourable Member* : " It is difficult for the people to capitalize ".) Let the Government give the capital and take it back in small instalments. Then he suggested that Hindu and Muhammadan law forbade the practice. I do not think for a moment that those laws, as they are at present, stand in the way of checking the population. My personal opinion is that both Hindu and Muhammadan law give perfect latitude in the matter to men and women alike. It is up to the men to marry or not to marry multiple wives. Neither religion compels a man to marry more than one wife. Rather, in the Muhammadan law at any rate, though it is permissive, but the restrictions against multiple marriages are so strict that it has become a practical impossibility. At the present moment I do not believe that there are even one per cent. of Muhammadans who have more than one wife. In any case it is far better to have a legalised marriage than what they do in Europe.

The point was raised by some Honourable Member that this is a matter for the public and not for the Government because Government have not the money to spend on this propaganda. My reply to that is very simple. The Government have sufficient money to spend lakhs and lakhs, about Rs. 42 lakhs, on the maintenance of the Ecclesiastical Department, and that too in spite of their religious neutrality which is paraded so often by the Government. Cannot they then find a few lakhs to assist societies which may be started in connection with this work? Mr. Sapru also suggested the giving of aid to voluntary societies formed for the purpose of furthering birth control. This is not a new thing for us to ask the Government to do. Government is already giving help to many societies of this kind, for instance, the Lady Dufferin Fund, the Red Cross and St. John's Ambulance Societies. There are any number of societies doing humanitarian work to which Government is contributing, and I do not grudge their doing that. The aid is perfectly justifiable. They ought to do it, but is it any reason why they should not make a change now? An Honourable colleague of mine says its will not be humanitarian. I will reply to that. Do you think you are discharging your duty to your fellowmen by allowing them to die in hundreds and thousands every day on account of the ravages of illness, on account of starvation? Do you think you and the Government are discharging your duty in allowing all these innocent mothers, immature mothers dying in the prime of life? (*An Honourable Member* : " The Sarda Act ".) The Sarda Act is on the Statute-book and until that comes before us again you have no right to demand my opinion on that. Sir, the Honourable Sir Ramunni Menon was doubtful whether those statistics are to be relied upon or not. As far as the future is concerned, no one can say with any certainty what can happen, but wise men do not wait for the calamity to come. They think that prevention is better than cure, and take preventive steps betimes.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : May I draw the attention of the Honourable Member to the fact that today is the last non-official day and there are two more Resolutions to discuss?

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM :** I will not take more than the necessary time. I will conclude by referring to two more arguments. The Honourable the Home Secretary drew our attention to the fact that in days of prosperity when he was a district officer, he found, in two places, that zemindars were complaining of lack of sufficient agricultural labour. That, Sir, as a matter of fact is a story of about nine or ten years ago.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. M. G. HALLETT :** Before the economic depression. That is my whole point. The matter was much more serious because of the temporary economic depression.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM :** As far as I remember the Home Secretary left the districts in 1926.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. M. G. HALLETT :** In 1927.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM :** That is about eight years ago. Though he had this experience then, is it not a fact that since then the population has increased by 8 per cent. More men are available than there were at that time when he was a district officer and therefore his fear that with the returning prosperity we will again be lacking labourers is wrong. It is rather pessimistic. It seems to me that our colleague thinks that human beings of the lower classes are no better than so many head of cattle and the only thing we have to see is whether India can produce that amount of food-stuff or not. When they are about to be born, give them one meal a day and herd them together and make them work as cattle. That is not the standard we want our men to have. We wish our masses to have a better standard of living than they have now and this we cannot have without checking this uncontrolled supply. Then, Sir, General Sprawson was kind enough to tell us that there is no data as to whether the population is a surplus population or not. Who is to be condemned for that? Is it not the duty of Government to collect all necessary statistics, to know how the people who are placed in their charge are living and what is their condition? If the Government could do nothing else, the least they could have done was to have appointed a committee to inquire into this matter—whether there is a problem or not. They could appoint a committee of experts and find out what is wrong. If they are not prepared even to have a committee to inquire into the matter, if they are not prepared to give a helping hand to voluntary societies, or if they are not prepared even to do propaganda work, as I ask, by including it in the curricula of secondary education, by having travelling birth control clinics, then it is not possible for us to withdraw this Resolution. Sir, I press it.

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT :** Resolution moved :

“ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to take practical steps to check the increase in the population of India ”.

**The Question is :**

“ That this Resolution be adopted.”

**The Motion was negatived.**

**RESOLUTION RE RECRUITMENT OF INDIAN MEDICAL SERVICE OFFICERS BY OPEN COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION IN INDIA.**

**THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA MATHURA PRASAD MEHROTRA** (United Provinces Central : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I beg to move :

“That this Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to recruit Indian Medical Service officers by open competitive examination in India and to put a stop to the present method of recruitment by selection”.

Sir, the subject-matter of this Resolution is not a new one. We are all aware that it has been agitating the minds of public men in India for the last 40 years. It was only in 1930 that a similar Resolution was moved in the Legislative Assembly and when put to the vote, adopted. The Army Secretary then was pleased to admit that *prima facie* the matter required consideration and examination. Sir, it has been under consideration for many years and it was only last year that my colleague Rai Bahadur Lala Jagdish Prasad moved a somewhat similar Resolution in March, 1934, in this House. The Honourable the Leader of the House was pleased to give an assurance that the whole debate would be forwarded to the Secretary of State and his attention would particularly be drawn to the Resolution. Sir, we do not know what happened during the year 1934, and as the subject-matter is very important I was forced to bring it before the House again after the expiry of the period under the rules and regulations of the Council.

Sir, it will not be out of place if I give a very brief history of the subject at this stage. From 1855 recruitment was done by competitive examination in England and the system went on for 60 years without any difficulty. It was only in 1915 that the competitive examination was replaced by a selection board. At that time, the idea was prevalent in India that, owing to the Great War and the large number of recruits required for the medical service, the system was temporarily changed. But we find that the system has been adopted by the Government permanently and that they are not going to revert back to the system of recruitment by competitive examination.

Sir, the Bombay Medical Union agitated on this question several times and made representations to several commissions and committees appointed. It was also considered by the Welby Commission of 1896, the Universities Commission in 1902, the Islington Commission of 1913-14, the Verney Lovett Committee of 1918, and the Lee Commission in 1920. But with all that, Sir, what do we find? We find that the same method exists today and the ratio of two British medical officers to one Indian has been kept on. Sir, I do not know why this ratio of 2 to 1 is being kept in a service like the Indian Medical Service when the Government was pleased to accept the ratio of 50 : 50 in the Indian Civil Service. We know that Government has always been laying great stress on the recruitment of the Indian Civil Service and the Imperial Police Service. But we find that Government is not prepared to change the ratio in the Indian Medical Service but have fixed the ratio which they have kept for the army.

Sir, we are strongly against recruitment by the selection board system or several reasons and one of the most important of them being that



it is likely to lead to favouritism. In a competitive examination one has a chance to show his merit but by the selection board system it is all in the hands of the few members of the board whether they take a very competent man or not. Sir, it was very interesting to read the reply of my Honourable friend, Major-General Sprawson, on this point. He said that he would not like to subject the Indian Medical Service officers to any more examination tests after having six years of education. I may, Sir, ask him that, if this system is detested in this service, why is it being kept in the Indian Civil and Imperial Police Services which are certainly more important than the Indian Medical Service? There, Sir, the candidates also have several University examinations and over and above this they have to sit for the competitive examinations both in England and in India before they are recruited. I fail to understand why this system does not appeal to my friend in the recruitment of Indian Medical Service officers?

Then, Sir, I find that in the recruitment of these officers, the selection board as a rule (though there may be exceptions) want candidates to have European qualifications. I protest on this point also, Sir. We all know that our Indian universities are turning out more than 500 graduates every year and these graduates have proved their worth in many ways. I am glad that my friend Major-General Sprawson was also pleased to admit that he was getting better and more competent men now. He said:

“I claim that we are now getting a better Indian personnel into the Indian Medical Service than we had before. I have asked the Director of Medical Services about this and he tells me that young Indian officers who are coming into the Service are exceptionally good and I agree with him. The Director of Medical Services is satisfied that they make good officers and I as Director General of Medical Services am satisfied that they are excellent doctors”.

Sir, after this certificate I fail to understand what is the reason for giving preference to candidates who have got European qualifications, and why this preferential treatment should not be given up.

Then, Sir, what we find is that Government is taking doctors with Indian qualifications in the temporary service and they are given a chance generally of six to seven years. If they are worth keeping in the temporary service for so many years, I fail to understand this logic also. Sir, we all know that in December last the All-India Medical Conference passed a Resolution to the effect that the present method of recruiting officers to the Indian Medical Service by selection was undesirable and unsatisfactory, that the system should be stopped and that an open competitive examination should be held in India. Sir, this Resolution was adopted by that expert Conference and I do not know what consideration Government has given to it. I, personally do not want Government to sacrifice efficiency but when they can recruit graduates of Indian universities, without sacrificing efficiency by a competitive examination where they have got an equal chance to compete with doctors having European qualifications, there is absolutely no reason why this chance should not be given to them and the door should be closed against them. I know, Sir, that His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief has objection, so far as the army is concerned, and I find this from the speech of Major-General Sprawson in replying to that Resolution when he said that:

“The army has been compelled to insist on it for years and if His Excellency the Army Member were here he would tell you as he has told me that he sees at present no chance of recommending an alteration of that proposition”.

[Rai Bahadur Lala Mathura Prasad Mehrotra.]

Sir, if it is so, though I do not admit that His Excellency has got so much opposition for changing the ratio, I would submit that the military and civil services should be separated. So far as the civil services are concerned, they should be thrown open to Indians and Europeans without any exception. I hope that Government will be pleased to accept this suggestion of mine.

With these words, Sir, I move.

THE HONOURABLE MAJOR-GENERAL C. A. SPRAWSON (Government of India : Nominated Official) : Sir, as the Honourable mover has said, the purport of this Motion is not new to the House. It was just a year ago that I spoke on an almost exactly similar Motion. I welcome these repeated enquiries since the former debate, because they show that Members of this House take a great interest in the personnel of their medical and public health services and are anxious that the more important medical and public health appointments should be filled by the best men available. A year ago, the debate turned, as the Honourable mover has turned it today, towards the racial ratio in the Service. He desires a more rapid Indianisation of the superior Medical Service, civil and military. Now, the question of Indianisation is not new to the Indian Medical Service. Of the All-India Services, the Indian Medical Service was the pioneer in Indianisation. I believe I am correct in saying that before any other superior service had begun the process, there were many Indian officers in the Indian Medical Service. If the process appears of recent years to have slowed down, it is partly because the army requires a definite proportion of British medical officers, a preponderating proportion of British medical officers.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : What for, please ?

THE HONOURABLE MAJOR-GENERAL C. A. SPRAWSON : I will leave His Excellency the Army Member to state why. I would continue and say that when the army comes to be mobilised for war, it requires still more officers, and of those officers again, a proportion must be British. The war reserve, as far as the Medical Service is concerned, is composed both of British and Indian officers. But British officers are not obtained in a hurry. The army mobilising requires them at once. They cannot wait for the Secretary of State to engage officers and send them out. Therefore, those officers must be in the service, well trained, and in India. But that same remark does not apply to Indian officers. Indian medical officers can be obtained from the Provincial Civil Services or from the ranks of the independent practitioners. They, on mobilisation, are readily available and they are engaged beforehand from a body called the Indian Army Reserve of Officers. As I have explained, that does not apply to British officers. They are wanted in a hurry and must be here on the spot. It would be an unfair burden on the military budget to have all these Indian medical officers who will be required for the war reserve in the Indian Medical Service, and it would be an unfair burden upon local Governments to compel them to engage several Indian medical officers required for the war reserve when it is unnecessary to do so. On the other hand, not even the majority of these officers who are in civil employment are there for purely military purposes. The majority of them are there because local Governments ask for them for attendance on their superior civil services, and presumably will continue to ask for them until these civil services are more Indianised. I have explained that point at some full length, because I do

not think it is generally understood that there must be a preponderating proportion of British officers in the reserve in the Indian Medical Service. If it were more generally understood, I think there will be fewer questions and perhaps less cavil at the present organisation. I want to make it quite clear that the majority of British Indian Medical Service officers who are in civil employment are there because the local Governments ask for them. A few more are there because they are required for the military needs of the Service. It is those considerations which I have explained which are the reason why there is a preponderating British proportion in the reserve.

Now, the Resolution of the Honourable mover concerns in the main the method of recruitment, both in the United Kingdom and in India. I cannot speak with direct knowledge of the method of recruitment in London. I have no doubt the Secretary of State retains his present method of recruitment by selection, because he has found by experience that he can select better officers that way. But I would not have you think that every British applicant who applies for a commission in the Indian Medical Service is accepted. In the last selection in December last, I may say that out of six applicants who presented themselves, only one was taken. When we come to speak of selection out here, I am on ground wherein I can speak with more intimate knowledge. And there I would advance the same arguments that I advanced last year to which the Honourable mover has referred. I said that the examination is now both open and competitive, although it is not of that theoretical type which involves the sitting down at a desk and writing answers to a written paper. I said also that it should be borne in mind that when these applicants present themselves before the selection board, they have already been spending the last seven or eight years of their life passing examinations of the type the Honourable Member refers to, an examination every six months or every year, just like taking so many hurdles in a hurdle race. The selection board has no need for a new examination. The selection board has before

4 P.M. it the results of all these former examinations, the record of the candidate's career as a student, the reports on his conduct, his athletic attainments, the comments of the principal of the college, and all this information is more valuable than the results of another examination would be. In fact I consider another examination of that type not only unnecessary, but I maintain that in many cases it would give us fictitious information. It would place at a disadvantage those candidates who had been qualified for some time and had been away from this training for the hurdle race. Those candidates are likely to do best who come freshest to the course from their colleges and are in training. Most of our applicants have been qualified some years. They have spent the intervening years in hospital appointments, in practice, in working in laboratories. If they had to sit side by side with those fresh from colleges for a written examination, the examination would nullify their practical experience and place them at a disadvantage as compared to their juniors. Our present method of selection gives due consideration to the previous experience of those who have been qualified for some time. My personal experience of these methods of examination in my 35 years service in the Indian Medical Service has been almost equally divided between the former period when the examination was of the type the Honourable mover desires and the present period when a selection board conducts the examination through an interview, and I have no doubt whatever that we are obtaining now better officers, and by that I mean better medical men and better soldiers, than we were before. In fact the Honourable mover has very generously quoted what I said last year in appreciation of the good type we are getting, and I feel that if Members of this

[Major-General C. A. Sprawson.]

House could see some of our recently recruited material they would feel that we are getting the best that is obtainable and a personnel that is worthy of India.

The Honourable mover said that you must have a British qualification. That is not so. In response to a question, I quoted some figures last year, which I have not got in my mind now, of the number of those who have been recruited with purely Indian qualifications. It is obvious that, if we have candidates with both Indian qualifications and qualifications obtained by further study abroad, we should prefer the man who has the additional qualification. Then, again, the Honourable mover may have seen in the press a communiqué which said that in future any qualification which was on Schedule I of the Medical Council of India Act, 1933, would be acceptable for entry into the Indian Medical Service. That has opened the doors wide. Very justly and obviously that press communiqué means that any purely Indian qualifications are sufficient. I feel all the time that the Honourable mover and I are really wanting the same thing. He realises, I believe, the importance of getting the best Indian Medical Service personnel obtainable. He wishes, I feel sure, that the important appointments in the Public Health and Medical Departments should go to the best men that India has available. Our only difference of opinion lies in the method of recruitment, and there I maintain that our present methods have proved by experience that we are getting the best available and that no change in those methods is desirable.

Sir, I oppose the Motion.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS (Punjab: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I rise to support the Resolution. The reply given by the Honourable Major-General Sprawson seems to me most unconvincing. The proportion of the British to the Indian Army, if I understand it rightly, is 1 to 2. If that is so, where is the necessity of having a larger proportion of British medical officers than that? I put that question to Major-General Sprawson while he was speaking but I regret that he did not give me any reply whatever. May I ask him how he would define the right sort of people to be enlisted in the Indian Medical Service? Do I understand that all the persons recently enlisted are members of the Royal College of Surgeons or of the Royal College of Physicians? If not, what are the high qualifications they possess? Why are you keeping the competitive examination for the Indian Civil Service? Has such examination for the Indian Medical Service in the past been a failure? Will the Honourable Major-General throw some light on the reasons which led to this change being made in the recruitment of the Indian Medical Service? Sir, there are any number of able and qualified medical men available in India who hold the highest qualifications obtainable in England or elsewhere in the world. The other day I was talking to a distinguished member of the Public Service Commission and he said that in these days they can get the highest possible qualified men, particularly in the medical line. If that is so, there seems no reason at all why Indians should not be given a chance in this covenanted service, the Indian Medical Service. My friend has observed that experience is a great asset and that is one reason why recruitment is being made from the ranks of men who had qualified and had some experience as well. If experience is to be a basic qualification then I think the competitive examination was a mistake altogether. But if people with experience only are to be taken, there is a vast field for recruitment in India where you have experienced men at your doors. The Honourable Major-General Sprawson observed that in the event of war we should have plenty

of men available, here in the Indian Army there is the Army Reserve of Officers but there will be difficulty then for the recruitment of British officers. Cannot a similar pending list be kept in England of those people who would like to serve in the event of war? God forbid if another big war comes along, signs of which are appearing, if one may judge from the conscription pronouncement of President Hitler in the papers this morning. But if this pending list is kept it will be easy to obtain Britishers also. I see no reason, Sir, why the present proportion should continue. We should revert to the 50 : 50 per cent. proportion and the sooner we do it the better. Then, Sir, I want the Honourable Major-General to throw some light as to how Indian officers in the Indian Medical Service have behaved in the past? What has been their experience in the war, have they lagged behind any other race? I am convinced, Sir, that Indian medical officers have done equally well along with their British brethren and so I think that the claim put forward by my friend Rai Bahadur Mathura Prasad Mehrotra is quite justified and ought to have the support of this Council.

With these few words, Sir, I support the Resolution.

**THE HONOURABLE KHAN BAHADUR DR. SIR NASARVANJI CHOKSY** (Bombay : Nominated Non-Official) : Sir, may I add a few words to what has fallen from the Honourable Major-General Sprawson? It appears that the Honourable mover was not aware of the communiqué which was issued by the Government of India on the 2nd of February last. It runs thus :

"It has been decided with the approval of the Secretary of State for India that any person possessing Indian medical qualifications recognised under section 2, sub-section (1) of the Indian Medical Council Act, 1933, and registered in British India under one of the Provincial Acts is eligible for appointment to the Indian Medical Service".

This, Sir, is indeed the result, as was said by the mover of the Resolution, of continuous demand in India for a long time. I am gratified, — and have no doubt that others who have worked to this end will be equally so, — that recognition of Indian qualifications for admission to the Indian Medical Service has at last been achieved. The Honourable mover ought to be satisfied with it inas much as it is a great advance.

With regard to the Lee Commission ratio, the Army Secretary in the course of a reply to a question in the other House said that Government were reconsidering the whole matter of the ratio of the Lee Commission which was not sacrosanct. It means therefore that by far the most important point discussed by the Honourable Member has been solved, and another will be solved at no distant date. Further, it has to be remembered that as Indianisation progresses, there will be greater need for Indian qualified men. It would appear preposterous nay anomalous if in a battalion of 28 Indian officers there should be one European medical officer. I believe, Sir, those battalions as well as the division as they are gradually Indianised will have Indian medical officers with Indian qualifications. As regards recruitment during the last four or five years, the Army Secretary said that that was before the recent announcement. The number of men with double qualifications, British and Indian, that were taken on was preponderating compared to those with Indian qualifications, only I believe that it will cease to exist and Indians will have a fair field in the selection henceforward.

**THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS** : May I ask my Honourable friend Sir Nasarvanji Choksy how far the communiqué is being translated into practice?

**THE HONOURABLE KHAN BAHADUR DR. SIB NASARVANJI CHOKSY :** This communiqué was issued on the 2nd February this year and you do not suppose that it can be implemented almost immediately ?

**THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS :** The reply of Major-General Sprawson shows that it is not being acted upon.

**THE HONOURABLE KHAN BAHADUR DR. SIB NASARVANJI CHOKSY :** That is not so. If the Secretary of State has announced his decision, I presume the Government of India will carry it into effect to the very letter.

**THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA MATHURA PRASAD MEHROTRA :** Sir, I regret that I am not satisfied with the reply of Major-General Sprawson. I will first take up the point about the communiqué which has just been placed before us by Sir Nasarvanji Choksy. Sir, it is a fact that I was not aware of this communiqué, but I should say it meets one-fourth of our demand only. One demand of ours was that the degrees of Indian universities should be placed on a level with the qualifications of European universities and the future will show how far Government is prepared to act upon it. As far as the figures for the last three or four years are concerned, we find that in 1931 only three doctors with Indian qualifications were admitted, in 1932 only one doctor was admitted and in 1933 again only one doctor was admitted. That is the record of the past. As for the future, we will have to wait and see how far the Government is going to increase the number of Indian graduates when recruitment is made. Then, Sir, the communiqué does not say that so many should be taken and the main question that recruitment should be made by competitive examination and not by a selection board remains where it was. Then the question of the ratio of 2 to 1 is also there. My friend Major-General Sprawson, while replying to my arguments, said that the question is being made a racial one. It has not been made a racial question from our side, but the ratio fixed itself shows that the Government has made it a racial question. If a ratio of 2 to 1 is fixed for the army, why should the same ratio be fixed so far as Indian Medical Service officers are concerned ? When the Lee Commission has accepted the proportion of 50 : 50 in the Indian Civil Service, there is absolutely no reason why at least the same proportion should not be fixed in the case of Indian Medical Service officers. I would ask my friend the Major-General to give us the number of British and Indian officers taken during the last four years. We shall then be able to judge the proportion that was kept in mind when the selection board made the recruitment. We would like to know also whether they had Indian or European qualifications. My friend the Major-General said that when the army is mobilised it requires more British officers. May I ask what was the result during the Great War when so many medical officers were required and the reserve fell short and recruitment made in India ? As many as 1,100 to 1,200 doctors volunteered, they went to the war and worked side by side with doctors having European qualifications. May I know from the Government if they were in any way deficient in the performance of their duties or whether they performed those duties in the same way as other doctors did ? If they performed their duties conscientiously and the Government has had experience that at a critical time there will be no lack of Indian doctors, why should they keep such a large reserve of British officers without giving a chance to more Indian doctors having Indian qualifications ?

Sir, for these reasons, I regret I am not in a position to withdraw the Resolution and I press it to the vote.

**HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF:** Sir, I had not intended to speak to this motion, but I would ask leave of the House to allow me to say two words because I think both the Honourable mover and my Honourable friend Lala Ram Saran Das have missed the point of my friend the Director General's reply. The Director General did not say or hint for a minute that the qualifications of these Indian medical gentlemen were much less than those of the Europeans, he went so far as to say that they were improving every day and that he had recently had reason to tell the House that the recruits he has had in the last year or two have been conspicuously good. But what he did say, Sir, was that as long as we have Europeans in the superior services in this country and British troops in this country, they demand a certain proportion of medical officers of their own race to look after them and especially after their wives and children. I personally think that they overdo that a bit and I think before very long they will find that the Indian medical officer is as good as their own. But it is an inescapable fact that we have to supply, the Secretary of State has to supply, a certain number of British medical officers with a view to looking after the superior services and the army. And as Major-General Sprawson pointed out, that number increases very greatly when mobilisation occurs. I think I am right in saying that something like between 80 to 100 extra British medical officers are required on mobilisation because of the immense expansion of the hospitals for war and it would obviously be ridiculous and expensive to keep these men eating their heads off in India, doing nothing, when we could keep them by having them out here in the Indian Medical Service and allowing them to take civil work in peace time. I hope I have put straight what I think was a misapprehension.

**THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS:** Has Your Excellency fixed the present proportion on that basis which you have just mentioned?

**HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF:** No, there is no fixed proportion of 2 to 1. The Secretary of State at one time said that he thought certain numbers were necessary, which as it happened roughly worked out to 2 to 1, I think.

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT:** Do you still desire to press the Resolution to the vote?

**THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA MATHURA PRASAD MEHROTRA:** Yes, Sir.

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT:** Resolution moved:

"That this Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to recruit Indian Medical Service officers by open competitive examination in India and to put a stop to the present method of recruitment by selection".

The Question is:

"That this Resolution be adopted".

The Council divided :

AYES—12.

Bansjee, The Honourable Mr. Jagadish Chandra.  
Barua, The Honourable Srijut Heramba Prasad.  
Chari, The Honourable Mr. P. C. D.  
Gounder, The Honourable Mr. V. C. Vellingiri.  
Hossain Imam, The Honourable Mr.  
Kalikar, The Honourable Mr. V. V.

Khaparde, The Honourable Mr. G. S.  
Mehrotra, The Honourable Rai Bahadur Lala Methura Prasad.  
Naidu, The Honourable Mr. Y. Ranganayakulu.  
Ram Saran Das, The Honourable Rai Bahadur Lala.  
Sapru, The Honourable Mr. P. N.  
Sethna, The Honourable Sir Phiroze.

NOES—35.

Akbar Khan, The Honourable Lieutenant-Colonel Nawab Sir Mahomed.  
Basu, The Honourable Mr. Bijay Kumar.  
Buta Singh, The Honourable Sardar.  
Charanjit Singh, The Honourable Raja.  
Chetty, The Honourable Diwan Bahadur G. Narayanaswami.  
Choksy, The Honourable Khan Bahadur Dr. Sir Nasarvanji.  
Commander-in-Chief, His Excellency the.  
Devadoss, The Honourable Sir David.  
Ghazanfar Ali Khan, The Honourable Raja.  
Ghosal, The Honourable Mr. Jyotnanath.  
Gladstone, The Honourable Mr. S. D.  
Glass, The Honourable Mr. J. B.  
Habibullah of Dacca, The Honourable Nawab Khwaja.  
Hafeez, The Honourable Khan Bahadur Syed Abdul.  
Hallett, The Honourable Mr. M. G.  
Johnson, The Honourable Mr. J. N. G.  
Kameshwar Singh of Darbhanga, The Honourable Maharajadhiraja Sir.  
Menon, The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir Ramunni.

Mitchell, The Honourable Mr. D. G.  
Mitha, The Honourable Sir Suleman Cassim Haji.  
Muhammad Din, The Honourable Khan Bahadur Chaudri.  
Muhammad Hussain, The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Ali Baksh.  
Noon, The Honourable Nawab Malik Sir Mohammad Hayat Khan.  
Padshah Sahib Bahadur, The Honourable Saiyed Mohamed.  
Pandit, The Honourable Sardar Shri Jagannath Maharaj.  
Philip, The Honourable Mr. C. L.  
Raghunandan Prasad Singh, The Honourable Raja.  
Russell, The Honourable Sir Guthrie.  
Spence, The Honourable Mr. G. H.  
Sprawson, The Honourable Major-General C. A.  
Stewart, The Honourable Mr. F. W.  
Stewart, The Honourable Mr. T. A.  
Tallents, The Honourable Mr. P. C.  
Ugra, The Honourable Rai Sahib Pandit Gokaran Nath.  
Yamin Khan, The Honourable Mr. Mohammad.

The Motion was negatived.

## INDIAN MILCH CATTLE PROTECTION BILL.

THE HONOURABLE RAJA RAGHUNANDAN PRASAD SINGH (Bihar and Orissa : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce :

“ A Bill to protect the milch cattle”.

Sir, in moving the Motion for the introduction of this Bill, I am not actuated by any other motive than to see India self-supporting in the matter of the supply of pure milk, butter, ghee, cheese and other food products produced from milk. It is a pity that a vast country like India which has got the potentiality of supplying milk and milk products throughout the whole world, is to depend on the imported condensed milk and other milk products



from other parts of the world and specially from a country like Holland whose dimension is more or less like that of a division in a province in India. The next point I would like to bring before the House is that milk is a staple food which is required for the nutrition of babies of all classes of persons irrespective of caste, creed or colour. It is a matter of every-day knowledge that child mortality in India is beyond proportion and cannot be compared with such mortality in other civilised countries of the west. The main causes of this big child mortality in India at the present age is the scanty supply of good pure milk in the country.

As milk is a necessity for the nourishment of----

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : You need not go into arguments at the present stage.

THE HONOURABLE RAJA RAGHUNANDAN PRASAD SINGH : I move, Sir.

The Motion was adopted.

THE HONOURABLE RAJA RAGHUNANDAN PRASAD SINGH : Sir, I introduce the Bill.

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#### RESOLUTION *RE* FINANCIAL CONDITION OF ASSAM.

THE HONOURABLE SRIJUT HERAMBA PROSAD BARUA (Assam : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I move :

“ That this Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that a Committee of experts with three non-official Members of both Houses of the Indian Legislature be appointed to enquire into the financial condition of Assam and to find out means and ways for giving immediate necessary financial relief to the province and to recommend what financial aid from the Government of India the province would require in order to make it fully autonomous in the near future ”.

Sir, my Resolution seeks the appointment of a committee of experts to enquire into the financial difficulties of Assam in order to devise means and ways to enable her to tide over her present difficulties and to carry on her administration as an autonomous province in the near future. Much has been said on the floor of this House as well as in the other House about the financial difficulties and embarrassments of this province, and I would not like to dilate upon this subject any further now. The Joint Parliamentary Committee have admitted the difficulties of Assam and her claim to urgent relief and the Government of India have also realised the difficulties of this most necessitous province. The Honourable Mr. Tallents also made a statement in the House at the time of the general discussion of the budget that the Government of India were giving anxious thought and careful consideration to the question of Assam. I understand, Sir, that a committee of experts is going to be appointed in a few months and will be sitting in the next cold weather to inquire into the difficulties of all the provinces with regard to their finances. If that is so, I do not see any necessity of appointing another committee of experts now. If I get an assurance from the Government that it is so and that the case of Assam will be fully represented and considered in that inquiry, I would not like to press my Resolution.

**THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. TALLENTS** (Finance Secretary): Sir, the Government of India assume that the proposal contained in the Report of the Joint Select Committee that a body of experts should be appointed to look into the financial condition of the different provinces will be implemented. We have no information as to when this Committee will be appointed, but we assume that it will be appointed fairly soon. On that supposition, the initial steps will be taken in the Finance Department in the course of the next few weeks to prepare the material for this body of experts when they come to India. We have, as I said, no definite information regarding the date, but we assume that the Committee will be appointed fairly soon.

As regards the second point on which the Honourable Member asks for a full assurance, I am in a position to give it to him. There is no possibility of the case of Assam going by default. Assam is one of the cases which will have to be very carefully considered. The Honourable Member has not given facts and figures; nor will I, because it is admitted that Assam is already badly in deficit and will be one of the first cases which this body will have to consider. I hope that with this assurance, the Honourable Member will not press his Resolution.

**THE HONOURABLE SRIJUT HERAMBA PROSAD BARUA**: I beg to withdraw the Resolution, Sir.

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

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#### MADRAS CITY HINDU TEMPLES BILL.

**THE HONOURABLE DIWAN BAHADUR G. NARAYANASWAMI CHETTY** (Madras: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill to provide for the better administration and governance of Hindu temples in the City of Madras and the endowments attached thereto be circulated for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon".

Sir, the objects and reasons of this Bill have already been stated by me. I would only state a few facts for the benefit of Honourable Members who are not quite acquainted with the province from which I come and the Hindu temple management there. As Honourable Members are aware, prior to the year 1842, the administration of the Hindu and Muhammadan religious endowments in British India was carried on by the Government itself. Efficient and stringent control over the management of the temples and mosques was exercised through the instrumentality of the officers of the State and there was no general satisfaction that the income was properly appropriated. But in 1842, the Government entirely divested themselves of the control and supervision of religious endowments owing to the result of an agitation in England that it was not the function of a Christian Government to administer or control Hindu and Muhammadan endowments. As a result of such relinquishment of control and the withdrawal of supervision, trustees were in a position to do as they pleased and mismanagement prevailed everywhere. This was considered to be a very unsatisfactory state of affairs, and as a remedy, the Religious Endowments Act of 1863 was passed. By this Act, local committees were appointed to exercise a form of supervision vested formerly in Government—

**THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT**: All this is not necessary when you are moving for circulation.

**THE HONOURABLE DIWAN BAHADUR G. NARAYANASWAMI CHETTY :**  
In 1922, a Bill was introduced in the Madras Legislative Council for the better administration and management of Hindu temples, and all the districts of Madras except the City of Madras was included in that Bill. The Madras City was also included in the Bill by the Select Committee, though originally the Bill did not stipulate for the inclusion of Madras City. Then when the Select Committee took it into consideration they also included the City of Madras. But when the Bill was passed His Excellency the Governor remitted the Bill for further consideration on the ground that the Madras Legislature had no power to amend the powers or jurisdiction of the Original Side of the Madras High Court. And the Government Member said that as soon as the Bill was passed, which was in 1927, the Government of Madras would take early steps to ask the Government of India to introduce legislation to bring the City of Madras into the purview of that Act. I am sorry to say that though nearly ten years have passed since then, the Madras Government have done nothing in that direction. It is for these reasons that I have introduced this Bill laying down that the City of Madras be also included in the Religious Endowments Act, 1927, and I am sure the Government of Madras are in sympathy with my Motion. Therefore I do not wish to take up the time of the House at this late hour and ask the leave of the House to circulate the Bill.

The Motion was adopted.

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The Council adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Thursday, the 21st March, 1935.