

Thursday, 26th February, 1942

COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

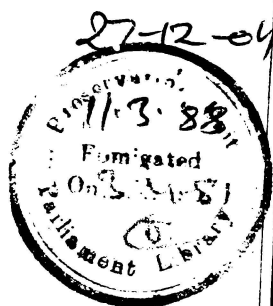
VOLUME I, 1942

(18th February to 2nd April, 1942)

ELEVENTH SESSION

OF THE

FOURTH COUNCIL OF STATE, 1942



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COUNCIL OF STATE

Thursday, 26th February, 1942

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

MEMBER SWORN :

The Honourable Mr. Satyendra Nath Roy (Communications Secretary).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

QUARANTINE RESTRICTIONS AT MANDAPAM CAMP.

67. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTASINGH : (a) Is it a fact that at Mandapam Quarantine Camp, first and second class passengers travelling from India to Ceylon are medically examined and inspected at the railway station, and granted health certificates if they satisfy certain conditions, and that even the servants of first and second class passengers are passed at the discretion of the medical officer on the guarantee of their masters, but all other passengers are required to undergo five clear days quarantine at the Mandapam Camp ?

(b) Is it also a fact that the majority of third class passengers are detained at Mandapam for over 24 hours for disinfection, vaccination, observation, etc. ?

(c) Why this distinction between third class passengers and those travelling in higher classes ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. BOZMAN : (a) and (b). Passengers travelling *via* Dhanushkodi have to obtain health certificates at Mandapam before they are permitted entry into Ceylon. First and second class passengers and their servants are ordinarily passed without ado and are allowed to continue their journeys uninterrupted. Third class passengers other than estate labourers are detained at the quarantine camp for 24 hours and estate labourers for five days.

(c) The whole question is being examined by the Government of India.

TRIBUNALS FOR REVIEWING CASES OF POLITICAL PRISONERS.

68. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Do Government propose to set up provincial tribunals to look into the cases of those political prisoners who were not affected by the release orders of Satyagrah prisoners ? Has the proposal been given effect to ? If so, what are the constitution and status of such tribunals ? How many such prisoners are still under detention ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : It is not proposed to review the cases of any convicted prisoners, but both the Central Government,

and also the Provincial Governments concerned, have arranged for the cases of persons detained under their orders under rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules to be reviewed. I am unable to give details of the reviewing agencies appointed by Provincial Governments, but an announcement will, it is hoped, be made shortly regarding the Central Government's own arrangements. There were 1,025 security prisoners under detention on January the 1st, 1942.

ALLOCATION OF EXPENDITURE ON AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS BETWEEN THE CENTRE AND THE PROVINCES.

69. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Will Government state how and on what basis the question of the allocation of A. R. P. expenditure between the Centre and the Provinces has been decided ? And what are the quotas that have fallen to each Province ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. RAGHAVENDRA RAO : The details of this arrangement are under negotiation between the Government of India and Provincial Governments concerned following a conference held between representatives of the Government of India and Provincial Governments on the 19th January, 1942. The basis of the arrangement is that each Province should contribute according to its means, and that the assistance given by the Government of India should increase with the dimensions of the expenditure incurred. To effect this it is proposed that a number of slabs should be fixed, the details of which are under negotiation. The whole of the first slab will in each financial year be payable from Provincial revenues ; the second slab will be payable from Provincial and Central revenues in the ratio of 50 : 50 ; the third in the ratio of 25 : 75 ; and the expenditure subsequent to the third slab will be payable in the ratio of 12½ : 87½.

MOVE OF GOVERNMENT TO SIMLA.

70. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : (a) Do Government propose to stop the " Simla exodus " this year ? If not, why not ?

(b) Will Government state what provincial Governments propose to stop hill exodus in the coming summer ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : (a) It has been decided that the Headquarters of the Government of India and G. H. Q. will remain in Delhi this summer.

(b) Government have not been informed officially of the decisions of the Provincial Governments in the matter except by the Government of the United Provinces who do not propose to move to the hills this hot weather.

REPRESENTATION OF INDIA IN THE EMPIRE WAR CABINET.

71. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Has any Indian, representing this country been appointed or will be appointed to the Empire War Cabinet ? If so, who ? If not, why not ?

THE HONOURABLE MALIK SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON : This question has already been answered this session—question No. 45 on the 24th of February.

INDO-NEPAL AERIAL ROPEWAY.

72. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Is there any proposal of constructing an Indo-Nepal aerial ropeway to facilitate trade ? If so, from what point to what point ; and when is the project likely to be taken in hand and when completed ?

THE HONOURABLE MALIK SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON : Attention of the Honourable Member is invited to the answer given to his question No. 187 on the 22nd November, 1941.

CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY PROVINCES, ETC., IN AID OF THE WAR.

73. THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL : Will Government lay on the table a comprehensive list of contributions by way of (a) gifts and (b) loans without interest, towards the war efforts, in India, since the beginning of the war—

- (1) By the Indian Princes ?
- (2) By each Province in India ?
- (3) By Great Britain, if any ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES : With your permission, Sir, I will combine the answers to questions 73 and 74. As my Honourable friend is aware, Provinces and States have their own separate War Funds, information with regard to which is not readily available here. The accounts of His Excellency's War Purposes Fund also are kept on a purpose as distinct from an area basis and it is not possible therefore to give the information in the form my Honourable friend requires. The total subscriptions to the Viceroy's War Purposes Fund up to the end of January, 1942 amounted to Rs. 614 lakhs, out of which Rs. 2,89 lakhs (apart from a recurring annual contribution of Rs. 36½ lakhs) represents the contribution of the Indian States. The total disbursements from the Fund amount to Rs. 530½ lakhs, out of which Rs. 310 lakhs were sent to Britain, Rs. 208½ lakhs were spent in India and Rs. 12 lakhs in countries overseas other than Britain. Apart from the grants made by His Excellency in consultation with the Appeal Committee, payments have in all cases been made in accordance with the wishes of the donors.

I lay on the table a statement showing the subscriptions to the Interest-free Defence Loan up to the end of January, 1942.

Subscriptions to Interest-free Defence Bonds.

Up to the 31st January, 1942.

(In thousands of Rs.)

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| Madras | 5,24 |
| Bombay | 1,20,63 |
| Bengal | 38,71 |
| United Provinces | 8,20 |
| Punjab | 14,00 |
| Bihar | 5,49 |
| Central Provinces and Berar | 1,37 |

| | (In thousands of Rs.) |
|--|-----------------------|
| Assam | 20 |
| North-West Frontier Province | 1,26 |
| Orissa | 6 |
| Sind | 2,98 |
| Delhi | 1,97 |
| Baluchistan | 54 |
| Ajmer-Merwara | 16 |
| Coorg | .. |
| Indian States and other Central Treasuries | 66,24 |
| Total | 2,67,05 |

This statement shows only the place of actual subscription and not the place of the residence of the subscribers.

74. THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL : Will Government lay on the table a comprehensive list of contributions by way of gifts towards the cost of the war, or for the relief of distress, in Britain, since the beginning of the war—

- (1) By the Indian Princes ?
- (2) By the several Provinces ?

(See reply to question No. 73.)

INDIANS IN BURMA, MALAYA AND THE FAR EAST.

75. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL : (a) How many Indian civilians were there in Hong Kong, Penang, Malay States, Burma, Singapore, Java, Sumatra, Borneo and other places involved in the Japanese war, when Japan declared war on Britain ?

- (b) What steps have been taken for their protection ?
- (c) What facilities have been provided for their coming over to India and how many left each of these places ?
- (d) How many of them were lost owing to enemy action and how many landed safe in this country ?
- (e) How many of them have been wounded and how many have been killed ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. BOZMAN : (a) I lay a statement on the table of the House giving the information asked for.

(b) Government have no reason to believe that Indians in the Far East in areas not under enemy occupation are not being afforded all protection possible by the respective local Governments. The Swiss Government have undertaken the responsibilities of the protecting power to look after the interests of British subjects in the foreign countries under Japanese occupation. The Argentine Government have undertaken similar responsibilities in Japan proper.

(c) Government have spared no effort in assisting Indians to evacuate from the war zones in the Far East. Even before the outbreak of war with Japan, the S.S. "Anhui" made two special trips to Shanghai and Japan to vacuate such British subjects including Indians as wished to leave Manchukuo,

Northern China and Japan. All shipping accommodation which could be spared has been made available for the evacuation of Indians from Burma and Malaya. The land routes leading from Burma into India are also being used.

(d) and (e). In the two heavy air raids on Rangoon 1,102 were killed or died of injuries and 1,650 were injured, most of them being Indians. In Moulmein reports have been received of 38 deaths and 80 cases of injury. I have seen a Press report that casualties in Singapore up to the 3rd February were 2,170 killed and 3,955 injured. I regret I am unable to say how many of these were Indians. Information regarding the total number of Indians repatriated from Burma and Malaya since the outbreak of war with Japan is being collected and a statement will be laid on the table of the House in due course.

Statement in reply to part (a) of question No. 75.

| Country. | Indian population. | Year. |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Hong Kong | 4,745 | 1931 |
| Federated Malay States | 4,68,029 | 31-12-1940. |
| Unfederated Malay States | 1,31,071 | 31-12-1940. |
| Straits Settlements | 1,49,729 | 31-12-1940. |
| Burma | 10,17,825 | 1931 Census. |
| Dutch East Indies | 27,638 | 1930 „ |
| British North Borneo | 1,298 | 1931 „ |
| French Indo-China | 6,000 | Estimate. |
| Thailand | 50,000 | Estimate. |
| Phillipines | 890 | Estimate. |
| Japan | 330 | 1941. |

RELUCTANCE OF INDIAN TROOPS TO SERVE OVERSEAS.

76. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: Is it a fact that any Indian regiment indicated its reluctance to serve in distant places from India or to fight against Japan for her being an Eastern Power ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. DEC. WILLIAMS (on behalf of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief): No, Sir.

INDIAN TROOPS AT VARIOUS FRONTS.

77. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: Has Government to make any statement regarding Indian officers and soldiers sent to various fronts ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. DEC. WILLIAMS (on behalf of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief): The Honourable Member does not mention the nature of the statement he desires regarding Indian officers and soldiers. I would, however, refer him to the statement recently made in this House by His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief. Government have no other statement to make at present.

DEFENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND INDIAN TROOPS.

78. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL : Do Government propose to send non-official members of Defence Advisory Committee to meet Indian regiments to inquire after their needs and requirements, if any ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. DEC. WILLIAMS (on behalf of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief) : No, Sir.

NUMBER OF INDIAN OFFICERS.

79. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL : (a) What has been the increase in the number of Indian officers in each arm of the defence forces since the beginning of hostilities with Germany ?

(b) How many Indian officers have been admitted in G.H.Q. and what are their duties and ranks ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. DEC. WILLIAMS (on behalf of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief) : (a) Sir, it would not be in the public interest to give the exact numbers of Indian officers holding commissions in each arm of the Defence Forces, but I may inform the Honourable Member that as compared with 800 Indian officers in all the three Services, *viz.*, Army, Navy and the Air Force in September, 1939, there are now a total of over 3,500 officers.

(b) There are 19 Indian officers posted to General Headquarters at present. They include one colonel, two lieutenant-colonels, three majors, six captains and seven lieutenants. Three Indian officers are posted at present in Naval Headquarters, namely, two paymaster-lieutenants and one paymaster-sub-lieutenant. All these officers are employed on normal staff duties.

STRENGTH OF INDIAN TROOPS.

80. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL : (a) What is the strength of the Indian forces of each arm at present ?

(b) What increase in the strength of each of these arms is contemplated by Government ?

(c) Whether any steps can be taken to increase the training staff and what measures have so far been taken and at what rate training can now be accomplished ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. DEC. WILLIAMS (on behalf of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief) : (a) and (b). I regret I cannot furnish this information as it would not be in the public interest to do so.

(c) All possible steps are being taken to increase the output of all training establishments and to find the necessary training staff for the purpose. It would not be in the public interest to give the rate at which training is now proceeding, but I may say that there has been considerable expansion in the output of all training establishments and as examples, I would mention that since the 1st of April, 1941, the output of the Camouflage School has increased by 486 per cent. ; that of the Anti-Aircraft School by 75 per cent. ; that of the School of Artillery by 153 per cent. The number of Indian non-commissioned officers trained at the Infantry School (formerly the Small Arms School) at Saugor has increased by 375 per cent. in the same period.

STRENGTH OF BRITISH TROOPS IN INDIA.

81. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL : What is the strength of the British Army in India at the present time ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. DEC. WILLIAMS (on behalf of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief) : It is not in the public interest to give this information.

DEFENCE OF INDIA AGAINST INVASION.

82. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL : (a) What steps do Government propose to take to prepare and enable the people of India to fight Japan attempting invasion and occupation of this country ?

(b) Do Government propose to take measures in this respect similar to what has been done in England ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. DEC. WILLIAMS (on behalf of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief) : (a) and (b). It is not in the public interest to reveal the steps taken for the defence of India against invasion by the enemy.

PRISONERS OF WAR.

83. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL : (a) How many Italian, German and Japanese prisoners of war, civilian and military, are in India at present ?

(b) Have some of them escaped from their camps and are still missing ?

(c) How many Indian soldiers have fallen prisoners in the hands of Germans, Italians or Japanese, so far known ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. DEC. WILLIAMS (on behalf of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief) : (a), (b) and (c). I lay a statement on the table.

(a) On the assumption that by the term "civilian prisoners of war", the Honourable Member means "civilian internees", the figures as available up to 12th February, 1942, are as follows :—

| | Germans. | Italians. | Japanese. |
|--|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Internees | 4,049 | 494 | 2,813 |
| Prisoners of war (including merchant seamen who are now treated as such) | 145 | 66,667 | Nil. |

(b) Of the 121 who attempted escape hitherto, all have been recaptured up to the 12th February except six officers (at large since 6th February, 1942) and one other rank (at large since 9th February, 1942).

(c) 1,685 Indian soldiers are in the hands of Germans or Italians. Figures of those in Japanese hands are not yet available.

MANUFACTURE OF AEROPLANES.

84. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL : (a) How many military and other aeroplanes are being made in the country every day ?

(b) How many more are likely to be made after three months ?

(c) Whether any motors are being manufactured in this country suitable for military purposes ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. DEC. WILLIAMS : (a) and (b). It is not in the public interest to answer these questions.

(c) Thousands of motor vehicles suitable for military purposes are being assembled in this country. None are being manufactured.

POWER ALCOHOL.

85. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL : (a) When do Government expect power alcohol to be ready in this country to be used for motor transport ?

(b) How many buses and lorries have been turned over to coal and gas ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. S. N. ROY : (a) A small amount of power alcohol is actually being used in the country as fuel for motor transport. The possibility of increasing its use is engaging the attention of Government.

(b) The fitting of producer gas plants to motor vehicles is progressing at the rate of about 300 vehicles per month in Madras and at a considerably slower rate in certain other Provinces. Precise information is not available but it is understood that so far about 3,000 transport vehicles have been converted to producer gas.

NUMBER OF AUSTRALIANS COMMISSIONED IN THE INDIAN ARMY.

86. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL : (a) How many Australians are officers in the Indian Army and how many of them have been appointed since the beginning of the war ?

(b) How many of them have been trained in India and will any more Australians be trained in India ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. DEC. WILLIAMS (on behalf of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief) : (a) Nine have been appointed since the beginning of the war. Figures for those appointed before the war are not available.

(b) As regards the first part, none have been trained in India so far ; the latter part does not therefore arise.

NUMBERS ENLISTED IN THE INDIAN ARMY SINCE THE OUTBREAK OF WAR.

87. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL : How many soldiers have been recruited since the beginning of the war from each Province in India ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. DEC. WILLIAMS (on behalf of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief) : It is not in the public interest to give figures, but I have laid on the table a statement giving approximately the percentages for various Provinces.

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Punjab | 50 per cent. |
| United Provinces | 15 per cent. |
| Madras | About 10 per cent. |
| Bombay | About 10 per cent. |
| North West Frontier Province | 5 per cent. |
| Ajmer-Merwara | 3 per cent. |
| Bengal | 2 per cent. |
| Central Provinces and Berar | Between 1 per cent. and 2 per cent. |
| Assam, Bihar, Orissa | Less than 1 per cent. each. |

TYPES OF BOMBS DROPPED BY THE JAPANESE.

88. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL : (a) What type of bombs have been dropped by the Japanese in the Malay States, Singapore and Burma and how are they different from those used in European countries ?

(b) What measures and precautions should be taken by citizens in case the Japanese aeroplanes reach Indian cities ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. RAGHAVENDRA RAO : (a) It is regretted that it would not be in the public interest to disclose what information Government has regarding the types of bombs dropped by the Japanese.

(b) Government suggests that the best course of action for any citizen to take is to get into touch with the Air Raid Precautions Warden and with the local Air Raid Precautions authorities generally who are constituted for the purpose of giving him advice of this nature.

ARREST AND DETENTION OF MR. SARAT CHANDRA BOSE.

89. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL : (a) Where is Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose at present ?

(b) For what reasons has he been detained ?

(c) Has Government sufficient evidence against him for a judicial trial ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : (a) Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose is at present detained in the Central Jail, Trichinopoly.

(b) and (c). I would refer the Honourable Member to the answer given by me on the 24th instant to the Honourable Raja Yuveraj Dutta Singh's question No. 44.

WAR RISK INSURANCE OF REAL AND INDUSTRIAL PROPERTIES.

90. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL : (a) Have Government framed any scheme for War Risk Insurance of industrial property as also of real property ?

(b) In what respect does it differ from the plan adopted in England ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR ALAN LLOYD : (a) Government are actively engaged in considering a scheme for the insurance of factory buildings, plant and machinery against War Risks. They are not framing any scheme for real property generally.

(b) There is no separate scheme in the United Kingdom covering only industrial property. The United Kingdom scheme relates to immovable property generally which includes industrial buildings and certain types of plant and machinery. It will be easier to answer the Honourable Member's question when the Government scheme has been finally adopted.

REVENUE DERIVED FROM THE EXCESS PROFITS TAX.

91. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL : (a) What revenue has Government derived from Excess Profits Tax in this year and in the previous year ?

(b) What have been the excess profits of cotton, jute, steel and other industries ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES : (a) Rs. 328 (up to the end of December, 1941) and Rs. 155 lakhs, respectively, including advance payments.

(b) The information is not readily available and the labour involved in extracting it will not be commensurate with the results likely to be achieved.

RELIEF TO COTTON CULTIVATORS.

92. **THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL :** How do Government propose to give relief to cotton growers ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR ALAN LLOYD : The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to the press communiques issued on the 26th and 29th January and on the 11th February, 1942 on the subject, copies of which have been laid on the table of the House.

OPENING OF CHEAP GRAIN SHOPS.

93. **THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL :** (a) How many grain shops have been opened by various Provincial Governments in their respective Provinces ?

(b) Have Government evolved any plan for securing supply of grain and other materials of food continuing undisturbed in emergencies and contingencies of the present situation ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR ALAN LLOYD : (a) I regret that the information asked for is not available.

(b) The problem is engaging the closest attention of the Provincial Government in consultation with the Government of India.

NUMBER OF INDIANS LICENSED TO HOLD FIREARMS.

94. **THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL :** How many Indians are licensed holders of guns, rifles, pistols and revolvers and how many weapons of each description are held by them in British India ; and how many are held by Britishers and others ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : I am afraid I am unable to furnish the detailed information asked for as it is not in the possession of the Government of India and the time and labour involved in collecting it would not be commensurate with the value of the results. I may add however that over 5½ lakhs of firearms were in the lawful possession of the public in 1940, which is the latest year for which complete returns are available.

BILLS PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY LAID ON THE TABLE.

SECRETARY OF THE COUNCIL : Sir, in pursuance of rule 25 of the Indian Legislative Rules, I lay on the table copies of the following Bills which:

were passed by the Legislative Assembly at its meeting held on the 24th February, 1942, namely :—

A Bill further to amend the Cotton Ginning and Pressing Factories Act, 1925.

A Bill to provide for the extension of the time limited by or under the Indian Patents and Designs Act, 1911, for the doing of acts thereunder.

RESOLUTION *RE* AN INDIAN DEFENCE MEMBER.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU (United Provinces-Northern : Non-Muhammadan) : Mr. President, I beg to move :—

“That this Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to represent to the higher authorities that in order to place the primary responsibility for the protection of the country on Indian shoulders and to prepare the country fully for its defence the portfolio of Defence in the Viceroy's Executive Council which is now held by the Commander-in-Chief should be entrusted to a non-official Indian.”

Sir, the position of the Commander-in-Chief as a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council has been considered more than once during the last 60 or 70 years. It was first brought comprehensively under review by the Army Organisation Commission of 1879. Although the situation has radically changed since 1879, there is an observation made by the Commission which is well worth consideration even today.

“The position of the Executive Commander-in-Chief as a Member of the Council”, it said “is, in the opinion of the majority, one without precedent in the organisation of any European Government or Army. It is contrary to one of the most essential and salutary principles of sound administration and the common instinct and experience of all administrations whether representative or despotic has everywhere rejected it”.

This recommendation, Sir, was not carried out and it was because of the failure of the British authorities to appreciate the advice given by the Commission that 25 years later a serious clash occurred between Lord Curzon and Lord Kitchener. Had that system been changed, had the advice of the Army Organisation Commission been accepted and the Commander-in-Chief had ceased to be a Member of the Executive Council, the controversy that took place between the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief during the regime of Lord Curzon would never have taken place.

This question, Sir, was considered in very recent times by the Legislative Assembly. It was in 1921 that the question of appointing a civilian as Defence Member was discussed in the Assembly. But, owing to several misapprehensions one of which was that the ratio of Indian and European Members in Council might be disturbed if a civilian were appointed to the Viceroy's Executive Council the proposal was turned down. The position, however, Sir, is such now that this question must be reviewed, and reviewed not merely because the existing practice is constitutionally unsound but because a radical change in it has become urgently necessary both on political and military grounds. I may add, Sir, before I deal with those considerations which require an immediate change that in order to appoint a Civilian as Defence Member of the Viceroy's Council it will not be necessary to change the Government of India Act. No statutory change will be required in order to sever the connection between the Commander-in-Chief and the Executive Council and to appoint a non-official Indian as Defence Member. I am sure that this position will not be disputed by

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either the Leader of the House or whoever speaks on behalf of Government today. As every one knows, had the Federation envisaged in the Government of India Act, 1935, been established, the Commander-in-Chief would have ceased to be a Member of the Governor General's Executive Council. But, even now, it is not necessary for the authorities to appoint the Commander-in-Chief as a Member of the Governor General's Executive Council. It is entirely within the competence of the Secretary of State to come to any decision he likes on that question. It is, therefore, a matter entirely of executive discretion whether the Commander-in-Chief will continue to be a Member of the Governor General's Executive Council or not.

Lastly, Sir, I should like to say before I deal with the wider considerations which have prompted me to put forward this Resolution that it should not be regarded in any sense as a reflection on His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief. The times are difficult. I do not think that any Commander-in-Chief in India in recent times has been called upon to bear a heavier burden immediately on assuming office than the present Commander-in-Chief. He will, I am sure, himself appreciate his being released from his political duties so that he might be free to perform the urgent military task which should be his main concern at the present time. His absence from the debate today shows that he has been unable to reconcile his position as the executive head of the Army and his position as the Defence Member of the Council whose duty it is to deal with the political aspects of defence and to present the Government view to the Legislature. The situation being such as to make the dual responsibility of the Commander-in-Chief quite incompatible with the existing circumstances, it is, I think, all the more necessary that a radical change should be made in the present system, so that our arrangements may approximate to those prevailing in England and a civilian should represent the department concerned with Defence in the Legislature.

Sir, I have already said that the question which I am discussing is not merely of constitutional but of urgent political and military importance now. Had it been a question merely of constitutional importance it might have awaited a satisfactory solution for a few years more, but it seems to me, and perhaps to the country at large that the present arrangements are a serious hindrance to the defence of the country. National leadership is wanted at the present juncture both to strengthen our defences and to raise the morale of the civil population. In order to illustrate what I mean I shall give a few instances to show how the present system is hampering us in our efforts to develop the basis of our defence adequately. I have already said that there should be two main considerations before us in dealing with this question at the present moment. Can we make the best efforts to prosecute the war to a successful issue under the present conditions and, apart from training our soldiers and providing them with the necessary equipment, can we adequately strengthen the will to resistance on the part of the civil population? I do not think that any one who is conversant with the state of our system of defence or with that of public feeling will answer these questions in the affirmative. Indeed, all those who have any knowledge of the present situation will strongly be of the view that a change is urgently called for in the interests both of India and of England. To take the first illustration that I want to place before the House, it is necessary at a time like this that those in charge of the Government should be able to make appeals to the people which will meet with a ready response from them. But unfortunately owing to the distrust prevailing between Government and the public the appeals made by the

British authorities fall flat on the country. On the contrary they are regarded as a political trick on the part of the authorities to stampede the Indian public into rallying round the Government and to force it to lay aside its preoccupation with its constitutional status for the duration of the war. As an instance of this I wish to refer to the appeal made by His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief on the 18th instant to the workers of this country to redouble their efforts to replace the serious losses incurred by British forces in Singapore. "I am able to tell you", he said in reply to a question, "that military preparations to meet the new situation are well in hand. But we must have equipment to replace our losses. I urge all men in the factories, in the mills and in the workshops to work as they have never worked before". And what is the effect that this appeal has made on the country? Hardly any. It did not seem to bring home to us the gravity of the situation even in this Council. When the Commander-in-Chief uttered these words I deeply regretted within myself that the executive head of the army should be making this appeal. Had there stood before us at the time in his place an Indian Member for Defence and had he made such an appeal we can well imagine the effect it would immediately have had on the country. It would have been listened to as the Commander-in-Chief's appeal could not be listened to. Coming as it would have done from one of them the people of the country would have taken it seriously and responded to it probably with alacrity. But owing to the arrangements which prevail the Commander-in-Chief's appeal has been far from evoking the full effect it was desired to produce.

Another serious difficulty inherent in the present situation is that the facts which it is necessary to place before the public in order to keep up its morale come from a source which is believed to be tainted. British propaganda, even though based on irrefutable facts, is suspect. Even though the British communiques may not depart an inch from the reality, even though they may represent the truth and nothing but the truth, they do not carry conviction to the public mind. Nothing, I venture to think, put out by the Public Information Department of the Government of India has had that effect on the mind of the people that Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek's statement has had. Even as a piece of propaganda, even as a warning to Indians regarding what they might expect should they fail to do the best they can to defend this country, the statement of Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek has been of greater value than any statements put forward by the British Government.

But, Sir, these are not the only grounds which I urge in support of my Resolution. They are of an important character, for our ability to resist the enemy successfully will in the last resort depend on the strength of will of the civil population. But I go further, Sir, and say that the present policy has interfered seriously with our defence. The arrangements that have prevailed up to the present time have been of such a character as to emphasise our subordination to the British Government and the result of it has been that our defence has for a long time been dependent on the ability of the British Government to come to our aid in the event of a major invasion of India. Whenever we asked that Indians should be trained to defend their country and that they should be allowed to occupy positions of trust and responsibility in the military sphere, we were told that as the responsibility for the defence of the country rested mainly on England it was not possible for the British Government to part with the power in regard to India's defence. India is in a very difficult position now. I do not mean to say that it is the only country in the British Empire or the world which finds itself in a perilous situation. But that does not alter the

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fact that its position is one of great gravity. If we were to get help from the British Government we should have got it at this juncture, but what is the state of things? In consequence of British policy neither our man-power nor our material resources have been developed and yet where is the British Navy now that was meant to give us protection? Where are the aeroplanes and forces that we want so badly at the present time? When we put forward demands in regard to these things what is the British Government's reply? It is this. "We cannot spare what you want. We want all those things for our own safety. We have first to think of our own defence. We are the nerve centre of the Empire. It does not matter even if your country is over-run by the enemy. If we are strong, if we beat the enemy here, we shall reconquer you". This is, Sir, the inspiring message that Britain sends to us in our difficulties. We want that we should be able to meet the challenge to our safety ourselves. We do not want to be over-run by the enemy. We do not want that our population should be exposed to the dangers to which it would necessarily be exposed should a war have to be fought on Indian soil. Yet the British Government have nothing better to tell us at the present time than that we should not despair, for if strength remains in them they will again become masters of India.

Sir, I may perhaps be accused at this point of minimising the difficulties which England is faced with and of being unfair to it. It may be said that England's difficulties are due to the pacific policy pursued by Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Neville Chamberlain. There is no doubt that that policy has much to answer for so far as the present state of things goes. But I do not think that that is the whole of the explanation. That is not a complete answer to our criticism regarding our deficiencies in respect of our equipment. And here, Sir, I will draw the attention of the House to the remarks made by the Colonial Secretary yesterday in the House of Lords with regard to the utilisation of Indian man-power in the present situation. He said, Sir, that it was wrong to imagine that India's trained soldiers were not being utilised to the fullest extent possible. He wanted to remove the misconception that the men who had been already trained and equipped were not being used. He said every man who was fully armed was being used but equipment was a difficult part of the problem. It was a mistake, he added, to think that the million men who had been recruited had been fully trained and equipped. Now, what is this deficiency of equipment due to? It is, as I have already said, due in part to the policy pursued by the British Government in this country and not merely to the policy pursued by it in the international sphere. To speak plainly, Sir, British policy has been guided in this country with the object of making British Raj safe in this country for ever. That is the main reason why our industries have not been developed, why we are seriously deficient even in respect of our defence industries and why we have not been allowed to train Indians for the defence of their motherland. Had this policy not been pursued, had India been trusted, had its resources, both human and material, been fully utilised, had she been made a contented member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, the British Government would have turned today to India and not to the United States of America for help. India would have been the main arsenal of the Empire and democracy and not the United States of America. The British Government is entitled to seek friends in every quarter and to welcome help, no matter from where it may come. I do not complain of its turning to America for help but it rouses bitter and resentful feelings in our hearts when we see that at this juncture when we are helping the British Empire we are unable to get what we ourselves stand in urgent need of because of the distrustful, selfish and short-sighted policy

pursued by the British Government in the past. Had it not tried to keep us down and to maintain us for ever in a subordinate position we would not have been as apprehensive of our safety as we are today. Let no one suppose, Sir, that any Member of this House is downhearted but every Member feels the dire consequences of the imperialistic policy pursued by the British Government during the last three-quarters of a century. I feel, Sir, that had there been an Indian Defence Member our position would have been much stronger than it is today. He would have been able to put stronger pressure on the British Government than the Commander-in-Chief can to secure the fulfilment of India's needs. He would have been in a position to draw attention as forcibly to our requirements as Australia can to hers.

Sir, an immediate change in the British policy is imperatively required by the situation. We have seen what has happened in Malaya and Burma. It is not merely we who feel that the distrust which prevails between the people of these countries and the British Government has been to no small extent responsible for the weakness of their military position. This is the feeling of a British statesman too. Mr. Hore-Belisha, speaking in the House of Commons yesterday or the day before, said :—

“ Our colonial administration left much to be desired. It had not enlisted the co-operation of the people, nor had it assigned to them the duties which they should perform in the event of an emergency ”.

This is, Sir, a serious indictment of British policy, and we all know that the reverses sustained by the British forces in Malaya and Burma and their inability to hold out as long as they were expected to is in part due to their having been unable to receive that help from the local population which they expected. To be quite frank, the enemy by skilful propaganda has been able to obtain valuable help from the people of these countries, help which should never have been forthcoming had Britain pursued a wiser policy. In the Phillipines, in welcome contrast with what has happened in Burma and Malaya, resistance is still going on. Is it fanciful to imagine, Sir, that this resistance is due to a feeling on the part of the people that they are fighting for their own country ? Whether this be the whole explanation of the situation or not, it is apparent from the debate that has taken place in the House of Commons that this is the feeling of responsible British statesmen. I venture, therefore, to appeal to the British Government to take heed of the warning conveyed by Malaya and Burma and to act before the situation becomes grave and perhaps irremediable in this country.

Sir, just one word more and I have done. The debate that has just taken place in the House of Commons has roused fresh hope in our hearts. Mr. Amery has done all in his power to reduce us to a state of despair and to fill our hearts with deep and passionate resentment, but the words spoken by Sir Stafford Cripps in the debate that I have referred to hold out to us the hope that the British may yet be wise and trust India and by assuring her that she will no longer be a subordinate dependency change the political and in part also the military situation that prevails today in connection with the war. Today's papers also announce that a statement with regard to India, which would give satisfaction to the country, may soon be expected from the Prime Minister. I earnestly hope that this forecast will turn out to be correct. Let me, however, say that merely small changes in the present system will not do. The institution of a War Cabinet like the one suggested by Sir George Schuster in the House of Commons' debate, while leaving the Viceroy's Executive Council as it is, will, emphatically speaking, not be a solution of the present situation.

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The British Government must take bolder steps if they mean to rouse the people of this country fully to the gravity of the situation and if they are to get out of them the last ounce of energy which they can put forward to resist the enemy and help the Empire, and, in following this policy, nothing will be of more cardinal importance than the transfer of the portfolio of Defence to Indian hands. That is, Sir, why I have ventured to place this Resolution before the House and I hope that my Honourable friend Sir Firoz Khan Noon will be able to announce in the course of the debate that the Government of India are not only not opposed to the suggestion that I have made but would lose no time in putting it into effect so that the people might feel that the war was their own and all their moral and material resources might be mobilised to meet a situation which is already grave and which threatens to become graver still. (Applause.)

THE HONOURABLE SIR SHANTIDAS ASKURAN (Bombay : Non-Muhamadan) : Sir, a report of the debate in the House of Commons and the House of Lords appeared in today's papers and the expression of honest opinion by the Members there has tempted me to say a few words in support of this Resolution.

I have great pleasure in supporting this Resolution which the Honourable Dr. Kunzru has so ably moved. It has been so modestly worded that the Government should welcome this opportunity to associate itself with Indian opinion and take this great step for promoting India's war effort in the present emergency. After all what does the Resolution want ? It wants the primary responsibility for the protection of the country to be thrown on Indian shoulders. It wants to prepare the country fully for defence. If these objects, which should appear as much to the Government as they do to us, can be better secured by appointing an Indian Defence Member, there should be no delay in giving effect to it. There is, however, Sir, one misgiving in my mind which I must frankly put to the House. In a matter like this mere sentiment should have no place. It is not for the mere satisfaction of seeing an Indian in this important and responsible position that I am supporting this Resolution, but it is because of the conviction that it is just and necessary for the very task of national defence which is our most urgent duty today. But let me ask is it enough to have an Indian Defence Member ? The success of Defence, as everything else, depends upon finance. If the Defence Member is not in a position to find the money for his schemes, he will feel himself helpless to carry out his policy however energetic and well intentioned he may be. I am not seeking to cast aspersions on anybody, but I consider it of the utmost importance that the Finance Member also should be a non-official Indian. Unless the two go together in close co-operation, the object which the Resolution is intended to serve cannot be achieved.

Sir, this is not the first time that the subject has been debated in this House. It has been raised so often that the Government are fully aware of the feeling in the country. The question has to be viewed from two different points of view. From the point of view of the existing constitution itself, I see no difficulty whatever. So far as I know there is no provision in the Government of India Act making it obligatory on His Excellency the Viceroy to appoint His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief as the Defence Member. All that the Government of India Act says is that if the Commander-in-Chief is a Member of the Governor General's Executive Council, he shall subject to the provisions of this Act have rank and precedence in the Council next after the Governor General. If, as I take it, it is open under the present constitution itself to have

a separate Defence Member to represent the Defence Department both in the Governor General's Council and in the Legislature, no question arises of any constitutional difficulty. Then there is the other aspect of the question—the purely military aspect. It is wrong to think that the appointment of an Indian Defence Member will interfere in any way with or diminish the authority and responsibilities of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief as the head of all the military forces in India. On the contrary the presence of an Indian Defence Member will be of help to His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief in many ways, not only in relieving him of certain extra military responsibilities like representation of the Department in the Legislature and so on but in securing closer contact between the Defence Department and the public—so essential in these days for the success of national defence. I have heard it said of certain previous Commanders-in-Chief that they took this view—what a help it would have been to them personally and also for the exposition of Defence policy in the Legislature and to the public if there had been Indian non-official Members to put forward the army view. I hope His Excellency the present Commander-in-Chief will take the same view, for, he has nothing to fear and everything to gain, from the association of an Indian Defence Member with him in settling Defence policies and administering the Department. As a matter of fact the rolling of political and military responsibilities into one, as is the case in India, by making His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief also the Defence Member of Government is an anomaly which is unknown to democratic countries. The sooner this anomaly is done away with, the better will it be to His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief himself not only in the discharge of his responsibilities but also to the public in the formulation and working of defence measures.

Sir, if the need for an Indian Defence Member was keenly felt even in pre-war years, I may say that the urgency of it is far greater at a time like this when war is at our very doors. His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief has onerous military responsibilities extending now to the defence of Burma and Ceylon. His Excellency has constantly to be on tour in connection with the direction of military operations and military training and organisation. Apart from these great responsibilities of a purely military character—the direction of strategy and the conduct of operations—His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief has now as Defence Member a number of other administrative and extra military duties—the administration of cantonments, equipment, purchase production, recruitment, health of the army and a number of others. To my mind it appears that if an Indian Defence Member is appointed, it will be possible to lighten the task of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief and leave him free to give undivided attention to his primary responsibilities as head of the forces. The division of functions is necessary and desirable from the administrative point of view itself—particularly in war time when there are immense problems requiring quick decisions and energetic action on a large scale.

Sir, in the statement which His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief made in the House the other day, he referred to the present serious situation facing the country. He particularly mentioned that the enemy will lose no opportunity for spreading panic and undermining the morale of the people. We have no knowledge of the military preparations which are being made to meet the new situation, but there are a number of measures which the Government can take to strengthen the people's morale and inspire them with the confidence to face the future with courage and fortitude. One of them is certainly the appointment of an Indian Defence Member who enjoys the confidence of the people. It is already late, but it is not too late to take urgent decisions of this

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character to make national defence the people's concern and enable them to pull through the grave situation that may be ahead of us. Such steps as have been taken, like the establishment of the National Defence Council and the Defence Consultative Committee, are incomplete without an Indian Member at the head of the Department. Only by the adoption of bold and comprehensive proposals—not taken singly and at distant intervals but as an essential part of a comprehensive scheme to carry the people of the country with the Government in their measures, lies our hope for the future. A former Member of the Government of India, Sir George Schuster, has warned us against complacency. It is no use saying that India is already behind the war. If we are to develop the spirit of energy and sacrifice which is now sustaining the people of China or Russia against tremendous odds, let us remember, as Sir George Schuster says, "It is blindness to expect such a spirit unless you had a real National Government behind it". I hope the Government will accept this Resolution in this spirit and pave the way for bigger decisions in the near future.

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO (Madras : Nominated Non-Official) :
 Sir, I do not think that any patriotic Indian would differ from the general principle underlying this Resolution, that is the principle of the Indianization of the Governor General's Executive Council. The proposal in this Resolution is only part of the whole reform, the complete Indianization of the Executive Council. As such, therefore, no Indian would differ from the principle underlying it. The mover of the Resolution emphasised that small changes will not do at this stage and therefore he expected that radical changes should be made in the composition of the Government of India. I am one of those who have been advocating radical changes and stressing that small changes will not satisfy Indian aspirations. Of course, complete Indianization is subject to certain conditions which ought to be satisfied to ensure complete harmony and co-ordination of work among all sections of the people. Subject to that it is very desirable that this Resolution has to be considered.

We need not go into the ancient history of this request. Lord Irwin's Government quite recently admitted in its Report on Constitutional Reforms that Indian defence should be placed in the hands of Indians more and more and the responsibility should be put on Indian shoulders as time goes on. That was the definite recommendation. It happens also that in the Instrument of Instructions to the Governor General and Viceroy it was laid down that the defence of India should be the increasing concern of Indians themselves. Then came the scheme of Federation. If that scheme had been accepted by this country it would have been a really great thing for Indian liberty and freedom. That scheme set out the position of the Commander-in-Chief in the constitution. He would have been the adviser of the Indian Defence Member. Therefore, this principle of responsibility for Indian defence being placed more and more on Indian shoulders is accepted by both the Governments in India and in England. There is no justification for the Government to have withheld this responsibility from Indians for such a long time. Neither the Government of India nor the British Government have ever decided to do things in good time. They wait and wait, and in that delay lies the danger. They do not foresee the march of events. It is this lack of vision and political foresight in constitutional improvements that is responsible for the present position in this country. I do not say the responsibility is wholly that of the British. It is also that of the Indians for having relied upon the false hopes raised by fifth and sixth rate people in

England and for having carried on agitation in a manner which could not conduce to constitutional realisation of India's hopes. Therefore, it seems to me that, whatever may have happened in the past, the time has come when Great Britain and India should sit together and see what is best for the defence of the country and to improve the present position. It has been repeatedly said that for the best defence of India she should be given greater freedom, at least that amount of independence and freedom as is sought for by non-Congress people. This seems to me very much without force. The other day the leader of another great party has told us what he and his League would do and do not agree to such a position as is advocated by the non-Party Conference. The first essential thing is that both the League and the Congress should come to terms before anything is done. But it has been said in the House of Commons, "Oh, no demand need come from the people and as His Excellency the Marshal has said the other day, the Government itself should go forward and take things as they are and improve upon them. It seems to me that such a step without any agreement between the main sections of the people is really a hazardous step. Real democracy is not suited to the social and economic conditions in this country as I have said elsewhere, but any such step as is pressed upon should be with the consent of the people. No scheme can be carried out without agreement on all sides. It may be said that may be impossible or impracticable at the present juncture when feelings are running high and so it is better to proceed without such agreement. Are we to wait till that date when the millennium would come? What I do say is this. It is open to us, open to the leaders of the people, who feel that the defence of the country is urgent and necessary and progress is to be achieved, to join hands and work up a scheme and then tell the Government "Here we are, ready with a scheme, now enforce it and give power".

It seems to me, Sir, that so far as the present question is concerned, the Indianization of the Defence Member, there is not much difference on any side so far as I could see. Whatever may be the particular object of it, we have recently read in the press that the Prime Minister is going to make an announcement with regard to the changes in the Indian Government or the Indian Constitution. We shall await with interest and see how far the present circumstances would induce the Prime Minister to change his former position and how far he would advance India in constitutional matters. After that assurance has been given, it seems to me that we should not be bitter in the discussion of this question, because, as I have already said, there seems to be no difference of opinion in the matter of defence being hereafter increasingly the responsibility of Indians themselves. If that is so, an Indian Member for Defence is inevitable and that this should have been postponed to such a length of time is a wonder. The Commander-in-Chief has lots of important things to attend to and he has not got the time to devote to the political aspect of it. Wisdom has now dawned on the bureaucratic Government. An Indian official is Additional Secretary of the Defence Department. This is the first time that an Indian has been appointed as Defence Secretary. We realise how useful is the Secretary in the matter of giving information to non-official Members on several points. He comes to our help when needed. That is an advantage of having an Indian Defence Secretary at present. It may be only a preliminary to what is coming later on, an Indian Defence Member who will be responsible to the people and who will be able to express views on behalf of the Defence Department. It seems to me that the Government have moved but moved very late and I hope it is not too late by the time that the changes in the administration of this

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country are effected. As regards saying that if there were an Indian Defence Member there would be more enthusiasm or greatest response from the country, I do not believe it. Experience has now shown that it cannot be relied upon as a very great argument. With regard to some people there will be that adverse criticism and they will preach in the country that unless a certain demand was met they would not co-operate. That necessarily acts as a check on the enthusiasm of the people. Nevertheless, it must be said that there is no difficulty about recruitment and enlistment of soldiers. As one who has had something to do with committees and emergency commissions, I have noticed that a large number of young men are enthusiastically coming forward not for the sake of the job but for the sake of fighting for the country. Such being the case, it is no use saying that there would be more enthusiasm if there were an Indian Defence Member. It might have been so if an Indian had been appointed years ago. If he had been there for many years and had convinced people that the presence of an Indian is really useful and effective, then it would have been an impetus for recruitment. But as it is, who is now working in the Punjab, the United Provinces, Madras? The people who are working all over the country and encouraging people to enlist are the recruiting committees and people are enthusiastically responding to their call for service.

THE HONOURABLE MALIK SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON (Leader of the House): Sir, I have only risen with a view to saying a few words in order to inform the House of the attitude of the official Members. So far as official Benches are concerned, we intend to take no part in this debate. So far as the Resolution is concerned, Government will be very pleased to forward the views of this House to higher authority as suggested by the Honourable the mover in this House. Beyond this I do not wish to say anything more at this stage.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: I did not say, Sir, that the Government should content themselves merely with forwarding this debate to the Secretary of State for India. When did I make such a suggestion?

THE HONOURABLE LT.-COL. SIR HISSAMUDDIN BAHADUR (Nominated Non-Official): Mr. President, Sir, I rise to offer a few observations on this important Resolution moved by my Honourable friend Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru. I can say with confidence that my Honourable friend always takes keen interest in army affairs and has gained vast knowledge of it.

I can, Sir, modestly claim some knowledge and experience of military affairs from 1897 Tirah experience in the Army. Therefore, I trust my intervention in the discussion of this Resolution will not be regarded as gratuitous. I have listened to the speeches made this morning very carefully and without casting any reflection on the inner feelings and eloquence of the speakers, I cannot help saying that they have woefully missed the bus. They have shown little realisation of the old proverb that "It is not wise to change one's horses in midstream".

The significance of the Resolution is obvious from the very wording of it that a representation is being sought through the Governor General in Council to the higher authorities. The Honourable Members who have preceded me have, by sponsoring a suggestion for a fundamental change in the control and direction of the defence arrangements of the country at

the present juncture show a complete disregard of the realities and gravity of the situation and have only played up to the gallery. As an ideal the proposal embodied in the Resolution is most attractive and I have every sympathy with it but looking at it from a practical point of view it advocates a most dangerous innovation and amounts to playing with fire. We are passing through very acute and critical times and may have to travel through dark days ahead and a slight mistake may bring a severe setback, a serious blow and disastrous consequences. I am sure the Honourable Members will realise that the army should not be dragged into politics. Defence is a special and technical subject, requiring knowledge of different phases of war strategy, tactics and above all grim determination in handling the situation and directing the movement of troops. Where can we find a man possessing the qualifications requisite for an efficient Defence Minister among those who have had nothing to do with the army in their whole life? Is the present time a suitable one for experiments? The safety of India is at stake. I am sure the House would not put the "Defence portfolio" on trial at this critical juncture but would rather assist more and more and strengthen the hands of the Defence Department by practical and constructive suggestions which are welcome at all times. Look at England. The Right Honourable Mr. Winston Churchill, who is the man of the hour and the soul of the war insists on retaining the Defence portfolio which is the key to the successful prosecution of the war. Mr. Churchill has the requisite experience of various theatres of war and a grip of the technicalities. Would the people of this country thank us for agitating for a proposal which, if implemented, is about to weaken the hands of the Commander-in-Chief and thereby affect prejudicially and seriously the preparations for ensuring an effective defence against the military machine of a ruthless aggressor?

Without any reflection on the Honourable Members opposite may I ascertain how much solid and practical work they have done in contributing men, money and material towards the war effort? Now is the time for practical work and not mere theories and brilliant eloquence. See the villagers giving their sons and dear ones for the army to fight for their King and country. That is the solid proof, if any is needed. The other day I was at Hissar for recruitment. The men had the pride to say, "We shall rather die on the battlefield for our country than see our houses bombed, religious places destroyed and our women and children killed". Look at the war contributions of the zamindars in men and money. Let us come forward in our true colours.

I have every sympathy with the Honourable mover of the Resolution; but we cannot lose sight of hard and patent facts at this hour of our common trial. I would beg Honourable Members to leave it alone and let those responsible for the defence of the country go on with their arduous work unmolested and unharassed.

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL (Bombay : Non-Muhammadan) : I rise to support the Resolution so ably moved by my Honourable friend Pandit Kunzru. While implying no want of confidence in the present Commander-in-Chief, who is a great soldier and an esteemable man, I must say that he cannot stir the people to the same enthusiasm as an Indian can. An Indian would know exactly how to inspire the main-spring in the heart of every Indian.

[Mr. M. N. Dajal.]

India, Sir, has produced in the past many generals and soldiers and if India today is not conspicuous in military leadership it is because Indians have never been given a chance to prove their worth ; but I refuse to believe that this great country of 400 million people is so devoid of men of character, talent, trust, integrity, that it cannot produce one Defence Member for the Executive Council.

The Commander-in-Chief, Sir, is today the most over-worked man in India. Let him remain the supreme authority so far as tactical details are concerned but let him be associated, let him be assisted, by an Indian Defence Member in the Executive Council so far as administration and the direction of military policy is concerned.

The appointment of Sir James Grigg, who has been a civilian all his life, as the Secretary of State for War in England clearly shows there is no force in the argument that a Defence Member should have any very special technical military experience or education.

At this critical time Government must infuse courage and sympathy into the hearts of the people who are prepared to fight any aggressor to the last man. The announcement of an Indian Defence Member in the Executive Council will once and for all remove the doubt that Britain is not willing to part with power. The psychological effect on the people of such a generous move might prove to be the turning point in this war so far as its political aspects are concerned, or it might even be the key to the solution of the Indian political deadlock.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MUHAMMAD YAKUB (Nominated Non-Official) :
Mr. President, I fully appreciate the patriotism of the Honourable the mover of this Resolution, and I am prepared to give him full credit for the sentiments which have prompted the moving of this Resolution, but Mr. President the situation is so serious and the war condition is so grave, that we cannot pass any judgment, or come to any decision, on an important point like the one which is embodied in this Resolution without thoroughly going into the pros and cons of the proposal and without seeing all the sides of this Resolution. Sir, I am not taking part in this Resolution only for the sake of making a speech or entering into a controversy but Mr. President the war is not only at our doors but it is actually in our house. Burma, although it has recently been judicially separated from India, has for such a long time been wedded to this country that we cannot consider it as a foreign country and the war which is raging in Burma is, I think, a war in India. We must, therefore, realise the gravity of the situation and see how we can best do to support the war efforts.

Mr. President, the Honourable mover of the Resolution says that he wants this change in order to prepare the country fully for its defence. Sir, if this Resolution had been moved in 1938, or even earlier than that, I would have been fully prepared to support it but, in the year 1942, I think the time for preparing the country is already gone. This is not the time to prepare the country but this is the time to take action.

Mr. President, the Honourable mover of the Resolution has criticised the policy of the British Government a good deal. I am in full agreement with him in what he said. No doubt the military policy of the British Government has proved to be a total failure. The foreign policy of the British Government, their strategy and their statesmanship have failed. In my

opinion it was all due to the Western type of democracy which prevailed in England and which prevailed in other countries in Europe. It was the policy of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, and his two successors in office, their short-sighted policy, which has brought this catastrophe upon England. When Germany was preparing armaments, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald was prosecuting his fantastic proposal of disarmament, and since then England never prepared herself to face the situation which has now arisen. The two successors of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald also remained inactive and did not prepare the country for a big conflagration. Also I do not think that India cannot produce men of genius, men who can compare very well with any statesman in the world. But, Sir, we have to see the hard facts as they stand today. I cannot blame Indians when I say that at the present moment I do not think that we can find any Indian who is fully qualified to handle the present serious situation and to discharge the duties of a Defence Minister. It is not our fault no doubt. But the fact remains. Again this is not a war of India alone. It is a world war. The international position of the war is such that it requires a man of international fame, a man who is well acquainted with international policy, at the head of the War Cabinet. But, unfortunately, placed as we are at the present juncture, my humble opinion is that it would not be just and right to place the responsibility of the defence of the country in the hands of an Indian. Although I am also fully convinced of the ultimate victory of Britain in this war, but at the present moment the tide of war is at its lowest ebb and we will not be doing justice to our countrymen if we place an Indian at the helm of the defence of the country at this grave juncture. Supposing the tide turns against us, then the British Government will merely say, "We handed over the defence of the country to you and you have mismanaged the whole affair and brought defeat upon us".

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS (Punjab : Non-Muhammadan) : What is the position of the tide now ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MUHAMMAD YAKUB : As I have said, it is at the lowest ebb. We should not court blame upon an Indian. It would not be right to place an Indian at the helm of affairs at this juncture when the condition of war is so grave and when, as I said, the tide is at its lowest ebb.

Then, Sir, we have also to consider the fact that the real policy is not framed in India. The defence policy cannot be framed in India, the war being an international war. It is not a war of India. The defence policy is framed in England. What would be the position of the Indian Defence Member *vis-a-vis* the British War Cabinet ? If there is a clash between the policy of the two, then I think it will make the situation of India still worse. We should also like to know the relation of the Defence Member with the Commander-in-Chief. If there is a clash between the two, then again it will raise a very serious situation. These are all such complicated questions that they cannot be taken in hand at such a grave time as the present is. I quite agree with my Honourable friend Sir Shantidas Askuran when he said that this is not a time to play upon sentiments.

Then, Sir, as the Honourable Sir Shantidas Askuran has said, if you transfer the portfolio of Defence to an Indian and not the portfolio of Finance, a difficulty might arise as to how the Indian Defence Member will be able to carry out his schemes. The Honourable mover of the Resolution said that an Indian Member would be able to create more enthusiasm among the people of India than the Commander-in-Chief can do. Sir, I do not think that any

[Sir Muhammad Yakub.]

Defence Member at the present day can create any more enthusiasm than what we find in India. The feeling of despondence created in the country is due to the non-co-operation of the Congress and its Satyagraha movement and I think real patriotism would be to ask the Congress to change its attitude.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Also the Muhammadans are non-co-operating.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MUHAMMAD YAKUB : Mr. President, Mr. Jinnah has declared on the floor of the House in the other place, and also from public platforms, that the Mussalmans are not non-co-operating with the Government in this war. They are not raising anti-war slogans; they are not going to jails to create a disturbance in the country and to harass the Government. The position of the Mussalmans is quite different from the position of the Congress. But if Mussalmans are dragged to adopt such methods as they have adopted, it would be due to the appeasing policy and the weak policy of the Government for which the Mussalmans are not to blame.

Mr. President, the Honourable mover of the Resolution has mentioned the pronouncement which Marshal Chiang-Kai-Shek has made before leaving India. I have great respect for the great Marshal from China who came to our help at this time of need, and a friend in need is a friend indeed. But, Sir, after coming to India, I am sorry to say that he placed himself in a very awkward position and he has placed the Indians also in a very awkward position. He was quite right in the beginning when he said that he did not come to India to interfere in the internal politics of the country and he was right in saying so. However great the Marshal may be, he cannot understand the internal politics of this country by staying here, in company with only one Party, for a few days, and the message which he has left behind him has created more resentment in this country than courage. He has compromised his position as well as the position of Indians. I think it would have been better for him to keep silent, and I make bold to say that not only he but all those who consider themselves experts on Indian affairs, those Englishmen, and foreigners, who come here for a few days and hob-nob with a particular section of the people and then consider themselves as experts, are hopelessly ignorant of the real conditions prevailing in India, and the pronouncements they make in England create wrong impressions and make the position still worse.

Some Honourable Members have pointed out that the Prime Minister is shortly going to make an announcement about India. I hope that Mr. Churchill will be very wise in making a cautious pronouncement. I think that at this juncture it would be extremely unwise to raise any controversy about constitutional changes in India or to discuss or to come to any decision about such changes. This is not a time when we can coolly and dispassionately discuss such problems, when we have got fire all round our house and our house is burning. So, Sir, I conclude by saying that it is not in any spirit of controversy that I have intervened in this debate, but really I think that Honourable Members should realise the gravity of the situation and see that by taking any haphazard step they do not place the Indian Member himself in an awkward position, the Indian Member who would be placed in charge of the defence of the country.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: But you don't want any Indian Defence Member ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MUHAMMAD YAKUB: Not at this juncture. I say that the position of the war is so grave that it would not be doing justice to an Indian to place him at the head of Defence. If the condition becomes worse the whole blame will be thrown upon him.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: I want to know how will an Indian Defence Member who is non-existent find his position difficult ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MUHAMMAD YAKUB: If he were placed at the helm of the defence of India according to your Resolution, then what would be his position ? The time is not ripe for undertaking a change like this and therefore I am very sorry that I am unable to support the Resolution in the form in which it has been moved.

THE HONOURABLE MR. R. H. PARKER (Bombay Chamber of Commerce): Sir, I do not think I have on any occasion in the past heard a Resolution dealt with so ably on both sides in this House. There is, as we see, considerable difference of opinion. I am quite certain that I should find that difference of opinion if the House consisted entirely of Europeans instead of as it does, mainly of Indians. For that reason what I say expresses my own views, but I am quite sure it also expresses the views of a great number of Europeans.

Now I would like to say in the first place that the Government of India Act, 1935, does show, I think, that His Majesty's Government at that time—and there is no reason to believe that they have changed since—did contemplate and intend some such position as the Honourable mover of this Resolution wishes to see set up. So from that point of view we are following the lines laid down by His Majesty's Government. But the fact does remain that the position has changed considerably since 1935 or even 1937. From my personal point of view I believe in the principle that I have applied over the last 23 or 24 years in India, that is that I never willingly encourage the appointment of a European in India where I can find an Indian who is capable of doing the work and I do not think that in a case of this kind, in normal circumstances anyhow, one could say reasonably that you could not find an Indian who would make a good Defence Member. I think you could find a number of Indians who could do the job excellently and I could suggest several names. I do not know whether they are free at the moment for this particular post. But there it is, they exist. Well, I anticipated the Honourable Member's Resolution rather more than a year or two ago and I myself recommended His Majesty's Government, privately admittedly, to do exactly what the Honourable mover now suggests. I recommended it then on very much the same grounds on which he is recommending it now. But we were not then in the middle of a great war ; we were on the verge of a great war, and my main reasons for putting forward my private view at that stage were that I did not believe that Federation would go through. If Federation had been in my opinion likely to fructify, I would not have thought it necessary to make that recommendation.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: What reply did you get ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. R. H. PARKER : I think we shall all agree that there is a difference between an acknowledgment and a reply. Shall I say that I received an acknowledgment. Anyhow I put it this way, that if there was anything in the nature of a reply, which somebody might think there was—I do not think there was—but supposing there had been anything in the nature of a reply in the communication which I received, then it did not satisfy me. But then, I have to bear in mind, and I think we must all bear in mind, that there might have been reasons which they were not prepared to give me and perhaps they were right in not doing so. There might have been good reasons of which I am ignorant. For that reason, while I thoroughly agree with the recommendations of the Honourable Member in the general sense, I do say that I have my doubts as to whether this is the right time to give effect to them and that I am now in a different position from the position I was in when I definitely and wholeheartedly made that recommendation. It is to my mind a question of practicability. I do not know whether a new Defence Member, be he Indian or anybody else, would not take up so much time necessarily of the Commander-in-Chief and other experts as to do more harm than good. That is a possibility we cannot deny. I can only say that I hope this recommendation of this Council will be forwarded in the sense of a recommendation but qualified by what has already been said by my Honourable friend Sir Muhammad Yakub.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU (United Provinces Southern : Non-Muhammadan) : Mr. President, the Honourable Dr. Kunzru has dealt in his usual and thorough manner with the Resolution and I think it will be generally agreed, except by the die-hards of this House, that the Resolution is a very moderate one. He has traced the question of a civilian Member of Defence from the year 1879 right up to 1942, and I do not wish to cover the ground that has been covered by him already.

The Honourable Mr. Parker, if he will permit me to say so, made an excellent speech. The first part of his speech was excellent, but the second part I could not understand. I do not know whether he is going to vote for this Resolution or not ; he did not make it quite clear. The Honourable Mr. Parker was right in saying that the appointment of an Indian Defence Councillor was not ruled out by the Government of India Act, 1935. If Federation had been functioning it is possible that the Councillor in charge of Defence would have been an Indian. The Joint Select Committee did not say that he must be an Indian, but they did not rule out the possibility of an Indian being in charge of it. They did how ever consider that a change in the position of the Commander-in-Chief was necessary. Now, there are some people in this country who like to live in a world of unreality. They forget that they are living in 1942 and that during the last two and a half years we have traversed centuries and we are traversing centuries in minutes. When I was reading this morning the debate in the House of Commons and the House of Lords I felt that a revolution had taken place overnight in England as regards India. A man like Sir Richard Ackland, who has written two books, says : " Don't talk of Dominion status. Discard that word for heaven's sake. It does not suit the special conditions of India. Talk of independence ". A man like Hore-Belisha who was Secretary of State for War and who made a good Secretary of State for War, who was Chairman of the National Liberal Party until the other day and who therefore cannot be regarded as a very extreme man, says : " Don't forget the lessons of Malaya and Burma. You failed in Malaya, you failed in Singapore, you have been failing in Burma so far,

you have failed in Hong Kong, because you under-estimated the strength of the enemy. You failed in those countries also because you did nothing to keep up the morale of the people". He has asserted that there was no enthusiastic co-operation between the people and the army in Malaya and in Singapore and the story is not very different in Burma. Now what is the reason for this lack of effective co-operation between the civilian population and the military people in these places? In England you do not have that sort of thing. There it is total war effort. Every Englishman feels that he has got something to preserve. Every Englishman feels that he must give the best that is in him to the cause of freedom. Why have you no controversy in Canada now? You had war controversies in Canada. Why have you no controversy now as regards an all out effort on the part of Canada? Why is Australia today an absolutely united country so far as the war effort is concerned? The reason is not very difficult. The reason is this. These people feel that they are fighting for the preservation of their liberties; they are fighting for the enlargement of human liberties also. Those were the ideals before them. Here Government have not supplied any moral leadership to the people; it has not supplied any moral leadership to the community. It has just believed in exploiting their fear complex. They say, "If we go away, the Germans come; if we go away, the Japanese come; if we go away, the Italians come". You are not able to defend yourselves. I wish to be perfectly frank. I am not a defeatist. Whatever my faults, whatever my virtues, there is one credit that I claim for myself, and that is consistency in my opposition to Fascism. But the man in the street says: "Look here. You talk about Japanese aggression, German aggression and Italian aggression. So far as I am concerned, I cannot get a square meal a day. My lot cannot be worse than it is. It really does not matter who rules me. I do not understand these high-sounding words 'democracy, social justice.' I do not see democracy, I do not see social justice, I do not see freedom in this country". You go and talk to people and you will find that there is in this country a basic indifference to the issues which this war has raised. Therefore it is not purely from the military point of view that you must approach this question of the appointment of an Indian Defence Member. The Indian Defence Member may or may not be more efficient from a purely military point of view. I am coming to that question also. You have to approach this question from the psychological point of view and if you put Defence in charge of an Indian, you will be showing to the people, you will be demonstrating to the people, that you intend to transfer power to the people and you will give to the people thereby a stake in the fortunes of this war and that is why an Indian Defence Member will be able to enlist a much larger measure of support and co-operation than the present Defence Member. I do not want to reflect on him in the slightest degree. I am sure he is a very distinguished soldier. We do not want to make his task harder than it is. It is from this point of view that an Indian Defence Member would be better. Now, Sir, the Honourable Sir Muhammad Yakub said a great many things which I could not follow. He started by saying that the mover of the Resolution had moved this Resolution with moderation and all that sort of thing. Then he went on to say that you could not get an Indian for running the Defence Department. But I should like to know this: Do the eight Indian Members of the Executive Council regard themselves as incompetent for holding the office of Defence? What particular experience—he was a captain in the army but that was not his principal qualification—of strategy, of army policy had Captain Margesson? What particular experience of war has that very distinguished Civil Servant, whom we knew in this country, Sir James Grigg?

THE HONOURABLE MR. R. H. PARKER : Fighting, that is the experience. (Laughter.)

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : The greatest Secretary of State for War that Britain had was, I believe, Lord Haldane, and he was a barrister and a philosopher. Well, I think, therefore, that it is the virtue, it is the supreme merit of a democracy, that it has a place both for the expert and for the amateur and the amateur has in democratic countries proved to be more suitable for parliamentary positions, for positions of guiding principle than the military expert. Who shoulders the responsibility for the lack of proper air support? The Minister for Air. Or, who is responsible for what happens if the submarine campaign is intensified? The First Lord of the Admiralty. Neither the Secretary of State for Air—he was at one time I think an officer in the British Army—nor the First Lord of the Admiralty, who was connected with the co-operative movement, were soldiers at all and if these men can handle the affairs of the Admiralty and the War Office why cannot we poor Indian politicians who take some interest at all events in international affairs?

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Yakub spoke at great length about the international situation. He blamed Ramsay Macdonald and Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain for the present war and he said we Indians do not know anything about the international situation or what the state of the international situation is, and I am not quite sure that he is as profound as he would like the House to make out to be. If I had time I could trace the history of the diplomatic world since 1918 or 1919 since the Treaty of Versailles and I could prove that his criticisms were neither altogether right nor fair nor just. I mean the present war is not merely due to the fact that England did not arm; it is also principally due to the fact that England did not stand by the principle of collective security, that England was not able to build up a proper peace front. No proper peace front could have been built in Europe without the active co-operation of the Soviet Union and the British Conservatives were for some reason or another not prepared for a deal with the Soviet Union. Therefore, I do not agree with the view that we cannot handle the foreign policy of the country just as well as British politicians can. If you leave out Mr. Churchill or if you leave out Sir Stafford Cripps today, who are the big figures in British politics? When I was at Oxford I knew Mr. Anthony Eden quite well. He was a contemporary of mine and I am proud of having regarded him as a friend in those days. Anyhow I am proud of a friend who has achieved the position of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Well, he was a very clever man and I predicted a good future for him, but I do not think that there was anything very wonderful about him. I do not suffer from an inferiority complex. Given opportunity, given proper environment, I think I can do just as well—I am not saying this in a very boastful spirit; believe me, I am a very modest man—or for the matter of that there are hundreds of my countrymen who can do better than I. Therefore, if you spend your time either always thinking of yourself as the hub of the universe or craving for a certain distinction which you want to get for yourself, and if you go on working in that way you lose your perspective, and I am not surprised that in the evening of his life my Honourable friend Sir Muhammad Yakub, working in a semi-Fascist State, cannot see things properly in their proper perspective. (Laughter.)

I should have thought that the principle that the Executive Council should be expanded, agreement or no agreement, had already been accepted when the Executive Council was expanded. Did Mr. Amery wait for an

agreement between the Muslim League and the Congress before he appointed our esteemed Leader, the Honourable Sir Firoz Khan Noon and Dr. Raghavendra Rao and Mr. Aney to the expanded Executive Council? There was no agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League; yet the Executive Council was expanded and these gentlemen were entrusted with certain duties. Dr. Raghavendra Rao—I am very glad that he is here—is in charge of Civil Defence. Well, what experience had he or—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Order, order. Please do not attack personalities.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: Sir, I am saying this as a matter of compliment, because I think he will be able to run that Department because he has no experience of military affairs or he has never been in a nursing hospital. (Laughter.) I am sure of this because he is not a technical man, because he comes from the people and as he is in touch with the people he will be able to do his job much better than civil servants who spend their lives over disposing of files.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Your time is up.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: I shall also now bring my remarks to a close. Therefore, Sir, this question has got to be approached not from a narrow point of view. It has to be approached from a broad point of view and what you have to consider at this juncture when you cannot be too certain of what might happen in the international world, is what the effect of this suggestion will be on the psychology of the Indian people. I venture to think that an Indian Member would help to sustain the morale of the civilian people, would help to increase the efficiency of all the branches of the army and it is for this reason that I give my wholehearted support to this Resolution.

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

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

THE HONOURABLE SIR RAMUNNI MENON (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, the Resolution which is now before the Council is in effect a part of a wider resolution which was sponsored the other day by the Non-Party Conference and which, I imagine, has already been despatched to the proper authorities. Looking at the Resolution, which we are considering today, on its intrinsic merits there will be large support in favour of it in normal times, as indeed for the wider resolution to which I have already referred. The point was raised in the course of the debate as to whether we could find competent men to take over the portfolios concerned. I have no hesitation in saying that in this country we can find competent and experienced people to take up any administrative portfolio in the charge of the Government of India, and if the availability of competent men were the only question at issue, it could be solved very easily. But I venture to submit that we have to examine this question not simply on its own intrinsic merits but in the larger context of the realities which exist in this country today. Even in normal times—and the present times are not at all normal—there would be considerable opposition to the wide change contemplated by the Non-Party Conference

[Sir Ramanni Menon.]

resolution. It has already been made clear that the Muslim League as a body will not tolerate it. To my mind that is sufficient argument for not proceeding with the Resolution along the lines suggested. However, let us consider the Resolution a little further, in relation to the conditions which exist today. As several Honourable Members have already remarked, we are in the midst of a great war, a life and death struggle, and that struggle is very near to us. It is in fact at our homes. Is this the time when we can safely change the position of the Commander-in-Chief of the defence forces in this country? Whatever may be said in favour of the Resolution, I am clearly of the opinion that this is not the opportune time for taking the step proposed.

Just a small matter—how will the Defence services react to such a change? Will they not feel that the prestige of the Commander-in-Chief, who has hitherto been occupying a very high position in the Cabinet of the country, has to a certain extent been reduced? I do not express any opinion on the justification of such an attitude, but I cannot help feeling that that will be the mental reaction of the Defence services.

Now, what are the difficulties which the Resolution which has been recommended to us is intended to solve? I take it that the difficulties are firstly in regard to the recruitment, training and equipment of a sufficient armed force in this country and secondly, that there is an apparent lack of enthusiasm in support of the war effort. I shall confine my remarks to the latter point. I admit that there is a certain amount of indifference or lack of emotional support in the country. What is that due to? It is mainly due to the fact that the two big political parties in the country have by their speeches, attitude and conduct, encouraged a sort of indifference in their followers. I do not think that the rectification of that mistake lies essentially with the Central Government; at any rate it is doubtful if it can be found on the lines indicated in the Resolution. How can we rectify that mistake? Speaking frankly, I do not think anything very much can be done by others; nor do I think that the lack of cordiality is a very serious matter, though I quite grant that it is a psychological factor of some influence in the furtherance of the war effort, and whatever could be done to bring about an improvement should be done. There can be no difference of opinion on that point. But will a change in the status of the Commander-in-Chief, will the appointment of an Indian as the Member in charge of Defence, bring about the necessary psychological change? As long as the Congress and the Muslim League maintain their present attitude I venture to say that it will not.

Then again, we saw in the papers the other day that the Commander-in-Chief in India has now not only the defence of India in his portfolio but the defence of Burma also. If that is so, how will his subordination to another Member in the Indian Cabinet affect his latter function? Further we must remember that we are not fighting an independent war. Whatever strategy the Government of India may resolve upon will have to be subordinate to the greater strategy which is determined by the War Cabinet in England. We have already been assured that an Indian representative will be on the British War Cabinet, so that, as far as the Indian point of view is concerned, we have got an effective means of making it heard in the highest quarters.

Then again, I think it will be a mistake to suppose that the Indian element is absolutely divorced from the conduct of the defence of this country. We have the Member for Civil Defence who is an Indian, and we have also the

National Defence Council which is a fairly representative body of Indians. So that, all these things considered, it seems to me that the change in the position of the Commander-in-Chief which is contemplated in this Resolution is not quite essential at present. How then, can we improve the present situation in regard to the war, which exists in this country? I think it is generally agreed that we cannot make any fundamental or drastic change in the existing constitution at the present time. So whatever steps we may take must be brought within the frame-work of the present constitution. Thus understood, it seems to me there are two courses of action which are open to us, one at the Centre and the other in the Provinces, and unless there is action in both I do not think any great improvement can be expected. It was with the greatest interest that I read in the papers yesterday that one of the points mentioned in the debate in the House of Commons to which reference has already been made by previous speakers was the constitution of a War Cabinet in this country. We do not know the details of the suggested War Cabinet; and I think it is rather unfortunate that the Honourable Pandit Kunzru has rejected that proposal outright. It seems to me that the proposal for a War Cabinet in India holds out some promise, some hope of providing a means of reconciliation and co-operation between conflicting parties in this country and of furthering war effort in India. I can well imagine that a small Cabinet including the representatives of the large Political Parties in this country, of the Indian Princes, the Commander-in-Chief and a few others all working under the control and direction of the Viceroy will be a very potent instrument for the furtherance of war effort in this country. I do not know whether any such body is likely to be brought into existence. If it is, I for my part shall be only too pleased. Secondly, an effort must be made to bring the popular governments back in the Provinces where they are not working now, not governments on the old lines but coalition governments. It is only in that way that we can really secure the necessary co-operation. If these two steps or steps along the lines I have indicated are taken, I have very little doubt that a great improvement can be effected in the situation regarding Indian war effort.

Before I sit down I should like to add this: we have to face the fact that the difficulties which are in front of us are really Indian difficulties, and no outside influence or pressure can really help in solving them. You cannot coerce any community, it does not matter which community it is, without producing a state of affairs in this country which nobody can contemplate with equanimity. I should also like to give expression to my feeling that it will be extremely desirable for all public men, political parties and the press to refrain from making provocative utterances in regard to political views held by those who differ from them. That itself will be a very great, though indirect, contribution to the war effort.

THE HONOURABLE SARDAR BAHADUR SOBHA SINGH (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I think the Resolution as it stands is quite clear and a simple one. I do not think it is in any way, as some of my friends have thought, a slur on His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief or that it minimises his importance as the head of the Army. I know, as all of you know, that His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief is very highly respected by all sections of the Army in India. They feel proud of having such an experienced soldier at their head. Far from minimising His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief's importance, I feel that the appointment of an Indian as Defence Member will strengthen His Excellency's hands. The times not only require some

[Sardar Bahadur Sobha Singh.]

kind of a political gesture but they do require taking of the people into confidence and I feel that the Resolution is an opportune one.

Some Honourable Members think that an Indian Defence Member, while there is a European Finance Member, will experience lack of co-operation. I do not agree with them. I personally feel that an Indian Defence Member, with the help of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, will get more things done and will be able to secure more help from the Finance Department than probably His Excellency now can do under the present circumstances. He will be a greater strength and force behind the war efforts. And I have no doubt that Indian genius can produce many competent people to fill the post. I can say with confidence that the Leader of our House, Sir Firoz Khan Noon, born and brought up in the military traditions of his family and with Parliamentary experience to his credit, and many others, are eminently fitted to discharge the onerous duties of Defence Member. And I can say that there are many Ruling Princes who could ably fill the post of Defence Member in British India. Whether they would like to do so I cannot say. They might think that such a course would be considered as an interference by British Indians in their affairs. But I know that some of them are very competent to take up this post. I think, Sir, this is a very good opportunity and Government should accept this proposal and give India an opportunity to do the best she can to help the war effort. I support this Resolution.

*THE HONOURABLE SAYYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR (Madras : Muhammadan) : Sir, I am in perfect agreement with the general principle which underlies the demand that is made in this Resolution, the demand for Indianizing the Viceroy's Executive Council. I am of opinion—and some other Honourable Members who have spoken before me have also expressed likewise—that it is not only the Defence portfolio but other portfolios, of Finance, Home and Communications, administered in the Viceroy's Executive Council should be administered by Indians. I am also of opinion that there is no dearth of talent in the country. We shall be able to find many an Indian who would be eminently fit to discharge the onerous duties which the Defence Member has got to perform, people who would be perfectly in a position to administer this portfolio of Defence quite capably, efficiently and creditably. Sir, if you, however, want Indianization, it should be Indianization in its real sense, in the sense that Members of the Executive Council should be not only capable, honourable, efficient Indians but they should also be the real representatives of the people in the country. Unless this is done we shall be simply toying with a shadow, leaving behind us the substance of what actually ought to be done to improve conditions in the country.

As regards the specific suggestion that has been made in this Resolution, I will take up the objects for which this recommendation is proposed to be made to the Governor General in Council. My Honourable friend Pandit Kunzru says that his object in recommending this change is twofold. Firstly, he wants that the primary responsibility for the protection of the country should fall on Indian shoulders. Sir, let us examine whether by giving effect to the suggestion which my Honourable friend makes we shall be able to encompass this object. The object of putting responsibility on the shoulders of the people in the country could be achieved only if the people as a whole

* Not corrected by the Honourable Member.

are made to feel that the defence of India is not the exclusive concern of the British Government but it is they themselves who are mainly responsible for it. This sense of responsibility, it is quite obvious, could be induced only when the people know when they feel that the Indian who is in charge of Defence portfolio is one who is their representative and one who in the carrying out of his duties is expected to give due regard to public opinion in the country. This attitude on the part of the people could not be brought about by the mere fact that an Indian happens to be in charge of Defence. It would be impossible to bring about this attitude even though the Indian who might happen to be in charge of the Defence portfolio might be an efficient, capable, honourable and respected Indian. What do we see in England? Do we doubt that Mr. Lloyd George is one of the most eminent Englishmen in Britain?

THE HONOURABLE MR. R. H. PARKER : He is a Welshman.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR : Why is it that he is not in the Cabinet? Why is it that Mr. Lloyd George who saved England in the last war is kept out of the Cabinet. The obvious, simple, reason is that he has no following in the country. He is not in the Cabinet because he cannot claim to represent a large body of public opinion. He is not there because he is not answerable to that body of public opinion. Therefore, the fact that the individual who is on the Cabinet is a real representative of the people, is answerable to the people, is the one fact which matters. This is one quintessence of the thing which would be lacking if we merely give effect to the recommendation made in the Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE MR. R. H. PARKER : What about the case of Sir James Grigg? He is not particularly representative of the people. He is there merely for his ability.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR : Not merely ability, but you want people to feel that they are in the thing completely. If you want them to feel you must give them grounds to think that they have a real voice in the governance of the country, that they are in a position to control the actions of the representatives in the Cabinet. Unless that is done, this would be merely tinkering with the thing which would far from encompassing the object for which it is meant be likely to have the reverse effect.

Now, Sir, the other object is to prepare the country fully for its defence. This object too could not be achieved unless the Indian Member in the Cabinet is a real representative of the people, because it is quite patent that unless the Indian in charge of this portfolio is one in whom there is implicit confidence reposed by the people at large there cannot be that enthusiasm in the country which would go to induce the country to put forth its utmost efforts. I do not think I need labour this point any more. I would simply draw the attention of this House to what recently happened in England. Even Mr. Churchill, the mighty Mr. Churchill, who is looked upon as the one individual who could save England, even he had to bow before public opinion. He was forced to throw overboard his old colleague Lord Beaverbrook and take instead Sir Stafford Cripps. It was due to the pressure of public opinion. It is the authority with which public opinion is invested that makes all the difference. Unless this aspect of the matter is fully kept in mind, any change that is made would not have the desired effect and as I said it might even prove more disastrous than helpful.

[Saiyed Mohamed Padshah Sahib Bahadur.]

As regards the statement which is very anxiously awaited in the country, the statement to be made by the Premier, I would just say one word. I would repeat what some of my Honourable friends who have preceded me have said. The Prime Minister would do well to take great care and caution in making this statement, that he should be very cautious in what he says. These are very critical times, times when no one, particularly those who are at the helm of affairs, can afford to take any risks. The statement which is meant to improve the situation in the country must be such as would really go to improve it. It should not be one which might even in the remotest manner go to exasperate any section of opinion in the country. My Honour-

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able friend Sir Ramunni Menon, who is known for the moderation of his views, for the sobriety of his views, even Sir Ramunni Menon found it necessary that he should also sound a warning in this respect. He said that this statement should be such as would not have the slightest effect of coercing any section of the people or any community and that it should not be such as to coerce the Muslim League or the Congress. As I have said, Sir, it is well known that war effort is being made in the country. It is a fact, it is an unfortunate fact that the maximum effort is not being put forward but there is still an effort going on in the country. There are people offering their services, people offering their lives, people offering their money, people who contribute in men and material and anything that might have the slightest effect of changing the situation in the country, for a reverse would have very disastrous effects. The Muslim League has all along been making it clear that it is not hostile to the war effort, that it does not want to embarrass the Government in its war effort. It has made it perfectly clear and it is because of this realistic, of this responsible attitude on the part of the Muslim League that you see thousands and tens of thousands of the Muslim youth offering themselves as volunteers, offering themselves for commissions in the war.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Please bring your remarks to a close.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR
I will do it in a few moments, Sir. My submission is that unless this care is taken, unless the authorities take good care that they do not do anything which might go to worsen the situation in this country it would be better that no statement at all is made. As has been observed by some of my Honourable friends who have spoken before me the remedy for the situation presented in the country lies in the country itself. No extraneous power, no outside authority could bring about the desired change, the desired improvement in the country. If there is to be a real improvement in the state of affairs, the improvement has got to be brought about somehow by making the two major parties in the country to come together and to put their energies, their efforts, together. Unless this is done, unless whatever is done is a thing which goes to bring about this kind of result in the country, any statement that will be made would go merely to worsen the situation.

Again, Sir, there is one word which I should like to say about the—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Your time is exhausted.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR :
Very well, Sir. I feel that I cannot but oppose this Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR (Central Provinces : General) : I rise to support the Resolution so ably moved by my Honourable friend Dr. Kunzru. My Honourable friend Sir Ramunni Menon suggested in his speech that this was a new proposal altogether and it was part of the proposals made by the Non-Party Conference. May I bring to his notice, Sir, that this very proposal was discussed and debated in the other place in the year 1921 ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR RAMUNNI MENON : May I explain, Sir ? I never said—I don't remember having said at any rate—that it was a new proposal at all.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR : The Honourable Member said that it was a part of the proposal made by the Non-Party Conference.

THE HONOURABLE SIR RAMUNNI MENON : I was only stating a matter of fact. I did not make any reference to its novelty or to its being an old one.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR : I agree that it is a part of the proposals that were made by the Sapru Conference, but, Sir, I must bring to the notice of this House that this is not absolutely a new proposal that is being discussed on the floor of the House today. The proposal was discussed and debated long ago—21 years ago—when the other House discussed the Esher Committee's proposals.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Mr. Kunzru has already explained that fully.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR : Sir, therefore, why I bring this fact to the notice of the House is that if the proposal had been accepted at that time we would not have found ourselves in the position that we have to face today. I look at the proposal, Sir, from two points of view : from a constitutional point of view and from a practical point of view. If you look at the proposal from a constitutional point of view, if Britain is honest in her desire that India should gain the status of equal partnership in the British Commonwealth then in that case the Defence must be the concern of Indians and not of the British. If that position is to be conceded and has been conceded by various statesmen this is an opportune moment that they make an announcement to the effect that the responsibility for the defence of India must be transferred immediately to Indian hands. I was very sorry, Sir, to hear a discordant note sounded in this House during this debate about inopportune moment, about the difficulty of having a Defence Member, an Indian Defence Member, in charge of the Defence portfolio, when we find that our worthy Indians have administered in the past and are also administering at present efficiently the various departments that have been entrusted to their charge. It is a slur on India to say that we cannot find competent men.

Well, Sir, I want to address myself for a few moments to the practical side of the question. Sir, those who have to deal with this affair—and I am one of those who have been tackling this problem for the last nine years in this House—are faced with a very grave situation in the country now in view of the policy followed by Britain up till now. If Britain had trained Indians, if Britain had encouraged Indians to shoulder responsibility for the defence of this country, the situation that we have to face now would never have arisen. Sir, I quite agree with my Honourable friend Mr. Sapru when he says that the man

[Mr. V. V. Kalikar.]

in the street is indifferent to the present conditions. Sir, we have to encourage young men to enter the Defence forces of India by impressing upon them that the present war has not only reached the doors of India but is actually in India and therefore it must be regarded as our problem. If British statesmen had not followed the policy they have been doing, if Burma had not been separated from India, then this war would not have been thought of as Britain's war. Though Britain has separated Burma from India, in her own interests we must look at it from the practical point of view, and as the war is in Burma, Indians must consider that the war has come to India. The Indians must feel that it is now their responsibility to defend their hearth and home. You cannot create enthusiasm among the people to face the situation bravely without bringing to their notice the fact that they are the defenders of this land and that Indians are responsible for the defence of this country. The political parties may disagree, but the two political parties in India do not mean India. I do not hold any brief for the Congress and I have my differences with them. But, after the war started, the Congress in its Poona Resolution decided to give complete support to the war efforts of the British Government if they would concede their demand of establishing a national Government. Technical objections were raised then, and in some quarters are raised even now, that without an amendment of the Government of India Act this question cannot be solved. Able lawyers in India like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and others think that an amendment of the Government of India Act is not needed for putting the proposal of the Honourable Mr. Kunzru into practice. Even conceding the point that the Act requires amendment, I submit that if Britain desires, she cannot find any difficulty in getting the Act amended. The Government of India Act has been amended so many times after the outbreak of the war. It is no use putting forward that argument. The question is whether you can create that sort of enthusiasm which is required for sustaining the morale of the people of India for resisting foreign aggression when Indians know that they are not masters in their own land and that they have not got any responsibility for defending their country. I quite agree that the proposal in this Resolution is not sufficient to create that enthusiasm. We want the whole Executive Council to be Indianized, so that people in India may feel that they are responsible for the defence of their country and that they have to be courageous enough to resist foreign aggression. It is only by adopting these measures that you can ask the people in India to fight against foreign aggressors for their own interests and not for the interests of the British. The past policy of the British Government has practically emasculated India. The British statesmen say that there is want of equipment. But who is responsible for this? India has vast raw material and 400 millions of population. British imperialism would not use this material and the population for the war purposes because of their policy of distrust. It is no use crying over spilt milk. I am glad to read in today's papers that an announcement is to be made by the British Government. Sir, I hope that no time will be lost in making that announcement so as to place the responsibility of administering and defending this country in the hands of Indians. Sir, I do not want to take notice of the remarks which were made from some quarters of this House today because I think that those remarks would not in any way help us to solve this difficulty. What I submit is this, that if even now the British statesmen find a pretext of postponing proposals for further reforms, if I may say so, on the ill-advice tendered from some quarters, not only they will come to grief but we will also come to grief. It is for them now to realise the situation. They have got full experience about it in Malaya, Singapore and some parts of Burma. If

after this experience wisdom does not dawn upon them; I submit that not only they but also we will be the sufferers. We in India, whether we belong to the Congress Party or the Hindu Sabha Party or the Muslim League Party, do not desire a change of masters. We want to be our own masters in our own house. If that situation has to be faced, I think Britain will now consider seriously before it is too late and ask India to shoulder her responsibility for the defence of the country. I submit that the proposal that my Honourable friend Mr. Kunzru has put before this House at this juncture is a very modest proposal.

One word more with your permission, Sir. I am referring to the remarks made by the Leader of the House. I am sorry he is not here. The remarks that he made were to the effect that he would forward this debate to the higher authorities. My Honourable friend Mr. Kunzru does not want the Leader of the House to forward the debate to the higher authorities. He wants the Executive Council of the present Government to represent to the higher authorities that such and such a thing ought to be done. Mere transmission is not wanted at this juncture. Post office work can be done by anybody. Now, Sir, there are seven Indians in the Executive Council. It is not only their duty but also the duty of the European element in the Executive Council to represent to the higher authorities that unless they transfer power to Indian hands India cannot be saved and cannot be defended. I therefore strongly support the Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE HAJI SYED MUHAMMAD HUSAIN (United Provinces West : Muhammadan) : Sir, I am indeed very sorry to have, for the reason which I will mention, to oppose such a patriotic Resolution, a Resolution which in my opinion deserves such treatment in the House that it should be passed by all standing. My only reason for opposing this Resolution is that it is a little premature, and by that I mean that it is probably only a few days before time. The utility of the Resolution very much depends upon the announcement which is expected to be made by the Premier of England shortly. Let us see whether an appointment of an Indian would be useful to the people of India or not if the announcement is not acceptable to the country. If it is not then it should not be pressed. India is in a worse position than any other country in the world. There is external aggression. The war is at our very threshold. The internal situation is still more acute and is one which does not exist in any other country in the world. There are three parties in this country today which are all fighting with each other, no one making common cause with the other, the Mussulmans, the Hindus and the British Government. Ours is certainly a domestic quarrel. That quarrel can always be made up if the British were a little sympathetic towards us. The larger questions like the framing of the constitution, etc., could be postponed till after the war. In fact Mr. Jinnah said that he was quite prepared to keep in a beyance the question of Pakistan till after the war. I would have thought that it would be possible for all the three parties at least in the present juncture, which is peculiar in the history of the world, to join hands to face the common danger. The Government has been condemned on this question by everybody and I think it deserves that condemnation. It does not now even appear to defend itself. We are also to be blamed to a certain extent. I do not shirk our own responsibility, but the greatest responsibility lies with the British people. For the British people this war is a war of life and death, and I have no hesitation in saying that any nation defeated in this war cannot dream of rising for centuries. The British people profess to be trustees of this country and its people. How are they discharging their trust? They have made this country thoroughly impotent to defend itself or even of being much use to the defenders. Not only that, but the unpreparedness of the British itself is criminal. They have been condemned by their own people. But with us it is different. They were

[Haji Syed Muhammad Husain.]

free people. It was open to them to devise means for defence, but we were not free people. We depended on them. We trusted their words. They said, " We will defend you ", and at this hour we find ourselves in a most hopeless condition. We are asking them today to give us freedom so that we should defend ourselves and co-operate with them. We will do everything that lies in our power not only to defend ourselves but to defend the civilisation, but they do not listen to us. The blame is put upon Indians and it is said, " You do not agree among yourselves ; how is it possible for us to give you freedom ? Who is to take it ? " Is it not possible for the British Government to declare that " We give you freedom today ; you make your own constitution and we will accept it " . If they say that they will put us in the wrong, and I believe that I am not far wrong in saying that it will not take a week for the Hindu-Muslim question to be settled. It is only because there are so many " ifs " and " buts " and conditions to this declaration that it does not satisfy anybody.

Now, Sir, as regards the present question, beside many other arguments, the strongest argument in favour of appointing an Indian Defence Member is that it will affect the mentality of the people of India and they may be persuaded to believe that it is their war. If that had been so I would be the first person to support this Resolution. The unfortunate thing is that in spite of there being seven Indian Members in the Executive Council and everyone of them patriotic, eminent and able, and in spite of many of them having done great services to the country, they do not inspire confidence in the mind of public. They themselves feel that they are there against the wishes of the people. If you add to them one more without the settlement of the larger question, what will be the effect of it ? I say that the utility of the appointment of an Indian Member will be nil. Not only that, but probably it may do a little harm inasmuch as that the people of India who are not yet satisfied with what the Government is prepared to do by this Act may get the impression that the Government wants to break away people from them, induce them to come to its side and give them appointments. They will be placed in a position which would be, I must say, unenviable. It is for the Government, not only this Government but any Government to act at this moment in a manner which would inspire confidence among the people whose resources they want for the purposes of the war. In fact the present policy of the Government to try to please everybody has displeased all. The British Government is thoroughly undecided at this moment when it should be firm in some policy or the other. This is no time for the British people to shilly shally over a question of such importance if they really want to secure the co-operation of Indians. India is not only a country but a continent and can produce millions of people and if they could be supplied with war materials by the British or their Allies, Japan, Germany or their friends will never be able to turn their eyes towards India. It is the uncertain policy which is responsible for it. The Government is not ready even to do this. That if it cannot satisfy the public demands it should go ahead firmly with such people who are prepared to co-operate with it. There is a Party which is prepared to co-operate and in fact their demands are more modest than that of the Congress or the League ; but the Government is not even prepared to go to that extent. Now, in the circumstances, I would really appeal to my Honourable friend Dr. Kunzru that a Resolution of such importance, a Resolution so patriotic, a Resolution so necessary, should not be put in danger of being lost. I would request him, if it is possible with the permission of the Honourable the President and the House, to withdraw this Resolution and try to put it in the last ballot if he can, because I honestly feel that until larger questions are settled one

way or the other, there will be no utility of this recommendation and even if this recommendation is accepted, it might create too many troubles.

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. K. DAS (Orissa : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, some apprehensions have been felt among some Members that the appointment of a non-official Defence Member, at this critical stage of the war, would not inspire confidence ; and that, therefore, times are inopportune for a change. I maintain, Sir, that it is this very crucial moment when a non-official Indian should be placed in charge of the portfolio of Defence, leaving the Commander-in-Chief to work out the strategy and technique of the war.

Sir, I know, from experience and keen observation in my province in Orissa where, after the Congress resigned office, a popular ministry has again been formed—perhaps this is the only singular instance—and has been functioning for the last four months—war efforts have been taken up in right earnest and has been inspiring much more enthusiasm than it had been hitherto. The Ministers, while on their tours, are able to put things in their proper perspective to the masses and people have been beginning to think that it is more or less their war and that they have to do all they can to save their country. People who have confidence in their own men, at the helm of affairs, naturally confide in their words and come up in men, money and material to do their bit for the war.

It is, therefore, Sir, the most opportune moment, when a dramatic change over in the Defence portfolio, will go a great way in catching the popular imagination and will inspire them with confidence and instil enthusiasm into the people and raise their morale to bend all their energies to resistance.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : Mr. President I am glad to find that my Resolution has met with a great deal of support in this House, much greater than I thought it would receive when I tabled it. That there has been opposition is not surprising. It was to be expected. But I am not in the slightest degree discouraged by it, because it seems to me that it is based on what appears to be a complete misapprehension of the situation. Two main objections have been urged in some quarters against the Resolution. One is that the appointment of an Indian as Defence Member will not evoke enthusiasm at the present time. Now I gave several reasons for suggesting the appointment of an Indian Defence Member. One was that an Indian Defence Member would be able to appeal more effectively to the people than a British Commander-in-Chief. One may say that the situation is so difficult that an Indian Defence Member will not have sufficient time to discharge fully the task that may be entrusted to him. It is obvious that if an Indian Defence Member had been appointed a few months ago he would have had more time to carry on effective propaganda and to convince the people that he was following a national policy and that it was of the utmost importance in the interest of the safety of the country that his appeals should be enthusiastically responded to but there is no doubt that his appointment even now will show to the country that the most difficult problem which we are called upon to deal with at the present time will be solved in accordance with Indian interests.

Again, Sir, I pointed out another reason in favour of the course suggested by me. Dealing with the question of military defence I dealt briefly with

[Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru.]

British policy in this country during the last seventy years and pointed out how, if there had been an Indian Defence Member, our position would have been much stronger than it is. Even now I think we can strengthen our position if we get an Indian Defence Member. By way of illustration I refer to Australia. Australia was as much interested in the defence of Singapore as we were. Australia was thoroughly dissatisfied with British policy. It indignantly repudiated the British point of view that the defence of England mattered more than anything else at present and that the success of the enemy in the outlying parts of the Empire, would not cause a serious weakening of the British will to resist or the ability of the British people to defeat the enemy. The Australian Ministers protested against this view and I think have partially succeeded in inducing the British authorities to supply them with the material which they stand in need of. Had India been self-governing, had India even had an Indian Defence Member, I have no doubt that India would have made the necessary representations much earlier and that its voice would have been listened to with much greater attention than it is at the present time. However difficult the times, therefore, may be even if during the short period at our disposal in order to prepare ourselves to meet the enemy we get an Indian Defence Member I have no doubt that he will be able to get the material required for the defence of the country much earlier than we shall be able to under the present arrangements. It is quite clear, therefore, that the appointment of an Indian Defence Member cannot be postponed till the war is over. The danger in which we are involved, and the short time at our disposal for making the necessary preparations are arguments not for objecting to the appointment of an Indian Defence Member but for insisting on it. If anything can be done at present I am sure it can be done wholeheartedly only when the people of India feel that they have the necessary power in their hands. Besides it is just at this time that the Commander-in-Chief should be left free to devote all his time to his military duties.

The other objection urged against my Resolution was that it would not give equal satisfaction to all communities, and the Honourable Mr. Padshah said vehemently that unless the changes that were made were in accordance with public opinion the result might even be disastrous. I should not like to follow the Honourable Member in using strong language but let us see in the light of facts whether there need be any apprehension on the part of any community that its interests would be jeopardised if my Resolution were accepted.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR : It was only a warning.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : I am entitled to say that he opposes my Resolution on the ground that it might fail to give satisfaction to all communities, and it is for this reason that I ask the Council to consider the existing situation for a moment. The Viceroy's Executive Council has been expanded, expanded against the views of certain political bodies in this country, and what has been the result of the expansion? Have the interests of any community been injured thereby? I know that the expansion has not given satisfaction to the Congress and the Muslim League; it has not given satisfaction to any political party in this country, but the fact remains that the addition of more Indians to the Executive Council, however limited the power transferred to them, has in a certain measure strengthened the Government without injuring the interests of any particular community.

If this is the situation at the present time, why need we fear that the transfer of the Defence portfolio to an Indian will place either the Congress or the Muslim League in a difficult position? I think, Sir, if we look at the facts we shall not be impressed by the strong language used by Mr. Padshah or the threat held out by him. No one here has asked that complete power should be placed in the hands of one section of the population. Nobody has said that the interests of the minorities should be allowed to go by the board. Our views with regard to the legitimate interests of the minorities may be different from theirs, but we are as anxious as any community in this country, or any political party, that the legitimate rights and interests of all communities should be adequately safeguarded in the future constitution. Therefore, Sir, in spite of what Mr. Padshah has said, I feel and strongly feel that the appointment of an Indian Defence Member will instead of weakening the Government or creating trouble in the country by a welcome sign today of the determination of the British Government to place final power in the hands of Indians.

Sir, there is just one word more that I should like to say before I resume my seat. Some Honourable Members have expressed a little apprehension with regard to the announcement which the Prime Minister is expected to make. My Honourable friend Mr. Padshah said that he hoped that it would be careful and cautious. I, on the other hand, hope that it will be bold and statesman-like. No tinkering with the problem will be of the slightest use at the present juncture. What is necessary at the present time is the complete nationalisation of the Central Government. Nothing but that will enable Government to harness the full energy of the country for the intensification of the war effort. Merely the addition of a few Members to the Viceroy's Executive Council or the creation of a War Cabinet, leaving the Executive Council as it is, will not meet the requirements of the situation. The British Government must take its courage in both hands and entrust the government of the country completely and without any reservation to its trusted representatives. It is only in this way that the situation can be met now. We may be in the midst of serious danger. But if we are ever to be in a position to meet it successfully, it is necessary that the character of the Central Government should be radically changed. We may meet with reverses initially, but I have no doubt that the will of the people to resist the invader will become stronger and stronger as time goes on and that they will co-operate energetically with the Government in driving him out of the country. But, should the British Government act in a spirit of timidity, should it even at the present time seek to keep vital power in its own hands, then I am afraid that the time will never come when a united country will be able to co-operate enthusiastically with the Government. I trust, therefore, that the British Government realising even in this crisis what the establishment of self-government in other countries has meant, will boldly part with power in India and invite Indians as equal partners to join in the defence of the Empire and the cause of freedom and democracy throughout the world.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Resolution moved :—

"That this Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to represent to the higher authorities that in order to place the primary responsibility for the protection of the country on Indian shoulders and to prepare the country fully for its defence the portfolio of Defence in the Viceroy's Executive Council which is now held by the Commander-in-Chief should be entrusted to a non-official Indian."

AYES—11.

Question put : the Council divided :—

Askuran, Hon. Sir Shantidas.
Ataullah Khan Tarar, Hon. Chaudhri.
Dalal, Hon. Mr. M. N.
Das, Hon. Mr. N. K.
Devadoss, Hon. Sir David.
Kalikar, Hon. Mr. V. V.

Kunzru, Hon. Pandit Hirday Nath,
Parker, Hon. Mr. R. H.
Ram Saran Das, Hon. Rai Bahadur Lala.
Sapru, Hon. Mr. P. N.
Sobha Singh, Hon. Sardar Bahadur.

NOES—5.

Khurshid Ali Khan, Hon. Nawabzada.
Menon, Hon. Sir Ramunni.
Muhammad Husain, Hon. Haji Syed.

Muhammad Yakub, Hon. Sir.
Padshah Sahib Bahadur, Hon. Saiyed
Mohamed.

The Motion was adopted.

INDIAN COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL.

THE HONOURABLE MR. R. H. PARKER (Bombay Chamber of Commerce) :
Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce :—

“ A Bill further to amend the Indian Companies Act, 1913.”

I think it will be convenient if I do not add anything to the Statement
4 P.M. of Objects and Reasons at this stage and leave anything I may
have to say till later.

The Motion was adopted.

THE HONOURABLE MR. R. H. PARKER : Sir, I introduce the Bill.

RESOLUTION *RE* PROGRESS OF THE WAR.

THE HONOURABLE HAJI SYED MUHAMMAD HUSAIN (United Provinces
West : Muhammadan) : Sir, the Resolution standing in my name runs as
follows :—

“ That this Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to adopt means
to keep the Members of the Central Legislature informed of the progress of war on various
theatres and of the measures taken in that connection with as much details as possible
under the war conditions.”

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I only wish to point out to the
Honourable Member that an opportunity is to be given very shortly for a secret
session to be held and in those circumstances does he wish to move this Resolu-
tion ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU (United Provinces Southern : Non-
Muhammadan) : But that does not cover future information.

THE HONOURABLE HAJI SYED MUHAMMAD HUSAIN : I have myself
considered the holding of a secret session, and we can even then find out whether
this practice will be kept up or not. Therefore, I do not consider it necessary
and request permission to withdraw my Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : I object to the withdrawal of the
Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : The Honourable Member has not actually moved the Resolution. He has only read it. If he had moved it, it would have been open to any Member to take an objection, but at this stage the objection does not lie, and it is for the Honourable Member to choose whether he wishes to move his Resolution or not.

THE HONOURABLE HAJI SYED MUHAMMAD HUSAIN : I do not propose to move the Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Thank you.

The Council then adjourned till Half Past Five of the Clock on Saturday, the 28th February, 1942.
