

Tuesday, 22nd September, 1942

COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES

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TWELFTH SESSION

OF THE

FOURTH COUNCIL OF STATE, 1942



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COUNCIL OF STATE.

Tuesday, 22nd September, 1942.

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

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 Monday, the 21st September, 1942, namely:—

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

A Bill further to amend the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.

A Bill further to amend the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (Second Amendment).

A Bill to repeal certain enactments and to amend certain other enactments.

DEATH OF RAI BAHADUR LALA MATHURA PRASAD MEHROTRA.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Honourable Members, I am very sorry to hear of the sudden demise of one of our respected members, who was a member of this House for several years. I refer to the death of Rai Bahadur Lala Mathura Prasad Mehrotra. He always took a keen interest in the proceedings of this House. He was a fairly young man and his death is a great loss to the mercantile community of which he was an ornament and also to the province from which he came. I hope you will all agree with me in sending his family our condolences.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS (Punjab: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I associate myself with the remarks of the Honourable the President. The late Rai Bahadur was a distinguished member of our Party and we all deeply mourn his loss. He was our Chief Whip and was always working for the betterment of the Party and rendering valuable service to the general public.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN (Leader of the House): Sir, I would like to associate myself with what you have said and I request you to convey to the bereaved family the sympathy of this House.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM (Bihar and Orissa: Muhammadan): Sir, I had the privilege of working with the late Rai Bahadur. We

[Mr. Hossain Imam.]

were members of the same Party and he was one of our mainstays at times. Men of that type go to make the Party a success. I associate myself fully with the remarks that you have made.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: We will pass this Motion, standing.

(The Motion was passed by the Council, standing.)

MOTION *RE* POLITICAL SITUATION IN INDIA.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN (Leader of the House): Mr. President, I beg to move:—

“ That the situation in India be taken into consideration.”

I am moving this Resolution for the purpose of giving the Honourable Members of this House an opportunity of discussing the present situation in this country.

Soon after the arrest of the Congress leaders on the 9th August there were concerted acts of violence and sabotage not only in Bombay but in Madras, Central Provinces, Bengal, the United Provinces and Bihar. They were specially directed against the railways, telegraphs, telephones, post offices, police stations and other Government buildings. The Provinces of the Punjab, Sind and North West Frontier were remarkably free from these attacks.

The extent of the damage done was very great. About 258 railway stations were destroyed, of which about 180 were in Bihar and the east of the United Provinces. Forty trains were derailed, as a result of which casualties to railway staff were one killed and 21 injured and casualties to other personnel in accidents arising from the disturbances were three killed and 30 injured among Government servants or troops and two killed and 23 injured among passengers. Great damage was done to the railway engines, the permanent way and the rolling stock. About 550 post offices have been attacked, of which 50 were completely burnt down and 200 seriously damaged. There have been till now about 3,500 instances of wire-cutting. About one lakh worth of cash and stamps were stolen from the post offices, and numerous letter boxes were removed and destroyed. Further, about 70 police stations and outposts and 140 other Government buildings were attacked, the majority of which were burnt or demolished. Attacks were also made on many municipal buildings and private property. The total damage done to the railways, posts and telegraphs, alone, taking into account the loss of earnings, would be much over a crore of rupees. The total damage done in the Nagpur district of the Central Provinces is estimated at Rs. 1,25,000, while in another case in the Central Provinces Rs. 3,50,000 were looted from a treasury (one lakh has since been recovered).

In the United Provinces a private doctor's dispensary was sacked with a loss of Rs. 10,000.

In Delhi, the total damage to buildings is estimated at Rs. 8,86,000. The situation has much improved though sporadic acts of sabotage and mob violence are still being continued.

To control and suppress these disturbances and to maintain law and order in the country, the following measures were taken :—

1. The Congress Committees were declared to be unlawful associations and important individuals who were likely to organize and lead mass movements and create disturbances with the object of paralyzing the administration were detained.
2. As this movement was intended to interfere in the prosecution of the war and to paralyze the war efforts, action was taken under the Defence of India Rules.
3. The Penalties Enhancement Ordinance, the Special Criminal Courts Ordinance and the Collective Fines Ordinance were put into operation.
4. Certain restrictions on the publication of news were imposed in the best interests of the country.
5. In the disturbed areas fullest use was made of the police who had on several occasions had to face very difficult situations and were forced to open fire on riotous mobs. As a result of this 390 people were killed and about 1,060 wounded. A large number of policemen were injured and 32 were killed.
6. British and Indian troops were used in aid of the civil power in about 60 places. They were forced on many occasions to open fire, the casualties being 331 killed and 159 wounded, and the military casualties being 11 killed and 7 wounded.
7. The Air Force was employed for reconnaissance and patrol.

The police and the military have been called upon to meet a very grave situation in various places. I should like to take this opportunity of expressing the appreciation of the Government of the excellent work done by them. It is a matter for congratulation that all ranks of Government servants have done their duty most faithfully and loyally—on many occasions under very difficult circumstances.

As in all engineered movements the general public had nothing to do with these disturbances. In several cases labour has been forced to take part in them. It is a matter for satisfaction that the Muslim community and the schedule castes have as a whole stood entirely aloof.

The cutting of telephone and telegraph wires, removal of rails, demolition of bridges, impeding the war efforts and running a parallel government were all on the Congress programme of open rebellion as may be seen from the instructions issued by the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee which have been published by the Government of Madras.

Mr. Sankar Rao Deo, a member of the Congress Working Committee, who has been arrested and is now detained, speaking at Marol and Ghatkopar in the Bombay Suburban District on the 26th and 29th of July said that he thought the entry of Japan into the war should be an encouragement to Indians, who should and did, derive pleasure from the successes of the Germans. He went on to suggest that the mass civil disobedience movement would take the form of a general strike in all factories, mills, and transport undertakings which would cripple the war machinery.

The fact that the method adopted for interfering with communications was of the same pattern in all parts of the country and the selection of military areas and objectives for special attack seem to indicate a common guiding policy with the definite object of inviting Japan to attack India. No party which

[Sir Mahomed Usman.]

sincerely desires to rally the country wholeheartedly in resistance to the enemy could possibly, in any circumstances, have let the country in for what has happened since the 9th of August.

For all these disorders Congress cannot be absolved from responsibility as Mr. Gandhi and the other Congress leaders had been preaching for some time an open rebellion against the Government of the country, apart from the terms of the resolution passed by the All-India Congress Committee. Some say that Government have been hasty in taking action. If we had only delayed taking action, this dangerous movement to rebel against Government and to impede the war efforts would have taken such a tremendous shape as to cause an irreparable damage to this country. The Congress alone is responsible for the present situation and for the destruction of life and property during the last six weeks. By encouraging and promoting these acts of violence and sabotage, the Congress has done the greatest disservice to this country at a time when Japan is at the very doors of India. The measures taken by the Government are therefore thoroughly justified.

I beg to move the Motion :—

“ That the situation in India be taken into consideration.” (*Applause.*)

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO (Nominated Non-Official) : Sir, after the graphic description of the tragic results that we see around us today, and that we saw lately, the Government ought in justice to the people to have stated or indicated also what has brought about the present state of things, what are the causes that have led to this disruption and disorder and destruction of property. It would have been very enlightening at this stage if we had indications of that from the Government. The absence of any allusion to that is indeed to be deplored. But, Sir, the Honourable Member has said that the object of this Motion is not so much to obtain the decision of this House as to afford facilities to elicit the opinion of the members. If that be so, then there is no use in long discussions and long debates. There have been long statements from various people, statements of various kinds in the press. We have known all that. It seems to me superfluous that we in this House should again debate the question at great length. It will serve, as I said, no profitable purpose, nor will it improve the present situation in any manner. The issues before the country are clear. There is no doubt as to what Indian political parties demanded. That being so, it seems to me the only way in which we could approach this problem is with a mind to solve it and with a desire to see how best it could be improved. To my mind the political or constitutional issues are not as important as they would be afterwards. At the present moment what we require is honest and sincere co-operation of every citizen, man or woman, with the Government here and in Britain in order to defeat the enemy. Thereafter we could have our full Swaraj. Until we defeat the enemy, until we gain the day, it is not reasonable for us to expect that anything could be done in the interval. When the enemy is knocking at the doors, when the enemy is threatening us with massing forces in the neighbouring country and when his arms are extending towards the borders of India, when he is holding our throat and when Great Britain is engaged in the most difficult war in the Middle East and in helping the East, in such a situation is it possible for any political party to have calm and peaceful thinking of the issues relating to this country, the political and constitutional issues? The only thing that the situation demands is that everyone must do his duty at any sacrifice to help the war effort and to defeat the enemy. That is the first and foremost duty of

everyone and every honest citizen, man or woman. Therefore, Sir, it seems to me that no long discussion or debate is necessary. As I said, reforms are bound to come after the war. I will not be a bad prophet if I say that Indian Swaraj is bound to be achieved soon after the war; after the cessation of hostilities there will be declaration of Indian Swaraj and there can be no doubt about it. If there was any doubt in the minds of the people of India or in my own mind at any time, it was dispelled completely by the definite assurance given by the Prime Minister of England speaking for the people of Great Britain in definite language, in unmistakable terms, that India will attain full Swaraj, full self-government, after the war and in the meanwhile provision has been made to enable people to come together and to formulate proposals which will be considered by them favourably and will be accepted by them if it is agreed upon by the people here. To my mind, therefore, the question of constitutional or political issues do not at all arise at present. But, Sir, what does India want? The political parties in India want that there should be a National Government, that there should be complete transfer of power from the officials to the non-official representatives. What has been done to meet that demand?

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA (Bihar : Non-Muhammadan) : National Government, God forsooth, yes, but when? Now or after the war? Medicine, yes; but during or after the disease?

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO : Please do not disturb. You might answer me afterwards if you have anything to say.

You know, Sir, two great opportunities were afforded, two important occasions which could be taken advantage of by us in order to improve the situation. We could take it, utilize it, improve upon it and thereafter claim full Swaraj. That was two years ago on August 10th when His Excellency the Viceroy stated in simple terms, in great earnestness and sincerity, that India will attain full Dominion Status of the Westminster variety. It was not acceptable to the political parties. It is a great mistake; it is a great error of judgment that we Indians have made in not accepting the opportunity and utilizing it for a better advantage and for a better purpose. Now, Sir, the Viceroy has stated in his Declaration—it is perhaps worth repeating again—on the authority of His Majesty's Government that it is proposed to allow India to devise by agreement among ourselves the framework of India's future constitution in accordance with the Indian conception of social, economic and political conditions of our life. Who could know better than we Indians ourselves our own conditions and be able to prepare a constitution suitable to our social, economic and political conditions? Our political parties have not accepted the Constitution Act of 1935. They said it has not been prepared with the consent of or with the agreement of the people and therefore we should have a constitution which would be agreed upon by the people themselves. Here a definite assurance was given to us by the Viceroy that a constitution prepared by ourselves in accordance with the Indian conception of social, economic and political conditions of life would be given every help to enable it to be brought into conclusion with the least possible delay after the war and the Declaration also promised to help representative Indians to arrive at an agreement. Sir, our essential demand for the time was that we should have the right to prepare our own constitution; that nothing should be imposed upon us. The people themselves must agree to such a constitution. Now here an offer has been made to us to prepare a constitution by agreement among ourselves and yet what do we do? We summarily rejected that offer and we did not study the implications of that great Declaration, viz., the status after the Westminster Act. If we read section 5 of the Westminster Act as proposed it gives full right

[Sir A. P. Patro.]

to the Dominions to be able to secede or to declare independence. Therefore when we have got that right given to us what was there to apprehend? Is this not independence? The independence which we sought, the freedom which we fought for is given to us in this Declaration, which would have been the first basis of the National Government. Sir, the Declaration of August 1940 assured Muslims and other important minorities that nothing would be done, nothing would be carried above their heads in a compromise with or in agreement with the Congress Party. The Muslims and other minorities will be protected by agreement. Therefore there was absolute protection given to all those important minorities and their interests were not neglected. Sir, the Viceroy assured that India will have a status as an equal partner in the British Commonwealth of Nations. I presume every one has read the Westminster Act and analyzed it in such manner that it discloses the right of secession. Even those members of the British Commonwealth of Nations to whom the Westminster Act is applicable have now asserted their independence. Britain has not demurred to it. The British Government has not objected to it. Therefore, I say that a great opportunity was given to us and we lost that opportunity. Sir, still further as an earnest for the period of the war it was suggested that within the framework of the Act of 1935 to associate representative Indians in the government of the country, that is, in their individual capacity and not in their representative capacity, but any wise and practical politician would now realize that representative capacity at present is a term that it is very doubtful whether it could be applied in its fullest sense and in its significance to the conditions of the country. Therefore the only alternative—perhaps the best alternative—was to take in the representative men, to take in the individual co-operation of representative men instead of representation of parties or communities. But, Sir, as we all know, as history teaches us lessons, that by convention, by experience, by coming together in work, all those defects that have been pointed out in the Declaration of the Viceroy of August, 1940 would have been smoothened by association, by contact, by experience. Convention is a great thing in parliamentary practice; conventions are like the rules and regulations and these conventions which have the binding force upon the Government and the people, these conventions could have been established by which joint responsibility and the veto power of the Viceroy could have been properly regulated. Sir, this power of contact would have brought into operation the real power for National Government, viz., that the power of veto would have been regulated and the right of members for independent vote would have also been established. All this joint responsibility which was objected to as one of the worst features of the Declaration of the Viceroy could best be established not by regulation but by convention. This was only a tentative measure, a provisional measure, which would have enabled the establishment of a full form of National Government in course of time. This, Sir, was not accepted by all parties. The non-acceptance by the political parties—I advocated then and I always asserted—the non-acceptance of this is a serious setback to the progress of political reforms in India.

Now, Sir, there was another opportunity. Another opportunity came and it was refused and when it came it was expected throughout the country that something would be established which would enable the country to stand on its own legs. When the new India Union to be created was not favourably considered it was a great disappointment to all thoughtful politicians; those that are outside the caucus of a party, those that are outside the cliques of parties all regretted that this should have been rejected and we do regret that this should have been done. It is a party caucus that has thrown out this

offer of new India Union. Sir, we have a greater elucidation of the Declaration of August 10, 1940. This offer contained a complete transfer of responsibility and a right to Provinces to stay out. Safeguards for minorities were also provided for. This was the position. What is it that we wanted? Even after throwing out and not accepting the Declaration of the Viceroy we agitated still further and said we want complete independence at once, immediately; independence to be able to carry out by a statesman. That is the kind of independence. Here is complete responsibility offered to Indians, enjoying equal rights and powers with the United Kingdom and the other Dominions. It is one of the principal features of the British Cabinet's proposals that India should have along with the United Kingdom and the other Dominions those rights and those powers. That was the principal feature of the British Government's proposals. They made also proposals for the early realization of self-government in India. The new Indian State would not be subordinate in any respect in its domestic and external affairs to Britain. Please mark this. The scheme was that India should have independence, and will have independence, not merely on paper, but in actual working. That was the position declared to us unmistakably. And what was the result in spite of the assurance that these proposals for full self-government would be realized as early as possible, that the Indian State would not be subordinate, that the future constitution would be framed by India; that His Majesty's Government undertook to accept and implement the constitution so framed subject to certain limitations? Sir, if we had accepted the Declaration of August, 1940 we would have had a national government working in practice two years ago. We would have seen difficulties in the scheme and would have modified and adjusted those difficulties, and by this time we would have been in a stronger position to say, "Here we have worked the scheme and we have tried to complete it or the scheme is a failure". Without attempting to work, without attempting to put it into practice, without facing the realities we said, "We do not care for it, we will not work it". Then again the new India Union to be created was proposed in all earnestness—that India should have self-government as early as possible after the war, and it is only during the war time that it is not possible for them to arrange things, and therefore they would have a provisional government, a government consisting of representative men: if only we had adopted to the extent that it was offered to us and built upon that, the whole of our energy, our intelligence, our statesmanship to attain the internal union, union among the Hindus and Muslims, union among the important minorities, what would have been the result? If we had strengthened that union it would not have been possible for any government in Great Britain or in India to refuse to us our right for freedom and to obtaining full self-government. We lost those two great occasions wherein we could have established a national government and could have strengthened our position. Those opportunities were lost not by the veto of the Governor General, not by any Ordinance of the Governor General but because we would not agree among ourselves as to how we should have to work. If constructive statesmanship was only forthcoming, then it would have been possible to approach each other in goodwill and in goodfellowship, in a give and take spirit. They should not have insisted on prestige, or on having their pound of flesh. It would then have been possible for the parties to be able to understand each other and work the scheme as a temporary measure so that in course of time it may be established that what they wanted was quite justified.

Now, Sir, it is a great pity. It is politically as I said a great error that the two parties could not come together; that there could be no comradeship between the two. The world has now witnessed the tragic results of the destructive and dangerous policy of the Congress Working Committee. It had the

[Sir A. P. Patro.]

effect of encouraging the enemy abroad and of obstructing the war effort in India internally. It is a great pity that the Government have had to take steps. They were perfectly justified in adopting the measures with a view to control and suppress this disorder. There can be no doubt about it because the primary duty of the Government is to protect the person and property of every citizen and to maintain law and order, and peace and tranquillity in the country. If the Government fails to maintain peace and tranquillity in the country, it is not worth the name at all. It may well abandon governing the country. This primary duty is being discharged by the Government, and I am glad to say they are discharging it very successfully, and I hope that in course of time the forces of evil which are working in our midst will be completely subdued and peace will be restored in the country. I have seen some of the scenes in which these tragedies were enacted. It is heart-rending to see how people who have nothing to do with this mischief suffer. It is the poor villager, the poor man working on the railway lines, the poor man working on the post office lines, who suffered most. The poor man's property was destroyed. It is the poor wage-earner who lost, not the capitalist, not the money-lender, but these poor people, the masses, who suffer. They are sacrificed by these interested parties, and I have seen also how misrepresentation and falsehood is carried on by some irresponsible youths. All these should have been expected by the Government. As the Justice Party said two years ago, Government should be wise enough to understand how things are going on in the country, and they should adopt measures to prevent them; yet their voice was a voice in the wilderness. The Justice Party—oh no, they have got greater support and greater parties to deal with; and the greater parties have now answered the Government, and Government now receive support from the greater parties. Sir, again in Southern India, the South Indian Liberal Federation has been supporting the Government measures from the very beginning and they do still stand by the Government. What they ask the Government today is to devolve more powers on the peoples' representatives, that they should take the people into their confidence; yet they have been complacent. Sir, one more word. As I said, it is never too late. It is never too late for the Congress Party and the Muslim League to come together in fellowship and goodwill to the minorities, and agree upon the proposals. I am one with Mr. Rajagopalachari in asking that the Congress should take the hand of fellowship of the League and join hands with the League. Mr. Jinnah, the leader of the Party, has declared unmistakably in the Legislative Assembly a year ago:—

“ I do not want Pakistan to be decided immediately. The question of Pakistan may remain to be decided when we take up the constitutional problem. But, in the meanwhile, I want equal representation; I want that there should be balance of power in the Centre between the Hindus and the Mussalmans. With that balance of power we can achieve a National Government”.

He was prepared to accept proposals in this sense if they came from the Congress. The opportunity still exists open. The Congress Party should accept proposals in that form and by contact and conversation these proposals could be modified if necessary and this will solve the present situation. The Congress should accept the proposals of Mr. Jinnah as made in the Legislative Assembly. I do not refer to the numerous statements made by him in a controversial spirit in reply to statements made by several other organizations. But I refer to the statement he made in the Assembly, and I know he is very firm and does not move an inch from that. If good fellowship is established between these two parties and if the interests of the minorities are taken care of, I am sure that the present situation can be solved. I therefore say that as a temporary measure this

conclusion is necessary, and this concession to the Mussalmans is not one which is given away permanently but is one which could be revised and discussed as and when the new constitution is promoted. Once United India enters on government and exercises power, the existing conditions will gradually wear out to construct a new India Union, free and independent, and India will have no reason to regret the formation of such a new India Union.

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL (Bombay : Non-Muhammadan) : Mr. President, in the tide of this war there is a terrible warning for India, apathetic, disordered, truculent, sodden with communalism, her leaders fiddling in constitutional terms, when the very conditions under which these ideas are possible are faced with the threat of extinction.

The weakness of Indian Defence arises out of her unnatural political condition.

Before I come to the political situation in India let me add my voice of condemnation to the chorus of disapproval of the acts of hooliganism in several parts of this country during the last five weeks. I have myself been a witness to acts of hooliganism and sabotage in the city of Bombay, and let me state in the most emphatic terms that all those who are interested in the ordered progress of this country view them with feelings of horror and of determined resistance.

The British Government are pledged to grant complete independence after the war and what the major political parties want now is, not only a categorical declaration to that effect but certain steps during the war which would ensure it.

The transfer of power to an interim National Government, consisting of representatives of important political parties and interests, representing all the departments of Government including the Finance and Home portfolios, leaving only the operational control of the Defence Services in charge of the Commander-in-Chief as the head of the allied forces, is urged only in that light. A National Government is, moreover, essential not only for war effort but also for safeguarding India's economic and financial interests *vis-a-vis* His Majesty's Government and other countries, especially as it would secure an independent status for India at the Peace Conference, and because important questions which affect India's position both immediately and in the post-war period are even now under consideration, and form the subject of negotiations and decisions by the Government of India. Such a demand must be viewed with sympathy, especially when it is coupled with the desire of all political parties to fight the Axis menace.

We have heard it said that the Cripps scheme offers constructive solution of the present difficulty and India would do well to accept it. That scheme, Sir, offered nothing by way of transference of power during the war and it prejudged some of the issues which it would have been better to leave until after the war. For reasons which it is unnecessary to dwell on here, I for one, Sir, would suggest that the Cripps scheme should be regarded as out of date. Something else must take its place which would automatically remove the vestiges of doubt and mistrust that surround the Cripps mission.

The time has come for a supreme effort at internal settlement to make the country ready for the external menace. Malaya and Burma have taught us some lessons which we should profit by.

This debate will fail in its purpose if it is not to be followed by something constructive, something positive, which would herald not only a change of,

[Mr. M. N. Dalal.]

policy on the part of Government but a chance for India to fight the enemy and secure her freedom.

The Allied Nations are watching this country with very great interest and perhaps the Axis countries have their eyes on India. Mr. Churchill's statement on India has provoked reactions the significance of which, I am sure, has not been lost sight of by our Government.

I have been a life long friend of England and I sincerely hope the light of reason, justice and fair play will dawn on British statesmen.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU (United Provinces Southern : Non-Muhammadan) : Mr. President, the Leader of the House has made a statement which might have been made by any District Magistrate or Superintendent of Police in any mufassil town. His speech shows that he is completely and absolutely oblivious of the currents of thought and feeling in this country, and of what is happening in this country. His speech shows an utter lack of statesmanship, ill-suited for a man occupying the position of Leader of the House. Never before in the history of Indo-British relationship has India had to face the situation which it is facing today. At a time when the international situation is such as to cause real anxiety to those who believe in the principles of democracy and social justice, at a time when the international situation is such as to cause real pain to all those who wish to see a better world, free from the taint of all imperialism, British or non-British, at a time when people wish to see a world based on principles of justice emerge out of this war, Government and Congress nationalism have engaged themselves in a deadly contest which is not calculated to increase India's capacity to defend herself against Axis aggression. For, it would be stupendous folly on the part of any patriotic Indian to deny the extreme gravity of the present situation. Following the arrests of Mahatma Ghandi and other Congress leaders, the country has witnessed both repression and widespread disorder on an unprecedented scale. No man outside the lunatic asylum thinks that violence, arson, looting and murder can do the country any good. I do not, therefore, hesitate to denounce violence and hooliganism with all the strength of which I am capable. No one conversant with the situation in the provinces and districts can also deny that in maintaining order not all officials high and low, have adhered to the maxim that the force used must not exceed the necessities of the situation, that in restoring public peace care must be taken to see that the innocent do not suffer along with the guilty, that things are not done which are likely to excite racial passions that people are made to feel that the object is not to humiliate them or any particular section of them but merely to assert the majesty of the law. We live, Sir, in a period of firing, *lathi* charges, collective fines and whipping. The great Mr. Amery has discovered the virtues which the Allied Nations should take note of of this punishment of whipping in the Indian Penal Code. Many things have occurred in this country which have made many thoughtful Indians ask, many patriotic Indians ask, whether there is any essential difference between Nazi methods of administration in occupied countries and British methods of administration in British India. Be that as it may, the question which I consider important is whether the conflict in which the Government and the Congress have entered was or was not avoidable and whether the main responsibility for the present disorders, whether the main responsibility for the present unrest, whether the main responsibility for the growing estrangement between Great Britain and India —and let there be no mistake about it that the estrangement between Great

Britain and India is growing and increasing in intensity every day—whether the main responsibility for this growing estrangement rests or does not rest with the British Government.

But before I go on to answer these questions, let me state in the plainest terms possible that I do not agree with the view which was put forward by the Leader of the House that these disturbances are merely engineered in the sense that there is no popular sympathy with the rioters. I am not in a position to speak about the Muslim community. The Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam will dispute my claim to speak for the Muslim community, though I have heard many Muslims express sympathy with the rioters, I have heard many Muslims express sympathy with civil disobedience and I have heard many Muslims express horror at the things that have been done by officials in putting down disorder. But I am more in touch with the Scheduled Castes. I do not know, Sir, that there is such a community as the Scheduled Castes. The Hindu caste system represents a hierarchy which it is difficult for an Englishman to understand. I am not quite sure, Sir, that the name of the great representative of the Depressed Classes, Dr. Ambedkar, is known to these Depressed Classes; and if I may judge from the results of the last election I find, Sir, that except in Bombay, the Congress had the majority of the Depressed Class seats in all the Legislatures. The real problem before statesmanship today is that people feel alienated from the law and they so feel alienated as they find that Government has been preparing them not for the freedom that they desire but for perpetuating a *status quo* which they intensely hate, which they intensely dislike. In a normal community, popular sympathy is always with the law, because law in a normal community is the expression of the popular will and there is a consciousness in the community of identity between it and the State. That feeling is *entirely* absent in this country. Government, notwithstanding the fact that its 11 Indian supporters, 11 members who have now been discovered by the great Mr. Churchill to be "wise and patriotic", does not rest upon popular support or upon the will of the people. It is an imposition from without, not a growth from within. It is obviously difficult in these days of strict press censorship when even factual news cannot be objectively written for or published in newspapers to comment with knowledge upon all that has happened in various parts of the country. But I will not conceal from the House that in my humble judgment even though the attitude of Government had been extremely, extraordinarily provocative, Congress nationalism would have been well advised in thinking in terms of sanctions other than those which one associated with direct action and mass action. An objective study of the situation has convinced me that the main responsibility for the present unrest in the country rests mainly, if not entirely, upon the Government of this country. Let us examine how the situation has developed. A constitution was working when the war broke out which had not generated a feeling that power had really been transferred. The demand for Indian freedom which had been gathering strength for many years was pressed by leaders of almost all parties just after the war started, and why should it not have been? You said that it was a war for freedom. What about our freedom? You wanted to fight German imperialism. What about your imperialism? It was emphasized by Indian parties that a satisfaction of India's legitimate aspirations was needed to put heart into the Indian people who wanted to fight—there was an absolute offer of complete, wholehearted, co-operation—as *equals* in a war which was represented to be a struggle against the soul-killing tyranny of Nazi Germany. Britain in the answer which she gave through the Marquess of Linlithgow and the Marquess

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of Zetland was unable to indicate any definite time, if ever, within which India would achieve her objective of self-government ; and in the early stages of the war there was even reluctance on the part of the authorities in this country and in England to admit an Indian element, a political element, into the Viceroy's Executive Council. I will not go over the ground which has been covered by me in previous speeches on the constitutional issue in this House. But I will content myself with saying that it was not until after the collapse of France that the notorious August offer was made, and that, as we know definitely, turned down the main demand not only of the Congress but of the Liberal Party also that there should be a National Government in charge of all portfolios at the Centre. All that the Indians were offered by that Declaration in the immediate present was an expanded Council with a larger Indian element. So far as the future is concerned, it was made clear that Britain's obligations—and this is my answer to my friend Sir A. P. Patro—it was made clear that Britain's obligations to this country would not allow her to part with full or effective control over Defence and External Affairs, that the functions of an Indian Dominion would not necessarily correspond with those of the British Dominions and that even this measure of constitutional advance Indians could only have if they were able to agree among themselves (a) as to the character of the body which would form the constitution and (b) as to the nature of the constitution they desired to live under. In other words, the Declaration gave a complete veto to all sectional interests over future constitutional progress. The Declaration, therefore, in our opinion, gave the most direct encouragement to communal intransigence and it became clear to many Indians that Britain was merely using the Muslim League for denying freedom. She has no particular love for the Muslims ; she only wants to utilize them for her own purposes. It was evident that Britain was merely using the Muslim League for the purposes of delaying Indian freedom. The period between the August Declaration and the Cripps Mission was marked by symbolical civil disobedience, expansion of the Executive Council, release of political prisoners, serious—and I want to emphasize this word "serious"—British reverses in the Far East, collapse, moral and military, of Britain in Malaya, Singapore, Burma and a growing feeling in the country that Britain was not in a position to defend this country, that Britain was not proving equal to the task of defending her Empire in India. The entry of the Soviet Union, the unprovoked attack by Japan on the United States and the declaration of China as an ally by Mr. Churchill were factors which were definitely helping Britain but British statesmen were, for one reason or another unwilling to utilize this fund of goodwill which was available in this country. It was in this atmosphere when Burma was almost collapsing that Sir Stafford Cripps, who had a reputation for radicalism, came to this country with an offer which is now known as the Cripps' Offer. The Cripps proposals were divisible into two parts : (1) those relative to the immediate present and (2) those relative to the future. The proposals relating to the future were open to the objection that they were calculated to weaken the forces making for the integrity of this country. I could, by a clear analysis of them, show that they were so devised as to keep India permanently within the British sphere of influence. The demands of the League would have been irreconcilable with the demands of the Indian States and the Indian Union would not have materialized and Britain would have functioned in this country through the Indian States. Even so, Indian political parties with a realism which does them credit were prepared to let the future take care of itself provided in the immediate present power was visibly transferred. The Cripps proposals in regard to the immediate present did not go even as far as the proposals of the Non-Party Conference and Sir Stafford

Cripps made it clear beyond any possibility of doubt that even with the position of the Commander-in-Chief safeguarded, Defence would not be transferred into Indian hands; it would not be transferred even into the servile hands of my friend Sir Firoz Khan Noon. All that he was prepared to do was to put certain secondary functions of the Defence Department into Indian hands and the acceptance by him of Colonel Johnson's formula did not make him alter his plan of keeping Defence effectively in British hands. He made it abundantly plain that even if all the parties agreed, and that means that even if the Muslim League had been willing to come to terms with the Congress, Defence would not be transferred into Indian hands. Therefore it was not the absence of any communal settlement that made him adopt that attitude; it was rather a distrust of Indians that made him take that stand. Is it to be wondered at that these proposals conceived in a spirit of perfect distrust of the people did not rouse any enthusiasm in Indian hearts? If, so argued Indians, Britain is not prepared to trust them in this hour of their and Britain's trial, where is the guarantee that in her hour of triumph she will not forget her pledges to this country? India could not forget that Mr. Churchill had refused to associate himself so far as this country is concerned with the Atlantic Charter and it could not forget that no Allied statesman except Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek had dared to say, one word to Mr. Churchill. India could not forget that neither President Roosevelt nor Mr. Cordell Hull had ever spoken directly to Mr. Churchill, at all events in public about India.

Well, it must not be forgotten that, notwithstanding their many defects, the prospects of the Cripps proposals being accepted were not at one time too bad and actually the negotiations broke down over a question of the conventions that would govern the Viceroy's relationship with the Executive Council. The Congress demanded that the Viceroy should give an assurance that he would not interfere with the decisions of the Executive Council. Sir Stafford Cripps refused as a constitutional jurist to entertain any such proposals as, in his opinion, the Congress proposal was tantamount to the setting up of a dictatorship of the majority community. The question of the proportions that the various communities were to have in the composite government that was then contemplated was not ever discussed with the communities and therefore I do not see how Sir Stafford Cripps could talk of a dictatorship of the majority community. Obviously, therefore, it was wrong to assert that Congress or any Hindu organization was certain to secure majority rule or a majority dictatorship. The Cripps proposals were never put before any joint assembly or gathering of Indians. Mr. Churchill and Sir Stafford Cripps have suddenly discovered that the Congress has no influence. Sir Stafford Cripps, when he came out to this country, made it abundantly plain that the only parties he cared for were the Congress and the Muslim League and I congratulate Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. Churchill on the sudden discovery that the Congress is an organization of little influence in the country. They have also discovered a love for the Indian Members of the Executive Council. At the time the Cripps mission was in this country I was hearing whispers that the Indian Members of the Executive Council were resenting the way in which they were being ignored by Sir Stafford Cripps. Surely, seriously speaking, it was possible, as is admitted even by Professor Coupland, for Sir Stafford Cripps to indicate how normally the new government would operate. It was possible for the Head of the State to say that he would make it a custom to deal with his Council as far as possible as if it were a Cabinet. Professor Coupland had obviously written his book for his American readers, and he wishes them to infer from what he says that Sir Stafford Cripps said anything of this kind. He did not even say that normally, subject to the protection of minorities, the

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Executive Council would be allowed to have its own way. Sir, Professor Coupland says that if such a declaration were made, then to the extent that the Governor General would act normally his position would correspond to that of the British King. No such declaration was made by Sir Stafford Cripps and therefore I am not prepared to assume that if any such assurance had been made by either the Viceroy or by Sir Stafford Cripps or any meeting had been arranged between the Viceroy, Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. Jinnah and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, a settlement would not have been arrived at on the basis of the Viceroy normally accepting the advice of the Cabinet. Therefore, the attempt of Professor Coupland can only be regarded as propaganda for the United States. Then what happened? The Cripps offer was suddenly withdrawn and Sir Stafford for whose leftist views I had respect at one time left in temper for England. He proved to be a bad negotiator. While he was here, he consistently ignored all organizations except the Congress and the Muslim League, and after reaching England his one effort has been to misrepresent India and the nature of the offer he brought out to this country. He has, for example, in his broadcast to the great American people said that the Viceroy's Council is very much like the body which helps and assists the President in administering the United States. This is obviously, and I use these words deliberately, an untrue statement, unworthy of a Member of the British Cabinet. The Governor General is not elected by the Indian nation. He owes no responsibility like the President of the United States to the Indian people. He was once described by one of the greatest of India's Secretaries of State, Lord Morley, as an agent of the Secretary of State, and I think his constitutional position, so far as the Government of India is concerned, remains exactly the same. He and the Government of India are, as an examination of the Act of 1935 will show, under the general direction and control of the Secretary of State, and this control has been described by those who have worked the Indian constitution as real—visible and invisible, but real. The transitional provisions of the Government of India Act have made the position of the Executive Council even worse than it was before the Act of 1919. Law and order today is the sole responsibility of one single individual, the Governor General. Well might Hitler and Mussolini who have at all events party machines to consider envy the position of the Governor General?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM (Bihar and Orissa : Muhammadan) : Hear, hear.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : Before the Act of 1935 the Government of India was responsible for the Indian States. Today, the Governor General, as Crown Representative, has the sole responsibility for these States now. The Ordinance-making power—any number of Ordinances have been made, and we were told by the Law Member the other day that the Government of India had nothing to do with Ordinances—he did not know anything about them—the Ordinance-making power resides with the Governor General. He can now put Ordinances on the Statute-book not only for a period of six months but for an indefinite period, for the period of the war. Even though a number of Ordinances have been issued, while this House has been consulted in regard to the present situation, those Ordinances have not been put before this House or the other House. The Government of India, therefore, is both in law and fact a subordinate branch of His Majesty's Government; and under the law the Governor General can act in the name of the Council with the help of only one Member of the Council. The position, therefore, of Members of the Executive Council, whatever they in their vanity might say—and we Indians are prone to vanity—is no better than that of

glorified Secretaries. In fact, I think the Secretaries are more powerful because, I think, they know more about their departments than the new incumbents. Is it to be wondered at in these circumstances that Indian political parties have refused to associate themselves with an Executive Council which is subordinate to the electorate of another country? The position of the Governor General, let me remind the House, has been further strengthened by the emergency legislation passed by Parliament in 1940. It is no answer to say to Indian political parties that nothing can be indicated at this stage as to the manner in which the Executive Council will work. Personally I agree with the view which was expressed by Lord Samuel in the House of Lords that there ought to be a distinction between the Governor General as the Head of the State and the Prime Minister. The Governor General, he suggested, ought not to be his own Prime Minister. I further agree with the suggestion of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar that the India Office, which is the most reactionary office in the British Empire, should be abolished, and that India should be placed under the charge of the Foreign Office or the Dominions Office. It is important to bear in mind that the Cripps offer did not represent a decision of His Majesty's Government as regards the manner in which the Indian constitution shall be drawn up by Indian political parties. Let me explain this. It merely represented a suggestion by His Majesty's Government for acceptance by Indian political parties. The position, therefore, today is not, as Sir A. P. Patro said, that Britain is committed to full self-government after the war. The position today is that Britain is not committed now or within any definite period to full self-government for this country. It is only committed to giving full opportunity to India to realize her destiny, consistently with her obligations to her numerous creeds, interests and races. It is against this background that the original cry of "Quit India" by the Congress must be judged. "Quit India" is just an answer to the theory of trusteeship and obligation which has been trotted out by Britain. After the failure of the Cripps mission and after it had been made clear by Sir Stafford Cripps that no further initiative would be taken to break the Indian deadlock, the situation rapidly deteriorated. It was clear to every one who followed the proceedings of the All-India Congress Committee at Allahabad that the country was in for stormy days. The Mahatma was writing week in and week out in the *Harijan* that in view of the attitude of the British Government he would not be able to maintain his policy of non-embarrassment of the war effort. The Congress Working Committee at Bombay passed a resolution which, in effect, stated that if India's demand for independence was not conceded, the Congress would resort to mass civil disobedience. Between the 7th July, on which date the resolution was passed by the Working Committee, and the 7th August, on which date the resolution was ratified by the All-India Congress Committee in a modified form—I wish to emphasize these words—in a very much modified form—for, there is no demand for withdrawal of allied troops in the resolution; on the other hand, there is an offer of full co-operation with the war effort in that resolution—what was this wonderful Government consisting of 11 Indians doing? There was a clear indication in the resolution of the 7th August that the Congress was prepared fully to co-operate with the war effort if the principle of independence was conceded. Indeed, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, whom the documents which were seized by the police disclosed to be a cent. per cent. supporter of the United Nations, described the resolution as one of offer of full co-operation with the war effort. He did not wish it to be regarded as an ultimatum. It contemplated certain action in the event of its not being accepted. Why was the suggestion that Mr. Amery should encourage the idea of a round table conference, why was the suggestion that the Viceroy should convene a round table conference, why was..

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the suggestion that the Indian Members, failing the Viceroy, should convene a round table conference, ignored by this wonderful Government of 11 Indians? Why was no effort made during this period of one month to break the deadlock, mobilize reasonable opinion behind the Government and take constructive steps to endow India with a National Government? Why was the Government of India sitting with folded hands? What Government was doing in this period—Government was fairly active—was to represent to the world that Mahatma Gandhi was either pro-Japanese or at all events inclined to make peace with Japan, independently of the United Nations, on dishonourable terms. So far as the notes of the Assistant Secretary of the Congress are concerned, they have been explained by Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and their word is final for their countrymen. But, assuming that there is defeatist talk in the ranks of the Congress, may I ask if this defeatist talk is entirely absent in official circles? I heard one of the highest officers of the land a man occupying a position not inferior to that of the Leader of the House, tell me in Kashmir, just after the collapse of France, that "We won't be able to last this autumn". He thought that defeat was staring England in the face. I disagreed with his estimate of the situation. He met me at Firpo's in Calcutta last September. We reminded each other of that conversation and he said that I had proved to be right. Would my Honourable friend the Leader of the House be prepared to describe him as a fifth columnist or defeatist? If he wishes to know his name, I can give it to him privately and he can verify my facts from him. It is nonsense to say that Indians are either pro-Japanese or defeatists. We have been fighting for our independence. We do not wish to go under a foreign and new imperialism, perhaps more ruthless than British imperialism. The fact is that your prestige in the East has suffered on account of the reverses that you have sustained in the East. We are full of admiration for the heroic and epoch-making stand which our valiant friends of China, that great Eastern country with great possibilities, whose friendship we greatly value, whose friendship is one of our most cherished treasures, has been making. We are full of admiration for the resistance of the brave people of the Soviet Union with whom many of us have shared many ideals. We have nothing but the most genuine admiration for the great American people who are fighting this war with clean hands, who did not get anything out of the last war, and who are combating aggression in the Pacific with great heroism. But you must not blame us if we do not think that Singapore, Tobruk and Rangoon constitute victory. If you think that we would be prepared to make peace with Japan if power is transferred to us, you are entirely mistaken. I have heard many Indians say that rather than fight to the finish, Britain will make peace with the Axis on imperialist terms. I do not share that view. It is, therefore, a tragedy that you have interned Indian leaders who are definitely and wholeheartedly opposed to Axis aggression. You rely on Rai Bahadurs and people of that type. I think it is easier for them to transfer their loyalty, than for people who have an anti-imperialist ideology. It is a tragedy that a large number of people who were willing and eager to help you in putting up a very strong resistance, have had to keep aloof from the war effort on account of the Government attitude. It is nonsense to say that the Congress is fifth columnist or is pro-Axis. A free India would have been able to render the maximum help she was capable of to China, the Soviet Union and other countries. What you have done is to deprive these countries, by your policy, of the maximum help that they could have obtained if you had settled with the Congress and the League. The

paradox of this war is that you can and will win this war if you de-imperialize yourself and assume the moral leadership of a community of free nations, equal in status and functions, one with another. It is India's misfortune, it is Britain's misfortune, that Britain has as her Prime Minister one who is so entirely devoid of imagination, one who is so absolutely racial in his outlook as Mr. Churchill. He has made a speech full of venom against the people of this country. Even the *Times* had to remind him that the Congress was not a negligible factor in Indian politics and such is the arrogance of this statesman that he actually boasts, while fighting a war for freedom, that there are more white troops in this country at this time than at any period in Indian history. It is, therefore, impossible, having regard to this background, for any thinking Indian to support the policy culminating in the arrests of Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress leaders. The Mahatma's offer to talk over matters with the Viceroy before starting civil disobedience was spurned with scorn and I cannot act on the assumption that had the Viceroy met him and had he made an offer which went beyond the Cripps proposals the Mahatma would have been unreasonable. I cannot persuade myself to believe that the Mahatma is anything but a pacifist and pacifists as my old friend Mr. Wilfred Roberts said the other day in the House of Commons often find themselves in difficulties in war time. I cannot agree with the view that the country or the Congress or the Hindu community is pro-Japanese. We have been fighting for our independence, not for the purpose of going under a new imperialism but for the purpose of giving a higher standard of living to our people, for the purpose of giving them a more tolerable mode of existence. Surely the progressive front today is one and indivisible and commonsense ought to teach Government that Indians cannot be so foolish as to wish for the defeat of the progressive front. Therefore what emerges out of all I have been saying is that Government has fired the first shot, that they have taken the initiative and opened the long looked for second front in India and we cannot accept the view that if Government had stayed its hands until it had tried conciliation and definitely failed its position would not have been stronger. I cannot accept the view that it would have been difficult to restore order if Government had delayed action. Popular feeling would in that case have been more favourable to Government than it is today. Reasonable people would have said if Government had tried and failed that Government had gone as far as it could; what more could it do? These Congress folk are unreasonable. That is not what people say today? It is no use saying that you could not negotiate with parties which are threatening direct action. You negotiated with Irishmen, with Griffiths and Cosgrave, while there was open rebellion in Ireland. You negotiated after you had fought with Generals Smuts and Botha; General Smuts is one of your pillars today. You gave responsible government to Canada at a time when Canada was seething with internal disorder. You salute the American flag of independence today with reverence. You speak of George Washington who must have appeared to the statesmen of his days as a rebel as a great American patriot. You negotiate with trade unions and labour organizations which hold out threats of strike and even a general strike and you think it is all right. And it is all right. But you refuse to negotiate with an organization which is definitely anti-Axis and anti-Fascist, which is pro-United Nations and which is prepared to support you if its plea for independence of the country, is recognized and a provisional Government consisting of representatives of all communities formed and power entrusted to this composite Government to frame a machinery for devising the future constitution of India. Why? The reason is obvious. The reason is that you are not prepared to part with the reality of power now or in any foreseeable future. You are not prepared to part with it even if all the communities agree. Your

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policy therefore has led to frustration with all its terrible consequences. While I would have had India adopt a different strategy, the strategy of adjustment and compromise with various interests and groups, I am, howsoever much I may differ from those who have resorted to civil disobedience, at this juncture not prepared to give you and your Government, your wise and patriotic Indians, an atom of support in the policy of mere negation which they have embarked in this country. Neither can I persuade myself that you are not using your influence to divide communities in this country.

Just one word about the minorities. In the speeches and resolutions of the All-India Congress Committee, there was an effort to evolve a constructive policy towards the minorities. The principle that the residuary powers shall reside with the province has been conceded by the Congress. In simple language, the concession of this principle means that the Provinces shall have the status of Sovereign States and that the transfer of power shall proceed from the Provinces to the Centre. The Congress went to the length of stating that it has no objection to power being transferred to the Muslim League, but transfer power in any case. The Mahasabha has taken the sensible line that while it stands for the integrity of India, it would welcome the minorities problem to be settled by the United Nations if it fails to arrive at an agreement with them. For good reasons the United Nations have become interested in India. India is a vital part of their defence system. By taking the stand that the Sabha is prepared to abide by international arbitration, it has definitely proved that it is not a Hindu imperialist organization out to dominate the minorities. Speaking for myself, while I firmly believe in the integrity of the country, I recognize that the unfortunate propaganda of the Muslim League aided and abetted as it has been by Amery & Co. Unlimited has made it essential for us to consider with an open, impartial and even sympathetic mind, the question of self-determination for provinces, rearranged and regrouped in a more intelligible manner than at present. It may be that for the purpose of strengthening the unity of the country which we all desire a new approach to the problem is needed. Hindus should realize and Muhammadans should realize that the British Government is merely out to exploit our differences. Nationalism cannot at one and the same time fight on all fronts and there is no humiliation in negotiating with one's own countrymen. Both Hindus and Muslims are the inheritors of ancient cultures and it ought to be a matter of shame for them that they are a subject people without any international status. Therefore it is in the friendliest spirit possible that I make the suggestion that an earnest effort should be made to compose our differences and that failing that the United Nations should intervene and arbitrate so far as this country is concerned. It is impossible for any one to look at the suggestion that the fate of the Provinces should be decided by a communal referendum. The position therefore as it has crystallized itself is that all parties are agreed that there should be freedom. We all want a declaration of freedom now. I do not see why it cannot be made when an Anglo-French Union could be proposed at the time when France was collapsing, why can't you make a declaration of freedom now, here? We must be given a National Government. For enabling the problem to be considered in a fresh light, it is necessary that Government should release the Congress leaders, but if it is not going to release them—it has not allowed the Mahasabha leaders nor that good liberal-hearted Englishman, the Metropolitan of India, a truly Christian Englishman, to visit the Mahatma—why is it not possible for it to negotiate with the Mahasabha and the Muslim League? Why cannot a National Government composed of representatives of these organizations capable of giving full

support to the war effort be formed? It must be left to this new Government to release the Congress leaders and negotiate with them. The present state of affairs is intolerable. You gave the Communal Award! Why cannot you seek the aid of the United Nations to give a new award if we fail to arrive at a settlement? The feeling in the public is that Indian Members are not pulling their full weight in the Council and mere Indianization will satisfy no one. Indeed I sometimes think that Indianization unaccompanied—and this will interest my friend the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam—I sometimes think that Indianization unaccompanied by popular control, either of this House or of organizations, is at times a curse.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Hear, hear.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: Witness, for example, the activities of the Indian Embassy at Washington today. The question is not, therefore, one of Indianization but of the powers the Indian Members will enjoy and of the control either of organizations or of the Legislatures under which they will work. This may be a jaded Legislature but the present House of Commons is also a jaded Legislature.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Not this House, Sir. There is no restriction yet.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: It is unfortunate that the American Press has chosen to criticize us so freely. I am not sure why they are doing this. We have not had some news from America for some time. No statesman in charge of American affairs has considered it necessary to say one word of encouragement, one word of sympathy, to the Indian people. We have looked at that great country for support. We know its heart is sound and it will not fail us.

Sir, for the reasons which I have given I would loathe myself, detest myself, if I were to give an atom of support to this Government. The responsibility for maintaining order is not mine; the remedy for the present situation is not in my hands. I am not even being consulted in regard to the Ordinances which are being promulgated by the Governor General; they have not come before this House. Therefore, Sir, for these reasons I am not prepared to give any support to a policy of mere negation, on which the British Government has embarked. It may have the support of eleven wise and patriotic Indians but let them remember that these wise and patriotic Indians are not pulling any weight in their own country.

COLONEL THE HONOURABLE SIR HISSAMUDDIN BAHADUR (Nominated Non-Official): Mr. President, Sir, the Leader of the House whom I accord a cordial welcome has delivered a speech which I am sure will command general support and acquiescence.

The Motion before us has a significance of its own, as it shows a readiness on the part of Government to take the House into their confidence and to afford, on its own initiative, an early opportunity to express its views on the present political situation in the country.

I have heard with interest and attention the different shades of opinions and angles of vision put forward by Honourable Members. Sir, we are passing through very critical and serious phases of the world war and war clouds are gathering very close to us. For the safety of our country it behoves us to do

[Colonel Sir Hisamuddin Bahadur.]

nothing likely to hurt the cause of Allied Nations or obstruct efficient prosecution of the war. In my opinion no useful purpose would be served by blaming and accusing each other and thereby embittering feelings which lead us nowhere. Let us imbibe the spirit of forgive and forget. Let us appreciate and face the realities of the situation.

His Excellency Lord Linlithgow and his Honourable Executive Councillors, the majority of whom are Indians, deserve to be congratulated for the prompt and swift measures taken by them to preserve law and order in the country, by temporarily detaining the leaders and dealing effectively with the unruly mobs. As they say in Persian:—

“ Sar-i-chaama shayed griftan ba mil
Chū purshud na shayed guzash tun ba pil ”.

The movement with which we are faced is of a most sinister and subversive character. The manifold acts of sabotage, destroying and looting of public property, burning of post and telegraph offices, railway stations, derailments, tampering with means of communications in the country, burning of police stations and murdering loyal public servants, will not bring about that freedom and independence which the Congress professes to seek to achieve. In fact such acts disgrace the sacred name of freedom. My sympathies go out to the innocent victims of the unruly mobs.

Thank God, the present movement has not affected in the least the loyalty of the classes who are the backbone of the army; recruitment is going on with increased tempo and I can personally vouch for this fact, as I have myself enlisted about 3,000 recruits, who are coming forward willingly.

Sir, I read in the papers the other day that an increase is contemplated in the pay of soldiers in the Indian Army. To me an old soldier, with 41 years connection with the army, this is great news indeed. It has been my long-cherished desire that the pay of Indian soldiers should be substantially raised. I firmly hope that this happy consummation will be achieved by the efforts of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief.

Thanks to the statesmanship and prudence of Mr. Jinnah and other prominent leaders the 90 millions of Mussalmans have kept aloof from the present movement, otherwise the consequences would have been too disastrous. The Government should be grateful to the Mussalmans not only in words but in graceful deeds too.

In regard to the imposition of collective fines at certain places connected with the present movement, I would request the Government to penalize only those who were and are responsible for misdeeds and exempt the innocent Mussalmans who remained peaceful, calm and loyal.

It will not be out of place to mention that certain Provinces have kept up the loyal tradition at this critical juncture. The North West Frontier Province has been conspicuous in maintaining law and order under the inspiring leadership of His Excellency Sir George Cunningham whose statesmanship and noble deeds have won the admiration of all, and whom I have had the privilege of knowing personally since he was Private Secretary to Lord Irwin—now Lord Halifax. Sir George has a unique influence on all classes and clans in the Frontier, and they would do anything for him. The Punjab has also maintained its law and order wonderfully well, which I must say, is all due to the influential personality of Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan.

The Indian States, which comprise one-third of India, have been immune from the repercussions of the Congress movement ; and the respective Ruling Princes have handled their respective situations admirably well.

To my dear countrymen, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and all, I had appealed in a Press statement on the 21st July, 1942, *i.e.* soon after the resolution of the All-India Congress Working Committee and I take this opportunity to appeal again for co-operation, mutual tolerance, and forbearance, when the enemy is knocking at our gates. The momentary lull in the activities of the Japanese on our border is due to their being engaged in consolidating their positions in the occupied countries, making preparations and reorganizing their forces. We should not only get ready to defend our country but to strike them in their country and dislodge them from the occupied countries. Their attack must be a very surprising one, and we should not be taken unprepared and unaware as before. Let us be up and doing and contribute in men, money and material to the Allied cause and win this war—a war of good against evil, a war of justice against oppression, a war of freedom against slavery and above all a war to uproot the evils of Nazism from the surface of this world and to uphold the structure of a liberal and humane civilization.

I am confident that at the victorious end of the war India will get her coveted freedom and emerge as an equal partner in the comity of free and democratic Nations of the world.

Sir, I support the Motion.

The Council then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Wednesday, the 23rd September, 1942.
