

Thursday, 9th November, 1944

COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

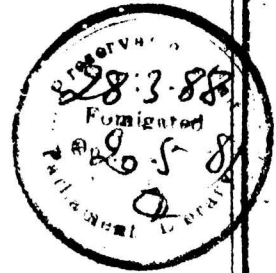
VOLUME II, 1944

(8th to 21st November, 1944)

SEVENTEENTH SESSION

OF THE

FOURTH COUNCIL OF STATE, 1944



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COUNCIL OF STATE

Thursday, 9th November, 1944

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:

Lt.-Colonel Albert Cyril Beynon (Nominated Official).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

BUDGET SPEECH OF THE CHANCELLOR OF THE BRITISH EXCHEQUER REGARDING THE INCREASE OF ENGLAND'S EXPORT.

16. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Has the attention of Government been drawn to the following passage in the Budget speech of the Chancellor of the British Exchequer Sir John Anderson, in the House of Commons on or about the 25th April, last.

"It would be indispensable for Britain to increase her export. Post War plans were based on the assumption that Britain would be able to import the raw materials necessary for active employment and sufficient food to maintain a standard at least a little better than she enjoyed now" ?

Will Government state what steps they have taken or propose to take that in their Post War Planning Scheme the increase in Britain's export and the import of raw materials referred to in Sir John Anderson's speech, will not be allowed to take place at the expense of India and that heavy industries will not be hampered by Britain's own needs and requirements ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. RAM CHANDRA: Yes. The quotation is however not quite exact. As regards the second part of the question the Honourable Member may rest assured that in the formulation of a post-war commercial policy Government will always have in the forefront how the economic interests of India can best be served.

DETENTION OF INDIAN SEAMEN AT ELLIS ISLAND IN U. S. A.

17. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Is it a fact that about a dozen Indian seamen are or were till recently kept in the camp of detention known as Ellis Island, U. S. A. ? Have Government made an enquiry and will they state the facts of the case and the steps if any, taken in connection with their release ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. RAM CHANDRA: The Agent General has reported that only one Indian seaman is at present under detention in U. S. A. If an Indian seaman, whose presence in the States is illegal, accepts shore employment, he is liable to apprehension by the U.S.A. Immigration Authorities. Information is then sent promptly to the British Consulate, who depute a representative to visit the seaman. If the seaman is ready to reship, employment is sought for him ; and if employment cannot be found within a reasonable time, he is paroled to the British Consulate General and set at liberty. If he is unwilling to reship, he is held in detention by the Immigration Authorities until arrangements are made for his removal from the country. The position of Indian seamen in this respect is exactly the same as that of other foreign seamen.

APPOINTMENT OF A LADY CLERK IN THE FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

18. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to an advertisement in the *Hindustan Times*, dated the 28th May, 1944 (Dak edition), inviting applications from Europeans and Anglo Indians for the post of lady clerk in the office of the Federal Public Service Commission, Simla ?

(b) Why was the post reserved for ladies only and why qualified Indian ladies were excluded ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN : (a) Yes.

(b) The post in question is in the Commission's Confidential Branch which is staffed entirely by ladies. One of the ladies is in charge of the Branch and all work in the same room. It would not therefore be practicable to employ a man in this Branch. The Commission's reason for advertising only for a European or Anglo-Indian was that it is necessary, in the interests of the staff as well as in the public interest, that there should be as little contact as possible between this Branch and potential candidates for examinations.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Are Anglo-Indians ineligible for appointments under the Public Service Commission ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN : I said in my reply :—

“ The Commission's reason for advertising only for a European or Anglo-Indian was that it is necessary, in the interests of the staff as well as in the public interest, that there should be as little contact as possible between this Branch and potential candidates for examinations.”

Anglo-Indians and Europeans are eligible.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : Are there any posts reserved for Indian ladies ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN : To avoid further heat on this matter, I give this assurance that such advertisements will not be published in future, and these appointments will be open to Indians.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Does “ Indians ” include Muslims as well ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN : Of course.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : What an extraordinary question !

SHOOTING BY THE GERMAN OF ESCAPED OFFICERS FROM STALLAG CAMP.

19. **THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH :** Are Government aware that as stated by Mr. Anthony Eden, Foreign Secretary, in the House of Commons, on or about the 19th May, 47 officers of the Dominion, R. A. F. and Allied forces had been shot by the Germans after a mass escape from Stallag Camp ? Have Government ascertained whether there were Indians also who were shot, if so, how many ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON : Yes, none of the officers shot was Indian.

NUMBER OF INDIANS IN ALSACE LORRAINE PRISONERS' CAMP.

20. **THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH :** Will Government state whether there were Indians also among the Allied prisoners of war, who escaped in the confusion which followed the air raid on Mulhouse in Alsace Lorraine prisoners' camps in that area ? If so, how many ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON : Government have no information about this air raid or its effects.

DEATH OF PRISONERS OF WAR NEAR BREMEN.

21. **THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH :** Will Government state the result of enquiries made regarding Stockholm reports that about 2,700 Allied Prisoners of War have died in suspicious circumstances in an unregistered prisoner of war camp near Bremen, and that 27 British and Dominion prisoners have been shot at Gradenz, on the Vistula ? Were there Indian prisoners also ; and if so, how many ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON : Enquiries made go to show that the reports are without foundation.

ESTABLISHMENT OF “ QUARTER MASTER BUTCHERY ” FOR AMERICAN SOLDIERS.

22. **THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH :** (a) Is it a fact that a “ Quarter Master Butchery ” has been established in India by the United States Army to provide fresh meat for American soldiers ? If so, where is this butchery established ; and how much meat is it likely to produce ?

(b) Will Government state whether the establishment of the above butchery is not likely to result in the increased slaughter of cattle in India ?

(c) What are the categories of cattle which are slaughtered in this butchery ?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF : (a) The answer to the first part is in the negative. The latter part does not therefore arise.
(b) and (c). Do not arise.

REPATRIATION OF INDIAN INTERNEES IN GERMANY SINCE THE OUTBREAK OF WAR.

23. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : How many Indian internees in Germany have so far been repatriated since the outbreak of the War ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN : Since the outbreak of the war 4 Indian civilians have been repatriated to the United Kingdom from Germany or German occupied Europe but these were not all interned. Two of them are still in the United Kingdom. No information is available regarding Indian civilians who may have returned through neutral countries.

CUSTOMS EXAMINATION AT DHANUSHKODI OF PASSENGERS FOR CEYLON.

24. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : (a) Have Government made any enquiry relating to the allegation of severity of the Indian Customs Examination at Dhanushkodi of passengers going to Ceylon ?

(b) Is it a fact that passengers are forced to leave behind or sell personal luggage, as custom examiners refuse to allow these to be taken to Ceylon ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR-CYRIL JONES : (a) Yes. The Export Trade Control Regulations have recently been tightened up, as it was observed that certain goods which were in short supply in India were being exported to Ceylon where the shortage was even greater. This, and the discovery of a number of attempts by passengers to export gold in the form of crude jewellery concealed in their baggage or on their persons, naturally led to a more thorough Customs examination at Dhanushkodi. Steps have, however, been taken by Government to mitigate, as far as possible, inconvenience caused to passengers.

(b) The Export Trade Control Regulations permit the export of *bona fide* baggage without licence and consequently no passenger is required to leave behind any article genuinely forming part of his personal equipment. If a passenger desires to take with him any other article, he may do so if he has duly obtained an export licence therefor. It is only when a passenger attempts to take with him an article for which he has not obtained a licence, and which is not part of his *bona fide* baggage, that he is required to leave it behind at Dhanushkodi.

AMOUNT OF INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION FIXED FOR THE U. N. R. R. A.

25. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Will Government state the amount of contribution of India as finally fixed to the U. N. R. R. A. ? How much of it has been paid and how much is due ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. RAM CHANDRA : The amount of India's contribution has not yet been fixed. Only a sum of 400,000 dollars has been paid as India's share of the administrative expenses.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Was this amount sanctioned by the Legislature or by the Finance Committee ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. RAM CHANDRA : No, Sir ; but India having signed the agreement, it was assumed that the Legislature would agree to some contribution which would certainly not be less than \$400,000.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Will the Honourable Member enlighten us why it was not submitted to the recent meeting of the Finance Committee ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. RAM CHANDRA : The principle of adherence to the agreement had already been accepted by the Legislative Assembly, and as payment had to be made soon, it was not possible to bring the matter up before the Legislature.

SUPPLY OF WOOLLEN GOODS FOR CIVILIAN NEEDS.

26. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Will Government state what steps they have taken to supply the civilian needs for woollen goods (a) by increased release of local production and imports from outside ; (b) have they arranged for wool imports from Australia and New Zealand ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR AKBAR HYDARI : (a) Before the beginning of this year it was decided that in 1944 25 per cent. of India's woollen manufacturing capacity should be released from Defence requirements for civilian needs. Government hope to release a considerably larger percentage in 1945. Government have also arranged for substantial imports of manufactured woollen goods. For example, for the six months ending June 1945 they are hoping to arrange the import of 675 tons.

(b) Yes, Government have arranged for wool imports from Australia and New Zealand to meet the requirements of Indian manufacturers for the production of woollen goods for the civil population. Wool imports for this purpose have been given the same degree of priority as wool imports for Defence Service requirements.

IMPORT OF ALUMINIUM AND EGGS FROM U. S. A.

27. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Are Government aware that there is a glut of aluminium and eggs in U. S. A. and have they taken any steps to import these for civilian and defence requirements? If not, why not?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : Government are aware that there has been a change in the supply position of aluminium and that supplies are now available from North America. Arrangements have already been made to import into India 1,320 tons of virgin aluminium ingot for Government orders, while import licences for 500 tons of sheets and circles and 250 tons of ingot have been issued for civil consumption. Government have not yet come to any conclusion regarding the need for import of aluminium for civil purposes in 1945.

Government are not officially aware of a glut of eggs in the United States of America but have seen reports to that effect and made enquiries to ascertain if it exists and if so whether any exports for India could be obtained.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Is there any plant for dehydration of eggs in India?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : There is a small factory in Calcutta, which is not under Government control at present.

EXPORT OF RICE FROM BIHAR TO U. P.

28. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Will Government give the following facts about recent export of rice from Bihar to U. P. or other provinces :—

- (a) Is Bihar a deficit or surplus rice area?
- (b) What was the total quantity and price?
- (c) Who were the sellers?
- (d) Was Bihar Government consulted and did it sanction or permit the export?
- (e) Who was the Regional Officer sanctioning this export?
- (f) Is it a fact that Bihar Government had rejected the stuff as damaged?
- (g) Has U. P. Government found the stuff good? If so, has it been sold?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : (a) Normally deficit.

(b) 2,829 maunds to Western India States; price not known.

(c) Messrs. Jutharam Ramswarup of Bairaginia.

(d) Yes.

(e) Regional Grain Supply Officer, Motihari.

(f) Yes.

(g) It was not sent to the U. P.

PRICES OF *Atta*, *Maida* AND WHEAT.

29 THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Will Government give the following information about *atta* and *maida* (wheat flours) and wheat :—

(a) The price at Provincial Headquarters on the first or last day of each quarter of 1943, and 1944?

(b) The reason for greater difference in prices at places where they exist?

(c) Whether import from the Punjab or U. P. is permitted, if not, the dates from which this has been banned?

(d) The price of *maida* at Calcutta which led to the appointment of Enquiry Committee and the cost as found by the Committee?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : (a) A Statement is placed on the table of the House, giving such information as is readily available.

(b) In so far as the figures indicate a tendency for prices to fall in the recent months it is considered that the main factors are the building up of Provincial Stocks, improved procurement and rationing machinery, Price Control, the assurance of imports and the favourable war news.

(c) Exports of wheat and wheat products from surplus areas to deficit areas are permitted only in accordance with a plan issued by the Central Government under the plan in force at present (Rabi Plan from May 1944 to April 1945), the Punjab has an export quota of wheat and wheat products, while the U. P. has no such quota.

(d) The price of *Maida* prevailing in Calcutta at the time of the appointment of the Committee of Inquiry by the Government of India was Rs. 19 per maund *ex-mill* and Rs. 20 per maund retail. As regards the second part of the question, attention is invited to the Government of India's Resolution No. F-10 (1)-Secy/43, dated the 26th of July 1944 published in the Government of India Gazette, dated the 29th July 1944.

Statement showing wholesale prices of Wheat, Atta and Maida at Provincial Headquarters in each quarter of 1943 and 1944. (In Rupees per Maund)

Centre. 1	End of March.		End of June.		End of September		End of December.	
	1943	1944	1943	1944	1943	1944	1943	1944.
	2	3.	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Rs. A. P.		Rs. A. P.		Rs. A. P.		Rs. A. P.	
Peshawar	6 13 9	11 4 0	8 6 1	10 0 0	10 13 9	10 0 0	11 6 10	...
Lahore	9 0 0	9 4 0	9 8 0	8 12 0	10 14 0	9 13 3	10 10 0	...
Karachi	No sale.	7 11 0	7 11 0	10 0 0	7 11 0	10 0 0	7 11 0	...
Delhi	10 5 3	10 8 0	10 8 0	10 1 6	11 10 0	10 1 6	11 4 0	...
Lucknow	11 8 0	11 7 0	14 8 0	11 10 2	14 8 0	12 4 11	12 5 0	...
Cuttack	...	14 10 8	...	12 6 1	14 3 0	8 8 0	14 11 0	...
Patna	10 0 0	15 12 0	18 13 0	13 0 0	17 8 0	14 0 0	13 4 0	...
Calcutta	28 0 0 to 80 0 0	10 7 0 to (a) 23 0 0	10 7 0 to (a) 10 7 0	12 12 0 to (a) 10 7 0	10 7 0 to (a) 10 7 0	11 8 0 to (a) 11 8 0	14 0 0 to (a) 11 8 0	...
Shillong	...	NOT AVAILABLE.	...	...	...	...	...	...
Madras	...	14 14 3	12 0 0	14 14 3	14 4 6	8 4 8	13 8 10	...
Bombay	13 0 0 (Retail).	11 8 0	13 1 0	11 8 0	13 1 0	11 8 0	11 8 0	...
Nagpur	12 1 0	18 9 2 (b)	19 15 0	13 12 1 (b)	14 1 0 (b) & (M)	11 3 9 (b)	13 9 3 (b) & (M)	...
WHEAT								
ATTA								
Peshawar	NOT AVAILABLE.							
Lahore	10 0 0	9 4 0	10 8 0	9 6 12	0 0	...	10 15 0	...
Karachi (Chakki atta)	8 4 9 (a) (Retail)	8 11 0 (a)	8 8 0	11 6 10 (a)	8 3 0 (c)	11 6 10 (Retail)	8 11 0 (a)	...
Delhi	11 2 0	12 4 6	11 8 0	10 14 9	9 12 8 0	10 14 9	12 4 0	...
Lucknow	12 10 0	12 8 0	15 12 0	12 5 0	16 0 0	14 0 0	12 8 0	...
Cuttack	...	18 5 6	...	14 1 6	...	12 0 2	...	...
Patna	12 4 0	18 0 0	...	16 12 0	20 8 0	14 4 0	19 12 0	...
Calcutta	...	11 8 0 (Ex-Mill) (a)	19 0 0 (Ex-Mill)	11 8 0	15 0 0 (Ex-Mill) (a)	11 8 0 (Ex-Mill) (a)	14 0 0 (Ex-Mill) (a)	...
Shillong	NOT AVAILABLE.							
Madras	NOT AVAILABLE.							
Bombay	11 15 5	12 15 6 (d)	15 8 11 (e)	13 13 8	15 8 11 (e)	13 13 8	13 14 6 (e)	...
Nagpur	NOT AVAILABLE.							
MAIDA								
Peshawar	NOT AVAILABLE							
Lahore (c)	18 0 0	16 12 0	16 8 0	16 4 0	15 8 0	...	17 10 0	...
Karachi (f)	13 6 11	11 0 4	11 0 4	15 0 0	11 0 4	15 0 0	11 0 4	...
Delhi	16 8 0	15 5 0	15 4 0	14 10 6	15 4 0	14 10 6	15 0 0	...
Lucknow (c)	...	24 0 0	...	19 0 8	...	21 0 0	21 0 0	...
Cuttack	...	23 12 10	...	19 0 8	...	17 1 10	19 4 7	...
Patna	16 1 0	24 0 0	...	22 12 0	25 0 0	21 4 0	25 0 0	...
Calcutta	8 12 0	14 8 0	19 0 0	14 0 0	19 0 0	14 0 0	19 0 0	...
Shillong	NOT AVAILABLE.							
Madras (g)	19 6 3	17 10 0	18 0 0	18 14 0	18 6 0	17 8 0	18 6 0	...
Bombay	14 4 5	19 7 0	...	...	...	...	19 1 0	...
Nagpur	NOT AVAILABLE.							

(a) Controlled. (b) Represents price in Government shops. (c) Taken from Messrs. Owen Robert Reports. (d) Bar wheat flour. (e) Whole meal wheat flour. (f) Household flour. (g) Wheat flour. (M) Medium.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : What was the price fixed in this notification.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : This notification did not refer to the price of *maida*, but it stated that the price of wheat supplied to millers should be fixed at Rs. 10-7-0 a maund, and that the price should be revised every quarter or every six months to see whether that price should be retained.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Are Government aware that Patna price is very high as compared to Lucknow as well as Calcutta, and what steps do Government propose to take in the matter ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : Patna price is very high, but the Government of India have supplied the Government of Bihar with whatever they have asked for by way of wheat, and it is now for them to make a proper distribution.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Will the Honourable Member enlighten us as regards prices in Patna and Calcutta ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : The price of *maida* in Calcutta is in the region of Rs. 14 and in Patna it is about Rs. 25.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Do Government regard this as a healthy state and does not call for any inquiry by the Food Department ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : The Government of India are prepared to ask the Provincial Government why the price in Patna is high.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Is it due to the fact that a monopoly has been given to certain mills for producing *maida*, and no import is allowed from any other place ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : I cannot say what the factors are. There is some difficulty in sending *maida* to provinces, because if you extract *maida* from *attah*, what remains is not whole meal, and people object to taking it. Therefore, it is not always possible to supply *maida* from surplus provinces.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : How has the price been brought down in Calcutta from Rs. 19 to Rs. 14, while it cannot be brought down from Rs. 25 in Patna ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : It sometimes happens that the price of *maida* which is consumed by the more well-to-do classes is kept high in order to sell *attah* to the lower classes at a lower price.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : What is the price today, Sir ? Is it cheaper in Patna than in Calcutta ? I doubt.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : I am sorry, Sir, I must ask for notice.

RESOLUTION *RE* TEMPORARY WITHHOLDING OF A PART OF THE PAY OF ALL PERSONS IN THE MILITARY SERVICE

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS (Nominated Non-official) : Sir the Resolution that I get to move reads as follows :—

“This Council recommends to the Governor-General in Council the desirability of withholding one-third of the monthly pay of the combatant, non-combatant and other services, and paying after demobilisation, such withheld amounts in monthly instalments extending over a period of three years.”

Just before I left Madras I got a wire from the War Department asking whether my Resolution refers only to Defence Services or to Civil Services also. I thought my resolution was clear, which states that after demobilisation the men should be paid in monthly instalments. Sir, my Resolution is confined to those who have been recruited on account of the war, not only for combatant, non-combatant and other services, but for labour corps and other corps for service during the war. My object in bringing forward this Resolution is that that the persons who have been recruited for these services should not be left without any help as soon as they are demobilised. Most of these people have been drawn from the lower ranks of society, and if they

are sent away to their homes without any chance of their getting monthly allowances, their condition will be very pitiable. They have been accustomed at least for some years to regular hours, good food and other amenities of life. They get cigarettes, cinema shows and all sorts of other things. It would be difficult for them to adjust themselves to village life. They have been drawn from all classes of village people, artisans, coolies, peasants owning small pieces of land,—mostly labourers. I am thinking especially of people who have been drawn from the Madras Presidency. I am not sure what the exact figures of their number are. I have put down a number of questions on the subject but they have not yet come up for answering before this Council. But I take it that the combatant services number about 2 million,—I take my figures from the newspaper reports—and that the non-combatant services, that is to say, labour corps, and other services, will number about 1 million. From the Madras Presidency alone at least half a million have gone up for these services. If they are sent away as soon as the order to cease fire is made, what will happen to them? The war has already lasted five years and if Mr. Churchill's estimate is correct, the war in Europe will be over some time next year, either by summer or a little later. He said also in the House of Commons that the war in the East, *i. e.*, the war against Japan, will take at least 18 months thereafter to finish. Therefore, making a rough calculation, we may take it that the war will continue not only in 1945 but also in 1946 and 1947 and demobilisation will take place, we will say, some time in 1948. This is only a rough estimate. The demobilisation itself won't be over in a day or two. Most of these men have gone to Arakan, the Middle East and so on. Their being sent home will depend on the facilities which can be afforded for transport and so on. We will take it that for nearly 10 years these people have been well fed, well clothed and well looked after. Do you expect these people, as soon as they are sent home, to take to the plough or draw rickshaws or drive tongas or jutkas as we call them and other kinds of manual labour? Human nature will not adjust itself at once to these difficult circumstances. They have enjoyed the luxury of civilised life for some time—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Will that not be the same condition in which the rest of the communities will be placed?

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS: No, Sir. They have been suffering all these years and they will continue to suffer. But these people have had a good living and they won't adjust themselves to the conditions now prevailing. I speak at least for Madras. The poor people there are suffering actually. There is want of food. On the West Coast, people are actually starving. But these people have not been starving. With due respect to you, Sir, I think that these people won't adjust themselves to the conditions prevailing now unless they are accustomed to those conditions for some time. I therefore suggest that a portion of the pay should be withheld,—I suggest one-third—and it should be paid back in instalments during the course of three years by which time they will be able to adjust themselves to the conditions which are now prevailing in the villages.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Will they agree to this arrangement?

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS: Whether they agree or not Government has to do it. It should not be left to their choice. They may say, "Pay the whole money" and then they may go and spend it on some thing or other—go on pilgrimage or do other things. It is for us to see what is good for them, in spite of their wishes. I consider this as a part of the war effort. We are doing so much for the war effort, and this also be a part of the war effort.—Government should not grudge the duty of looking after these men in spite of themselves. Government may say, "We have provided so many ways of saving money; there is the war loan and other loans." But we must consider what the nature of the people is. They are not at all thrifty; they are not at all careful. They do not take the trouble to provide against a rainy day. You must consider human nature as it is. There is no use of saying, "Do this and do that". When these people are sent back home I submit that they will find themselves without work, without the means of maintenance, and the result will be that they will starve. We might be asked what they have been doing with their money. Most of these have sent the money to their fathers, mothers and wives. Very probably these people have spent the money.

[Sir Devid Devadoss.]

People are not thrifty. I have to confess that. We must take human nature as we see it. There is no use of saying, "You should have done this or that". These people are improvident, unthrifty and have been spending their money. Therefore, in order to prevent future trouble and danger to society when they are idle and therefore hungry, they will take to crime and do all sorts of things—I am putting forward this proposition. They may be very good material for political agitators. They might say to them, "You fought for the Government and this is the way in which you are being treated." There will be discontent and trouble in the country. What I submit is that Government should take steps now, before it is too late, to see that these people are not allowed to go back home without proper means of maintenance. I do not say that one-third is sacrosanct. Government might do whatever they think proper. My only point is that people should not be left without some means of maintenance; whether it be one-third or any other proportion, that can be deducted now and paid in the course of three years. Until they adjust themselves to the surroundings of village life, i.e., at least for three years, they should have something to fall back upon. Otherwise there will be trouble in the country. Government may say they are going to give them land. It is all very well to talk of it in this Honourable House, but what are the facts? Supposing a man is given 2 acres of land. If it is virgin soil it will cost at least Rs. 100 an acre to make it cultivable. In Madras we have got this difficulty. Red tapism is rampant there. Even supposing the Government orders 2 acres of land to be given to a person, it will take at least six months for that person to be put in possession of it. The Collector will order the Deputy Collector or the Divisional Officer to go and inspect the place. He will direct the Thasildar, the Thasildar will direct the Revenue Inspector and the Revenue Inspector will direct the Karnam, who is the village accountant. The Karnam won't move unless his hands are greased. All this process will take at least 6 months. You cannot by publishing an order in the Gazette give a piece of land to people. It will take a long time. Supposing he is able to get the land in the beginning of January. He must first of all find plough bulls to plough it. Plough bulls are now sold at an increased price of 600 per cent. What used to be had for Rs. 50 or Rs. 60 you cannot get now for less than Rs. 300. Then he will have to find seed grain and manure. Then he will have to find labour. Labour is very difficult to obtain in the South. Then, after all these things are done he will have to wait at least 5 or 6 months before the crop is ready for harvest. For harvesting also labour is required. During all this time how is he to live? If he has a family, how are they to live? To say that we are going to give land would not solve the situation. That is why I submit that Government should take steps to see that these people are in a position to maintain themselves for at least 3 years till they adjust themselves to the conditions in which they were before they went to join the services. My fear is that if these people who are now accustomed to a good life are idle and become hungry, they will take to crime. Some of us may remember what happened soon after the last war. Even in England where things could be had easily—Mr. Lloyd George said that they were all heroes—what did the heroes begin to do? They snatched hand-bags; they did a lot of things which they would not have done if they had not been hungry. Therefore these people in the villages will take to crime and other things. They may take to rioting. Government may say "we will shoot them down." What an irony that these people who were prepared to give up their lives for the empire should be shot down because they cried for food?

I do not want to take up the time of the House with repeating myself. What I do say is that these people should be allowed some means of maintenance till they adjust themselves to the surroundings in which they would find themselves. They must adjust themselves to the conditions in which they were before they got recruited. With these few words I recommend the Resolution for the acceptance of the Council.

THE HONOURABLE SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON (Defence Member): Sir, I think before the discussion begins I had better give a few facts to the House so that they can comment all the more easily. As a matter of fact, this Resolution pertains to the War Department and I am sure that my colleague the War Member will deal with it later on. But in his speech the Mover referred to the demobilization of the

soldier and most of his speech concerned with the condition of the soldier after he has left the army and what is going to happen to him in the village. Demobilization and after care of the demobilized soldier is a responsibility of the Defence Department.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I wish you had taken this objection before-hand. I would have probably stopped the Honourable Member.

THE HONOURABLE SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON : I feel that the House would like to know a few facts with regard to this. I am grateful to the Honourable Member for having shown this interest in the Indian soldier after his demobilization from the army. Perhaps the members are aware that the pay of the soldier was not long ago raised by Rs. 2 a month from Rs. 16 to Rs. 18. In addition he receives Rs. 3 deferred pay. The soldier is not receiving that Rs. 3 a month, but it is accumulating to his credit in the army and when he retires he will get that money in a lump sum. In addition to that the Government of India are putting aside into a fund about Rs. 2 a month per soldier. But this fund cannot be spent by way of distribution amongst the various soldiers who are demobilized. This fund, which amounts to about Rs. 7 crores now and may later on go up to Rs. 10 or Rs. 12 crores, will be spent in the best interests of the army as a whole. Therefore that is not going to be distributed. But the Rs. 3 a month which is deferred pay will be handed over to each soldier when he is demobilized at the end of the war by way of a lump sum, so that when he goes home he can either buy dowery for a wife for himself or build a house for himself or start a trade or do any kind of thing that pleases him. It is his money. The objection to stopping this money from being handed over to him all at once is this. If you say that this money will be paid to him in monthly instalments spread over 3 years, then every month the poor fellow will have to go to the post office to receive his money order and sometimes the babu in the Regimental Headquarters will forget to send his money order and he will be making those journeys for nothing. Then there are mistakes made in the money orders. I know of cases where men in the Punjab had to walk 20 or 30 miles to a post office in order to get their pensions after they had retired from the army. When a man has been waiting and earning this money for so many years during the war and then you give him this money by dribblets, it is really not giving him at all. You might as well take it away from him. Therefore I feel that it will be very undesirable not to let the money be given to the man who has earned it during war-time all in a lump sum. It will be a very grave responsibility on the part of Government to have to disburse this money by monthly instalments spread over 3 years. But if there is any soldier who wishes not to spend this money immediately, he can keep it in a savings bank account which is open to all the soldiers in the army. But the suggestion here goes a little further. The Honourable Mover has suggested that we ought to stop one-third of his pay. That I think will be a great disaster to every low paid man in the army, whether he is a clerk or a soldier. The Honourable Member himself mentioned the price of something which had risen from Rs. 10 or Rs. 15 to Rs. 60. We all know that the price of wheat has gone up from Rs. 2 to Rs. 8, 4 times. Cloth has gone up 4 times. Most of these soldiers and clerks send money to their wives and dependants. If a man is getting Rs. 18 and if you take away Rs. 6, how is his wife going to live in the village when the price of wheat has gone up 4 times? We shall be creating a hardship. It is much easier for a man getting Rs. 3,000 to lose Rs. 1,000 a month and live on Rs. 2,000. To ask a man getting Rs. 30 or Rs. 40 or Rs. 50 a month to give up one-third is going to create great discontent among the services. Therefore I would request the Honourable Member not to press this Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Would not the recruitment in future be affected by this?

THE HONOURABLE SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON : Definitely, because the low-paid man likes to feel the money in his hand every month and what does not come in to his hand he does not consider as his own. Even with regard to deferred pay he says God knows whether he will get it or not. This will have a very bad effect on the low-paid services to stop one-third or even a lesser amount by force.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I request Honourable Members who will be addressing after the Honourable Member to bear the remarks he has made in the earlier part of his speech.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: (United Provinces Southern : Non-Muhammadan) : Mr. President, it is rarely that we agree with our Honourable friend opposite. But on this particular matter I must say that we are in entire agreement with the line that he has taken. When I read this Resolution I wondered whether the Honourable Sir David Devadoss was really serious about it and whether he was living in this country or in some other country. The pay of the Indian soldier, as the Honourable Sir Firoz Khan Noon has just reminded us, is Rs. 18 per month. In point of fact, he gets Rs. 16, because Rs. 2 represent deferred pay. I do not say that is a wrong thing, but in point of fact he gets Rs. 16 per month. We on this side of the House have been pressing His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief to increase the pay and the emoluments of the Indian soldiers. The British soldiers have been given an increment, and we say that the Indian soldiers should also be given an increment. They too are entitled to a good standard of living. I am sure that His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief sympathises with the demand of the Indian soldier as also with the demand of the Indian workman for an improved standard of living.

The Honourable Sir David Devadoss, in the interests of the class which he represents, would deprive the Indian soldier of a subsistence wage in the immediate present ; in order that the Indian soldier might not in the post-war world talk of a better deal for himself, he would try to crush the spirit that is in him today. That, I think, Sir, was the line of argument that he adopted in putting this Resolution before the House. That was a strange argument from a man professing to believe in democratic ways and in the ideals for which this war is being supposed to be fought. Imagine to yourself the condition of the poor man who gets Rs. 16 a month. Assume that he gets free quarters. I have seen some of the quarters, and I will not comment on them. Suppose the individual soldier gets free quarters, free food. He still has probably a wife, has probably some brothers. He may have some cousins. You know what an Indian family consists of : a fortieth degree cousin may also have a claim on your income. He has other relations to support. And he is expected to support them all on this wonderful wage of Rs. 16, one-third of which, according to the Honourable Sir David Devadoss, will go into Government coffers.

The Indian soldier is not a revolutionary. He has done his job very well. Whether he is a mercenary or not, I do not know; but he is certainly a brave fighter and he has done very well in this war. And you want to tell him : " Oh, you will be permitted to live only on Rs. 13 out of these Rs. 16, and Rs. 5 will go to the State coffers. You won't have money to spend on a cinema. You won't have money to spend on literary amenities. You won't have enough money to spend on tobacco. And as for your wife and children, well, let them very well take care of themselves. And so far as funerals are concerned, I do not know how funerals are going to be stopped, because people will die. But Sir David Devadoss will probably discover some method of stopping people from dying also. I suppose he is thinking of some scientific invention which would enable civilian deaths to be postponed until the war is over. All that is implied if you accept this Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: There is a moratorium.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: There is a moratorium in regard to banks and other things, not on deaths. The problem for any administration, if this Resolution is accepted, will be how to stop deaths, because under Indian conditions, whether a man is a Hindu or a Muslim, he has got to spend money on funerals. He has also got to spend some money on weddings. We shall also have to stop weddings. Then there are occasional religious ceremonies both among Hindus and Muslims. Those ceremonies also must stop.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I understand you are advancing these arguments —

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : To ridicule this most amazing Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : One minute. Let me finish. I understand you are advancing all these arguments to show that there ought to be a general increase in the pay of soldiers and combatants. The Resolution before the House does not ask for a general increase in their pay. I have allowed you to speak without interrupting you up to now, but it would be better if you address your remarks to the specific Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : My point is that the salary which the Indian soldier receives is so small that he cannot afford to give this contribution of one-third which he is to receive back three years after the end of the war for some kind of reconstruction—or for some of the purposes which would enable him to reconstruct himself.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : It is all right if you stick to that line of argument.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : That is my line. Supposing you were to increase the salary of the Indian soldier to, say, Rs. 300, then I do not say that it will not be possible for him to give Rs. 100 out of that Rs. 300 for the purpose for which Sir David Devadoss says this sum should be given. But that is not the proposition, and that is not what is likely to happen. I am not interested at the moment in the question whether the salary of soldiers should or should not be increased. My own view is that it should be increased. But that is a separate matter altogether. I am pointing out that it is difficult for the Indian soldier to exist on the salary that he is getting, because he has got a wife—most of us get married while we are in our teens—and probably children. He has got to support them. He may have to support an old mother or an old mother-in-law, or an old father or an old father-in-law. And you want him to do all that on Rs. 11 per month *plus* whatever dearness allowance you may be paying him. The dearness allowance will compensate him merely for the increased cost of living.

The most astounding statement that my Honourable friend Sir David Devadoss made was that we are not a thrifty people. Now, Sir, I know the north very well. I do not know whether people in the south are thrifty or not. But I rather gathered the impression, when I was touring in the south last year, that they were reasonably thrifty. I think it is a virtue to be thrifty. I do not mean this in any offensive manner. Because money is a rare commodity to the Indian, he knows the value of money, and he knows how to use that money, and he does not go about wasting it over little things. They cannot, with their limited incomes, afford to waste money. I do not think it is waste of money to have nutritive food. The poor Indian soldier or the poor Indian worker cannot afford nutritive food. It is not very easy for him to get food which would satisfy the standards laid down for him by Dr. Ackroyd. It is not waste of money to spend something upon decent clothing.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Your time is now exhausted.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : My arguments are also exhausted, Sir. (*Laughter.*)

All that I want to say is that I want to register, on behalf of our Group, our very strong protest against the very thoughtless Resolution which has been moved by the Honourable Sir David Devadoss.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM (Bihar and Orissa : Muhammadan) : Sir, I do not wish to take up any time of the House. I welcome Sir David Devadoss's intentions. We may not agree with his methods, but his intentions are very fair. His intentions were very clear : he wanted that these soldiers should have some provision made for the rainy day, but perhaps he did not consider the effect thereof. Provision for the rainy day in India becomes an incentive for unemployment, the urge to earn money vanishes, and it is from that angle of vision, Sir, that I feel that Sir David should withdraw his Resolution.

The second item which I wish to ask the Government of India to consider is how they can make a better and proper provision for the demobilised soldiers and workers. One item which Government should consider seriously is to give the

[Mr. Hossain Imam.]

Defence Services the right of vote. That would give them a share in the governance of the country, and they will be able to exert a great influence on the provincial as well as the central elections. I wish that the soldiers who are fighting today should have something to remember.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Will you stick to the Resolution ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : As I said at the beginning, I am not going to waste the time of the House, and I have my resolution to move, and so I will conclude.

THE HONOURABLE LT.-COL. A.C. BEYNON (Nominated Official) : The object underlying the resolution is that personnel of Defence Services should, on demobilisation, have some money to fall back upon. That object is a laudable one. As will be shown later, it has always been uppermost in our minds, and we have already done something to achieve it. The method proposed by the Honourable Member is, however, in the present circumstances, not the right one. Evidently it proceeds on the assumption that the Defence Services can live on two-thirds of their present pay. This assumption is not justified.

To take first the case of the clerical and inferior services paid from Defence Estimates. It is well-known that a man of average family responsibilities finds it difficult to live on his pay owing to the very greatly increased cost of living. In recognition of this difficulty, the Government of India have granted dearness allowance to civilian clerical and inferior personnel. This dearness allowance was granted with effect from the 1st of August 1942, and since that date it has been found necessary on the ground of inadequacy of the rates to revise them upwards from time to time. The existing rates were fixed in August this year. The Honourable Member will, however, be glad to learn that the Government of India have recently introduced a scheme of deferred bonus in the case of temporary clerks. The bonus is payable on satisfactory termination of service and is at the rate of Rs. 5 a month.

Take again the case of gazetted and non-gazetted civilian Government servants, paid from Defence Estimates, who are not in receipt of dearness allowance. In their case also, Government have recognised the need for an allowance to meet the increased cost of living, and they have been granted a war allowance with effect from 1st July of this year.

It is clear that the civilian personnel dealt with above cannot live on two-thirds of their pay, and if one-third were withheld, it would only mean that they would run into debt or suffer unwarranted hardship. Furthermore, as dearness allowance and war allowance have been granted on an all-India basis to all civilian personnel serving under the Central Government, whether paid from Civil or Defence Estimates it would clearly be invidious to discriminate against these classes of Defence Services personnel by holding back one-third of their pay. At the same time, as the Honourable Member is aware, every encouragement to save is being given to civilians paid from Defence Estimates. They can contribute to Provident Funds and the several attractive investments designed to further the war effort, for example, war loans, Defence Savings Certificates, and so on.

Much the same considerations apply to personnel of the Armed Forces. As the Honourable Member is aware, Government have increased the pay and allowances of Indian other ranks from time to time during the course of the war. The pay of V. C. O's. has also been revised upwards. The increases are due, to no small extent, to the increased cost of living. In such circumstances it would be quite wrong to withhold one-third of the pay of other ranks. Officers of the Indian Armed Forces are much in the same position as civilian officers of the Government of India. They too find it difficult to make both ends meet, and it would be inconceivable to withhold one-third of their pay. At the same time every encouragement is being given to voluntary saving.

In the case of Indian other ranks and enrolled non-combatants an inducement to accumulate their credit balances until their discharge is held out by allowing them interest at the rate of six annas a quarter on every Rs. 50 in their balance. They have also other saving facilities, such as unit provident and thrift funds, Defence Savings Provident Fund, Indian Post Office Defence Savings Bank, Indian Post

Office National Savings Certificates. Attractive investments are also open to officers whose circumstances allow them to save.

I will now turn to the measures taken by Government towards achieving the object my Honourable friend has in view.

First of all, there is deferred pay, already referred to by the Honourable Sir Firoz Khan Noon. So far as I. O. Rs. and B. O. Rs. are concerned, they will be credited on demobilisation with an accumulation of deferred pay.—

I. O. Rs. at the rate of Rs. 3 per mensem, and

B. O. Rs. at the rate of 6d. a day.

Furthermore, a Post-war Reconstruction Fund has been established for the purpose of financing schemes for the welfare of Indian soldiers and enrolled non-combatants. With effect from the financial year 1942-43 and for the duration of the war, a sum equivalent to Rs. 2 per mensem for each Indian soldier and Re. 1 for each enrolled non-combatant, is paid by Government to the Fund annually. The money will be used for the benefit of the soldier and his community after the war.

Lastly, the Government of India are examining to what extent the recent increases sanctioned by His Majesty's Government for the British Armed Forces, should be applied to the Indian Armed Forces, and, in this connection, the question of deferring a portion of the increase in the case of India other ranks will receive the fullest consideration.

I hope that in view of the explanation given by me, my Honourable friend will see his way to withdraw his Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS: Sir, I am thankful to the Honourable and Gallant Colonel for the very clear statement he has made about what the War Department is going to do. Well, Sir, my main object in bringing forward this Resolution was to make provision for non-combatants who will be sent away immediately after the war. So far as the regular armed forces are concerned, I see that sufficient provision is being made and will be made for their maintenance, and therefore when the Honourable Sir Firoz Khan Noon said that the combatant services are being looked after, I had no objection to that. That is not the main point. My point is that you have taken a lot of people—half a million from Madras—for labour and other things, and as soon as they are sent away, they will be without any means. Therefore, they should be given something to enable them to live for at least one or two years, something they can rely upon. There is no use of saying to these people, "Go back and find something for yourself." I cannot understand

12' NOON. what the Honourable Mr. Sapru meant by saying that these people have got funerals, marriages and so on. He said that they spend the money on these things. That is the very reason why I said they are not thrifty, they spend on marriages, funerals and all sorts of other things and they are not careful enough to see what they need. I do not say that one-third is sacrosanct. The Honourable Lt.-Col. Beynon thought that I was confining myself to one-third. I said it is not sacrosanct. You may do whatever is possible. My main reason is that these non-combatant services, whom you are going to send away as soon as the war is over, will find themselves without any livelihood unless you are prepared to pay them something at least for some time till they adjust themselves to the conditions prevailing in the villages. It is not my intention to press this Resolution to a vote. I see that the War Department at least are taking steps to see that these people do not suffer when they are demobilised. I want the War Department to take care not only of the regular soldier, the combatant forces, but also of the labour corps and those whom you have recruited for the prosecution of the war. With these words, Sir, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my Resolution.

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

* This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council the desirability of withholding one-third of the monthly pay of the combatant, non-combatant and other services, including clerical and menial services, and paying after demobilization such withheld amounts in monthly instalments extending over a period of three years.

RESOLUTION RE COAL SITUATION.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : (Bihar and Orissa : Muhammadan) :
Mr. President, the Resolution which I have the honour to move runs as follows :—

“ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to appoint a committee to enquire into the coal situation and report on the means to increase production, including compulsory amalgamations or nationalisation, if necessary.”

Sir, coal occupies an important position in the daily life of the country at the present moment, and no aspect of life is free from it. Industry is dependent on coal, war production is dependent mainly on coal, transport itself is entirely dependent on coal and even the food which we eat in the towns and cities is entirely dependent on coal supply. A thing of such comprehensive and paramount importance is being mishandled by the Government and the private owners. We do not even know the facts, and every inquiry to find out the facts is hidden under the omnibus formula, “ It is not in the public interest to state ”. It is not in the public interest to state the amount of coal which is being raised, or the number of people employed in the mines or how much of it is going to the war requirements—even the percentage. We do not even know whether and how much of the coal is going as bunkers to the ships that are calling at the ports. Everything is hidden under the omnibus formula, “ It is not in the public interests.” Yesterday, in the course of supplementaries, I was rather surprised to hear that it was not in the public interest to make any inquiry as to what is happening in other countries. My specific question was whether Government would find out what is the *per capita* output in other countries and what methods have been adopted. The reply was, “ No information is available regarding the U. S. A., U. K. and the U. S. S. R. No steps have been taken to import from the U. S. S. R.”

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : What is wrong in that ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Mr. President, the latest inquiry into the coalmining industry was made in 1937. Its personnel consisted of one I. C. S. officer, one retired I.E.S. officer, 2 Agents of Coal companies, and one Geologist, and its recommendations have not been implemented.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : That was in 1937, before the war broke out, and things have changed since the war.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : And the world has advanced far since 1937 when this committee made its inquiry. My submission is that this hush hush policy of the Government and taking shelter behind the thin plea of not being in the public interest is worse than anything. The object is to hide the inefficiency of the Government and the rapaciousness of the private owners.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : There is no question of inefficiency. Government think that in the public interest they could not mention all these things because our enemies would come to know about it and take steps to counteract our action.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : I should like the House or anybody in the world to enlighten us whether the fact that we are producing 4,000 or 5,00,000 tons will have any effect on the enemy.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : That is your view.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : How can they prevent it ? They know where the Jharia coalfields are and it is open to them to attack it. The fact that you are not producing enough is no deterrent to Japan from attacking the Jharia coalfields. The peculiar position of India is such that the coalfields in Bengal and Bihar alone produce more than 75 per cent. of the coal of India, and that area, Sir, is within 350 miles of Japanese bases, as the crow flies, in the Arakans.

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIAR : (Supply Member) : What has that got to do with the specific information which the Honourable Member wanted, namely, how much was being produced ? It was that which was said to be not in the public interest to disclose.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : I could have understood the Government not giving us specific recent figures. But they won't give figures even

for 1943, which is a past year. I am surprised at this. What purpose does it serve to hide past actions? This Department, Sir, has not been handled properly. Like the Food Department it has been shuttle-cocked from one Department to another, and now it rests with the Supply Department. It always happens in this irresponsible Government that an important Department becomes the common property of all the Departments to try their hands on it and until it is found that some Department can handle it properly it remains a shuttle-cock, going from one Department to another.

I will mention a few facts to show how little Government has done to implement even the recommendations that were made in 1937. My case is that the inquiry of 1937, due to the rapid advance that has been made in the mining industry, is now obsolete and therefore a new inquiry is needed urgently. But even what they had recommended has not been implemented. Can anything go further to show the disregard of the Government to take drastic and specific actions and the policy of complacency which characterises the entire executive of India? In the course of a reply given yesterday we were told by the Honourable Member that we were supposed to export coal to Ceylon but Ceylon is supplied by South Africa and that coal which was meant to go to Ceylon goes to whatever place the H. M. G. wants. And we have no control, no knowledge of the destination to which it goes. This was in the course of reply to my question—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Are you discussing your Resolution or are you commenting on your questions of yesterday?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I am commenting on the mishandling of the coal situation. Had there been no mishandling, there would have been no need to ask the House to have an enquiry committee. It should not be thought that I am attacking only the present handling of the situation. The thing has been mishandled consistently and therefore it should not be thought that my remarks are on the Supply Department alone. I have been strengthened further by a book "India builds her war economy" by Mr. P. C. Jain, a distinguished economist of India whose statement about coal I would like to read. But as it is a big extract, I will just give you a precis of it. Coal raisings have been much decreased and difficulties arise because of the small collieries that exist. On that one subject the official report of the Coal Mining Committee has given a plan showing how many collieries are working in a specified area of less than 200 or 300 yds. from each other, with the result that the working is most uneconomical. They have suggested improvements in the handling of the coal. I shall deal with them as I come to them.

Sir, I was saying that I should like to state first of all what was the condition of the coal trade before the war. The average production from all the collieries according to Mr. Jain of India up till 1936 was 22 million tons. In 1937 it rose to 25 million tons, in 1938-39 to 28 million tons and to 29 million tons in 1940 and Government stated yesterday that 31 million tons was produced in 1942. Since then there has been a blank and we do not know what is the production now. The interesting thing in this connection is that the number of collieries has been gradually reduced. In 1919 there were 587 collieries and in 1935, for which I have figures, there were 385. I am referring here to the statistics given in this Report which deals only with Jharia and Raniganj coal fields. The coal output was also down by more than 2 million tons; it came down from 18·8 to 16·8; and the interesting thing is that the number of collieries whose monthly output was less than a thousand maunds per month numbered 288 in 1919 and 132 in 1935. The number of collieries having between 1,000 and 5,000 maunds was 213 in 1919 and 181 in 1935. Only 72 out of these mines had a raising of more than 5,000 tons per month. If you look at the statistics of other countries, even of the U. K., you will be surprised at this large number of uneconomic mines which are working in India. Another point which I learned from this book is that a large number of these companies are not even limited liability companies. They had private ownerships, and ownership means ownership of the mining rights. The mines belong mostly to different people and it is the lessee who has only control for a definite period who is spoken of as the coal mine owner. He is not technically a coal mine owner but a lessee. This book on page 25 gives us the

[Mr. Hossain Imam.]

cost of production and it is interesting to find that the labour cost per ton underground varied between Rs. 2-14-5 and Rs. 1-2-8 in 1925 and had fallen in 1935 when the enquiry was made to Re. 0-11-1 per ton. That shows the extremely poor wage which is being paid to the labourer, Re. 0-11-1 per ton. And the figure which was given yesterday by the Honourable Member was, the earnings, including wages and all the other emoluments was Re. 0-11-0 in December 1942 and Re. 0-13-9 in December 1943 in Jharia, including dearness allowance. And for Raniganj it was Re. 0-10-9 in December 1942 and Re. 0-14-2 in December 1943. But for ordinary loaders even now in December 1943 the figure was Re. 0-12-9 in Jharia and Re. 0-12-6 in Raniganj. You cannot expect to attract labour at Re. 0-12-6. It is worse than the wage available in the village. Talking of slavery and indentured labour, all these things pale into insignificance when we realise the low wages which are being paid to the labourer.

I have been fortified in my views by the price of ordinary shares of certain coal companies on the Calcutta Stock Exchange given by Government itself. In December 1942 the quotation for Raniganj Coal was Rs. 26-8-0 and in December 1943 it went up to Rs. 35-10-0; whereas the share value had increased by 40 per cent., the wages had increased by less than one-twelfth. (*Interruption.*) The index number of prices for those areas in December would be something like 400. Sir, that the coalmines have been having everything in their own way at the cost of labour and of the country is amply borne out by the figure which has been given to me by the Government itself in the quotations for the shares. I will just read out a few of the interesting ones. Burrakur, one of the very good mines —

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Has not the Honourable Member heard of such a thing as speculation?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Speculation lasts only 15 days or one month.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member is entirely mis-informed.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: They had speculation in Wall Street, and it resulted in the depression of 1929. You remember how long that speculation lasted: ten days was enough to cause the whole thing to burst. If you want, I can give you tomorrow the figures of the earnings —

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Please stick to your Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I was referring to Burrakur. The share was quoted in December 1942 at Rs. 13-12-0; in December 1943 it had gone up to Rs. 25-10; and the latest figure, on 13th September 1944, was Rs. 39-10-0—nearly three times what it was in December 1942. I will also give you the Bokaro figure. It was being quoted at Rs. 17-4-0 in December 1942, at Rs. 31 in December 1943, and at Rs. 37 in September 1944. Bengal was quoted at Rs. 392 in December 1942, at Rs. 565 in December 1943, and at Rs. 615 in September 1944. I cited the December figures because Government has given the figures of rise in wages on that basis. The rise in wages bears no proportion to the rise in share values. That means that a larger proportion of the money which is coming out of the Government's pockets and the consumers' pockets goes to the capitalist than is justified having regard to the interests of labour. The raisings are low because the coalowners are not willing to pay a higher wage to the labour force. (*Interruption.*) The present-day trend is towards earning more money; that is because of the increased prices.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Please do not discuss between yourselves. Address your remarks to the Chair.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I may also remind the House that the record of the coalmines as far as casualties are concerned is very black. I have very little time, and I do not want to read; but I will just give the reference. In Chapter V of the Committee's report is given a list of the casualties which have occurred in the collieries in recent years. For instance: in Loyabad colliery—35 killed and 23 poisoned by gas; in Poidih colliery—209 persons killed; and so on and so forth. These figures relate to 1936.

This means that the Government owe a duty to the public and to the country at large to see that the coalowners are not allowed, under the guise of private property, to play ducks and drakes with human life and with the country's requirements. I should also like to remind the House that in every country, even in the United Kingdom, which is the most conservative—I should be excused for saying, even backward, because it has not taken up the new ideas of mass production from America or the German system of vertical organisation—even in the United Kingdom, by successive stages they have come to have at least a Coal Mines National Industry Board, which body has the right of compelling coalmines to amalgamate. In France there was a proposal to nationalise mines. I do not know what happened afterwards. Under the onslaught of war France went into the hands of Germans. In Germany the position is very much better. There the State has so great a control that the existence of private property is unable to do any harm to the general interests. It works under orders, and therefore works marvellously well. Industry, if it works under orders, is a very good organisation. But if it is left free, the results are disastrous to the country. The report of the Committee says in paragraph 193 :

“ We believe that State control of coal output and prices must come eventually in India unless there is a radical change in the psychology of the coal trade, while we are sure that there is considerable scope now for rationalising not only the various elements of the coal trade and industry, but also the aims and activities of landlords, mine-owners, railways, and the iron and steel and other industries.”

Then it goes on to suggest other methods :—

“ Indian coal is not inexhaustible and scientific mining methods are needed for its conservation and economic extraction.”

Further—

“ It has thus become the duty of Government as representing the existing community, and as trustees for posterity, to step in and impose some definite line of action upon a trade and industry which has not done much to help itself as a whole, and which shows little disposition to help itself in future.”

Then they indicate how these mining associations non-co-operated with this Inquiry Committee. Some of them would not even send representatives, and some of them would not give a reply to the questionnaire. This is not an old cry. Even the other day, at the meeting of the General Policy Committee, we were told that many of the companies who had been asked to supply information had refused to do so.

THE HONOURABLE SIR RAMASWAMI MUDALIAR : Not coal companies. That was a reference to the general industrial concerns all over the country.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Yes, Sir. But in 1937 we had the report of the Committee, and they say that the coal companies refused to send replies to the questionnaire. And now other companies have refused to give information.

THE HONOURABLE SIR RAMASWAMI MUDALIAR : Failed to give information, not refused.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : I therefore suggest to the Government that they would do well to accept my Resolution. I do not think they have completely neglected to do their duty. But they could do it better if they appointed a committee.

I have purposely avoided to mention anything about the personnel. I have not said that it should be predominantly of the Legislature, or of the experts, or of the Government officials. I have left the choice in Government's hands. But it is not true to say that everything is all right when in every walk of life we are feeling the shortage. Textile mills are not working to capacity because they have not got coal. Yesterday we had a statement by the Honourable Secretary in the I. & C. S. Department that paper mills could produce much more if they got coal. We know that a number of sheet re-rolling mills have been closed down owing to lack of coal. There are dozens of instances to show how we are handicapped by lack of coal.

I was mentioning that the enquiry should deal both with rationalisation and with increase of efficiency in working. This is a subject which I have not been able to develop. I regret that my time is up and I cannot develop my speech.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU (United Provinces Southern : Non-Muhammadan) : Mr. President, perhaps you will allow me to offer a few observations on the Resolution which has been moved so lucidly by the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam. I make these observations particularly for this reason. I have been to the coal areas in Raniganj and Jharia recently—in September of this year—in connection with my work on the Industrial Health Committee and was able to see the conditions in those areas for myself. It would be improper for me to anticipate the conclusions of the Committee in regard to health conditions in these areas, but perhaps it is permissible for an individual member—I happen to be the Chairman of that Committee—to give his own impressions in a general way about what he saw in these areas.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Your experience is limited to Jharia.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : My experience is not limited to Jharia, it extends to Raniganj also. I could not visit the mines in the Central Provinces, but we did visit the mines in Jharia and Raniganj, and I think we tried to see almost as much as was possible for us to see in the short time at our disposal. Now, Sir, so far as labour conditions are concerned, they are the subject of consideration by the Rege Committee. I think that Committee is collecting statistics in regard to wages, in various industries, and I will not go very deeply into that question. Of course, from a health point of view, it was necessary for us to have some idea of what the economic conditions of the workers are, and we could not, therefore, avoid going to a certain extent into the question of wages also. The system of wages that I found prevailing in the coal areas was payment per tub. A worker gets so much for filling a tub. When we went underground we saw these people fill the tubs. If a man fills a tub I think he gets, in both the places, roughly ten annas six pies per day. You have to add to this 10 as. 6 ps. another 1 a. 6 ps. which is in the nature of a dearness allowance. Then he gets what they call free rations, that is, he gets half a seer of rice free. In some coal fields we were told that the wages come to as much as Re. 1-2-0 per day. At Tatas we were told that the wages come to about Re. 1-2-0 per day, but the snag about the whole thing is this. The men do not work all the six days of the week. They cannot. It is physically impossible for them to work six days in a week. They usually work for four days, some times they work for as much as five days, but generally you may take four days as the average. Now, if you inquire into the prices of essential food commodities in the locality, you find that they are very high. The increase in prices in these areas would be somewhere in the neighbourhood of about 300 per cent. Therefore, you find that the wages in these areas are grossly inadequate for the needs of the labouring population. I think the inadequacy of the wage is one reason why men welcome employment of women in these coalfields. I asked this question pointedly—do you want your women to work in these coal-fields? Their reply was—if our women do not work in the coal fields how are we to exist, you stop the employment of women and then we will not have enough to pay for feeding these women : that is their attitude. That is so far as wages are concerned.

So far as housing conditions are concerned, it is difficult to describe them in language of moderation. Language fails, absolutely fails, to describe the horrible conditions under which these men who are performing essential war services are living in these coal areas. You find in a room 10 × 10 with a verandah of about 6 ft., dark, ill-ventilated, generally brick-built but not always, that is the type of house which you find, as many as ten men living at one time. Honourable Members may say that I am exaggerating—I am not exaggerating. I am speaking sober truth. You find ten men in these quarters in the busy season, and when we went there it was the busy season, and actually there were about ten men in one room. Now, it becomes impossible for any human being to observe the decencies of life under such conditions, I do not know how these men manage to live in such places of dirt and squalor, places unimaginable and shockingly dirty. It is a very severe indictment of any society that such conditions should be allowed to exist even for twenty-four hours. I am making these statements in order that the Honourable the Labour

Member who is noted for his sympathy for labour and the Honourable Mr. Prior who has studied labour questions for a long time and who has had long experience of them, may look into these conditions and try to remedy them. We were told by some employers—I should say this in fairness to them—that they were ready to improve the housing conditions, but their difficulty is the war restrictions on building materials. Even if they want to build quarters, they simply cannot because they will not get facilities in regard to building materials which are all under control. Therefore, what has happened is that in war time you get a large increase in labour employed in these essential services and overcrowding in industrial and semi-industrial and mining areas, with the result that sanitary conditions have gone down and health has gone down. You get more malaria, you get other diseases, and, therefore, I think, Sir, the position in regard to these coal-mines is a serious one.

So far as work in the mines is concerned it is a very difficult one. I will not do it even if I am paid a lakh of rupees. We went down and spent some time in the coal mines. In some of these coal mines there are no labour saving devices. The Tatas have introduced labour saving devices. It is very dark, you have to carry what they call Davy lamps. When we entered these coal mines we were told, however, that working conditions in these coal mines were actually not worse than those in mines in England. In fact, working conditions in Indian mines, we were told, were actually better than those obtaining in mines in England and other continental countries.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Who is your informant ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : Information on this point was almost unanimous. I cannot give the names of the informers but the impression that I carried was that experts on this point were almost unanimous that the working conditions inside the mines were better. The mines are not so deep in India as they are in England. You get mines here which are 750 ft. or 1,000 ft. or 1,200 ft. deep. We went to a mine about 1,200 ft. deep. You do not get mines which are 3,000 ft. or 4,000 ft. deep as in England.

The men who go to these mines go at about 8 in the morning and they work there for about 8 hours and during those 8 hours they get no meals. They do not carry any meals when they go into the pit and they cannot get up ; so they have to go without food for as long as 8 hours at a stretch in these pits. Another great difficulty is this: You do not in these pits have any washing facilities. There are no taps there. There are no latrines either. We made many inquiries on this question of latrines and we were told that it was not usual in England also to have any latrines in the pits. The experiment of having latrines in the pits in England had failed. One result of having no latrines in the pits is that conditions become insanitary and coal-miners are particularly susceptible to hookworm. As regards medical facilities, I do not think we can honestly say we were entirely satisfied. There is a provision that there must be a doctor in every coal mine, but the smaller mines employ a part time doctor. In Ranigunj at any rate we were told that the doctor is paid about Rs. 15 or Rs. 20 a month.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Your time is exhausted. Will you please bring your remarks to a close ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : By working on 2 or 3 mines a doctor makes about Rs. 50 or Rs. 60. I will just finish, Sir. These were the conditions which I saw in the coal mines. On general and ideological grounds I am entirely opposed to private ownership of coal mines ; I am opposed to private ownership of royalties, and I am opposed to private management. I do not believe in the other part of the Resolution. I do not like compulsory amalgamations. Compulsory amalgamations lead to monopolies, trusts and all that sort of thing. I would go either for nationalization or nothing. I do not believe in compulsory amalgamation. There are grave political dangers in a country like India in having schemes of compulsory amalgamation. I cannot go into this question deeply. I will say that while I cannot agree with that part of the Resolution, I agree with the substance and spirit of the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam's Resolution and on ideological grounds I am in favour of State ownership of coal mines. As a matter of fact, I think the coal industry should be taken over by the State at this time because doing so might lead to increased production.

THE HONOURABLE MR. K. W. MEALING : (Bengal Chamber of Commerce) :

Sir, I think it is undeniable that the coal industry has come in for a good deal of criticism of recent months—indeed, I might say, of recent years. It is unfortunate from the point of view of the industry that this criticism has arisen from so natural a cause. The industrialist, the individual, who finds that he is unable to obtain that quantity of coal that he needs to carry on his business and to keep his house warm, it is very natural that he should ask, "What is wrong with this industry? What is wrong with it resulting in this shortage of the vital commodity in the country?" It seems to me, Sir, that it is particularly unfortunate that this justifiable criticism, which naturally results in Resolutions such as that now before the House, should have arisen as a result of circumstances which I believe it is true to say arise almost entirely from conditions concerned directly with the war and outside the control of the industry. I am not going to maintain that the coal industry is perfect. Nothing created by the hand of man is perfect. The coal industry itself consists of a large number of units, some that are reasonably well run and some that are not so well run. The criticism, however, I am proposing to deal with now regarding the shortage of coal throughout India is not due, I maintain, to the shortcomings of the industry. It is due to several factors the most important of which is the fact that a considerable quantity of mining labour was drawn away from the mines for what were considered, and very probably were, more important functions elsewhere. That circumstance, that condition of affairs, must and will become ameliorated, indeed will cease, as the war situation ameliorates and as the labour is able and willing to return to the mines. But, in the meantime, it is an overall shortage and coupled with that there has undoubtedly been a potential consuming market in India today, and for the last year or 18 months, greater than normal. Before the war there was no question of shortage of coal in India. The difficulty then facing the industry was how to sell their output and after the war and as soon as conditions return to normal, I am quite certain that the same circumstances will come about, namely, that there will be plenty of coal. Indeed, I personally look forward within a few months to the time when it will not be the fault of the coal industry if there is insufficient coal to reach all the markets where it is required and the industries who require it. I believe that what may then again become the bottle neck is transport rather than the industry in production which will bring about any shortage that there may be.

Sir, there have been committees on the coal industry in the past and there will be again. I feel that to set up a committee now for the specific purpose among other things of considering the question of nationalization at a time when the industry is under criticism for reasons which are not the fault of the industry itself would be in fact to examine an industry under unfair conditions and at an unfair time. Nationalization of many important industries is becoming rather a slogan and perhaps properly so, in some parts of the world and may indeed come to India. But I do suggest to this Council that it is not proper in fact to go into the basically important question of nationalization under war conditions and because an industry is affected in the way the coal industry is today purely by war conditions.

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 Chairman (the Honourable Sir David Devadoss) in the Chair.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU (United Provinces Northern: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, my Honourable friend Mr. Hossain Imam has drawn attention to a very important problem which is exercising the mind of the whole country. Not merely more production, but production for civil requirements also depends on the quantity of coal that the factory owners can get. But it is a melancholy fact that there are factories which are unable to produce all that they are capable of, or even to carry on at all owing to the shortage of coal. I have seen many factories which have practically had to close down for want of fuel.

The question of increasing the production of coal or taking other steps to increase the quantity of coal available in this country is a very important one. A great deal has been said in the House regarding the reasons for the short production of coal, but I should like to make a few observations on the same subject. I should

first like to refer to the wages paid to the coal-miners in Jharia and Raniganj, which produce more than half—perhaps about two-thirds—the coal produced in India. A statement was laid on the table yesterday in reply to a question asked by my Honourable friend Mr. Hossain Imam, and I gathered from it that in the year 1943, when the prices of foodstuffs had risen considerably the daily wages in Jharia amounted to 13 annas and in Raniganj to 14 annas and 3 pies only. The House would doubtless like to know how these figures compare with the wages prevailing in the previous year. In December, 1942, in the Jharia coalfield the average daily earnings—I said wages, but I change the word “wages” into “earnings”—the daily earnings amounted to 11 annas. In the course of a year, therefore, they rose by only two annas. In Raniganj the average daily earnings in 1942 amounted to 10 annas and 9 pies; in the year 1943 they amounted, as I have already said, to 14 annas and 3 pies—an increase of about 3 annas and 6 pies or 33 p.c. Some increase was doubtless made but whether this increase was sufficient or not can be judged only when we know the extent to which the working class cost of living index had risen. In December 1942-43 the index number was 248, while of the working class cost of living in 1943-44 it was 366. It is thus clear that the cost of living for a workman rose by about 50 per cent. in Jharia. Yet the increase in earnings there amounted to about 18 per cent. only. I have not got the figures for Raniganj, but I am sure that if I had them they would tell the same story as these relating to Jharia. It is clear from these figures that, though wages have risen, the rise has been very inadequate as compared with the rise in the prices of articles which the workmen require.

Another factor that ought to be taken into account in considering the wages paid to coal-miners is that the coal-miners should be regarded as skilled workmen. Their wages ought to be compared, therefore, not with those of unskilled labour, but with those of skilled labour. Perhaps it would be instructive if I informed the House of the wages and the dearness allowance paid to textile workers in Bombay. The conditions in Bombay are no doubt exceptional, but a rough comparison is nevertheless possible between the wages paid to textile workers in Bombay and to the coal-miners, say, in Jharia. In Bombay the average daily wage amounts to about a rupee—I think the monthly wages amount to about Rs. 35 a month—and the dearness allowance amounts to as much or a little more. The textile worker therefore is very much better off than the coal-miner. I do not know, Sir, whether the figures given regarding the daily earnings of coal miners in December 1942 and 1943 include allowances, that is, the price of half a seer of rice which each worker gets free of charge daily. If this is included in the total of daily earnings, I think even the employers will admit that the wages of coal miners are painfully low. Even if the cost of rice supplied free to coal miners is not included in the figures I have referred to the daily earnings are inadequate and compares very unfavourably with the wages of a textile worker in Bombay today. It may be said on behalf of Government that there are certain advantages in respect of housing and medical relief enjoyed by workers in coal mines, which are not available to other people. I say this point may be urged on behalf of Government, but I am very doubtful whether it will be, because, if urged, it will not prove to be a very strong point. Any one who has been to any of the coalfield in Jharia, as I have been, will be struck by the smallness of the houses in which family consisting of five to ten people may be living. I hope that Government for their own sake will take no credit for having provided housing facilities for workers in coal mines. As regards medical facilities, this matter came under consideration along with a number of other points relating to workers in coal mine some time ago. It was then shown that the medical facilities that are given to coal miners are not such as Government can legitimately be proud of.

Now, Sir, in addition to these factors, another factor, which is of a very important character must be borne in mind. Coal miners do not work daily, they work only four to five days in a week. It is obvious therefore that their total earnings for a week are substantially lower than the figure of the daily wages would lead one to suppose. If in these circumstances the production of coal is inadequate why throw the blame on the disgracefully paid worker in coal mines, I understand that our Honourable friend who represents the Bengal Chamber of Commerce here ascribed the inadequate production of coal to the low output of labour in this country. I am

[Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru.]

sure that if he considers this subject again in the light of the facts that I have ventured to place before the House, he will be more just to the labourer than he appears to have been. I think I should be wanting in candour if I did not state frankly the reason which has been given for the present state of things, not by irresponsible men, but by responsible officers of Government—at any rate the reason which I am going to give is one which has not been seriously challenged by the Government officers to whom I have spoken. It is this : owing to the Excess Profits Tax it is understood that the employers themselves are unwilling to raise a large quantity of coal. I have heard it said that they feel that the Excess Profits Tax in their case would amount to a tax not on profits, but on capital. According to my information their feeling is that it would be better for them to exploit their mines fully after the war than during the war. I know that I am making a serious allegation, I cannot cite facts in proof as I cannot obviously mention of what I say, any names but I can assure the House that I have made this statement after finding out the views of responsible men.

Sir, I should like before I sit down to refer to one or two other points Government have recently constituted a Miners Welfare Board. This Board will have an income of about Rs. 40 lakhs a year which will be derived from a cess of 4 as. per ton of coal. Now the sum which will be available in the aggregate for promoting the welfare of miners would seem to be large, but when we consider that the number of coal miners is about two lakhs, the amount that can be spent per head turns out to be very small : it is only about Rs. 20 a year or about Rs. 1-8-0 per month. I welcome the constitution of the Miners Welfare Board, but let us be under no delusion with regard to the improvement that it can bring about in the general conditions of the workers in coal mines.

Lastly Sir, I should like to refer to the Government organisation that supervises coal production. We have, Sir, a Coal Commissioner who is a Britisher, and who is reported to have direct access to the Viceroy. There are 29 other officers of whom only six are Indians. These figures show how this Government Department is being run, and how it is handling affairs of the utmost importance to the nation at the present time.

Sir, in view of the considerations I have placed before the House I feel that the only real remedy for the present situation is that the coal mines should be nationalised. That, I believe, is the policy of the Government in England though the coal mines there have not yet been purchased by them. The royalties only have so far been purchased by them. But I believe it will be correct to say that it is the policy of H. M. G. to make the State the owner of coal mines in course of time. I think that proper the production, consumption and conservation of coal alike depend on the Government making itself responsible for the production of coal. This can be done only when the Government takes over the ownership and along with it the management of the coal mines. For these reasons, Sir, I support the Resolution moved by my Honourable friend Mr. Hossain Imam.

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIAR : (Supply Member) : Mr. Chairman, I welcome the discussion of this Resolution as it affords Government an opportunity to give expression to certain facts regarding the coal industry during the recent months which a number of Press Communiqués on the subject have not apparently adequately informed the public about. The discussion itself on this particular Resolution can be narrowed, but my Honourable friend the Mover of the Resolution and subsequent speakers referred to a number of things connected with the coal industry in the past and at the present time and I feel I must follow their example and traverse a wider field than I had otherwise intended to cover. The time at my disposal is not sufficient to review the entire position but I shall do my best to give a very short and graphic account of the coal industry during the past few years so that there can be with this background of the industry a more adequate, and let me hope a more correct, appreciation of the Government's conduct and attitude in the matter and that of the colliery owners themselves.

Sir, my Honourable friend Mr. Hossain Imam said that times have changed and that we should look at these propositions in a new light, from an altered angle o

vision. I entirely agree with him, because, in the past, public opinion—certainly public opinion as expressed in the Central Legislature—has not shown itself to be in favour of nationalisation of this industry. Time after time, in the debates in the Central Assembly—I do not want to take up the time of the House by citing speeches from Members of the Legislative Assembly or even of the Council of State—time after time, the complaint has been that the railway collieries are being worked too much, that more coal is taken from the railway collieries to the detriment of the private industry. There have been speeches from all sections from the most extreme—what is called the nationalist—section of opinion—that State management of these collieries is not desirable. I recognise that the angle of vision changes, as I have already said, and it may be that at the present time those who argued against State management and State control are, from the experiences that they have now gathered, inclined to slightly alter their opinion in the matter. I say this because, while some times Government may not be prepared to accept public opinion or is behind public opinion; on other occasions public opinion is far behind what Government may be prepared to do and Government cannot go very far ahead of public opinion in this or any other country. Therefore, I venture to hope that it is not fair to accuse the Government of the past of not following a policy which would have served the coal industry better or helped in the more rapid industrialisation or done anything for better regulation of coal mines or the conditions of labour there. Sir, a great deal has been said about labour conditions in the coal mining industry. It would take a speech by itself and perhaps it would be more adequately discussed on a separate Resolution if one were to go into the conditions of labour in the past and at present,—in 1943 and today. The only relevancy of that consideration is that perhaps by nationalisation the conditions of labour may be improved. But if it can be shown that such controls can be exercised by the Government, such direction can be given to the coal trade, such inspectorial staff can be appointed as to ensure reasonable conditions for the coal miners, both the underground cutters and loaders and surface workers, then I think much of the argument, derived from the condition of labour, for nationalisation may not to that extent be forceful. I therefore do not want to go into the question of actual conditions of labour at present. But I might be pardoned for pointing out this one fact that when you talk of the conditions of labour in the coal mines in the past, in fairness to the colliery owners one has also to consider, for whatever reason it may be, the price which coal fetched in those times. As the House knows, the present price of coal at pit's head is somewhere between Rs. 9-8-0 to Rs. 10-0-0 for certain grades. For higher selected grades the average price up to 1942 at pit's head was about Rs. 3 and odd. One has to take that into consideration. That is not the fault of any colliery owner. I do not say anything in extenuation of those managers who are exploiting labour. Not for a moment am I suggesting that conditions of labour then were good or fair or even that the conditions of labour today are as good as Government would like them to be. But I think you must take into consideration what the industry was able to sell its product at, in trying to assess the proper share which colliery owners or managers should bear for the conditions under which their labour live. I do not wish to go into the question of why this price was being fetched by the colliery owners. It is a long story. It involves a consideration of the course which the railway authorities followed in purchasing coal at low prices, asking for tenders and having the command of distribution in their own hands. All that is, as I say, a long story on which much can be said by one party or another. Today we have fixed the price of coal as much for the railways as for private consumers. That is the first great advance, if I may say so, in the rationalisation of the coal industry, a step which has been taken owing to the needs of war, a step which I venture to hope will continue to be in force even after the war conditions have disappeared. That is the foundation for the improvement of labour conditions in the collieries. Incidentally, may I refer to the remarks that my Honourable friend Mr. Hossain Imam made about the share values of these various companies? My friend Mr. Hossain Imam is a close student of monetary and currency problems and has got a good deal of experience of business conditions also. But I think he very badly tripped up on this question of share values. I need hardly point out that the share value of various companies at the present day is not an indication of the relative prosperity as against the past

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days of those companies. People with a lot of money to invest and not knowing where to invest have pushed up the share values of various industrial concerns and I do not take a rise in the share value as an indication of the growing prosperity of a concern.

Let me give a few figures with reference to the coal trade which are more relevant to a consideration of how far the colliery owners have progressed in their profit-making during recent years. I have got here a table of statistics of the profits made by 54 coal companies mentioned in the Calcutta Stock and Share List with an aggregate paid up capital of 5 crores and 91 lakhs. Of these 16 companies declared no dividends in the year 1942. One company gave a dividend of 28 per cent., 5 of 20 per cent., 3 of 17½ per cent., 2 of 16 per cent., 1 of 15 per cent., while the remainder declared dividends ranging from 1½ to 12½ per cent.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : For what period is this figure ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIAR : In the year 1942 Let me give the nature of the profit that has been made, because it is assumed that during the war years enormous profits have been made by the industry. I have got a statement of the profits made by these 54 companies from the year 1928 till the year 1942. I do not want to read the whole of this statement. But taking the profit which these companies made, at 100 in the year 1928, I find that in the year 1938 they made a profit of 142·4—that is the index figure for the pre-war years I am talking of—in the year 1939 they made a profit of 139, in the year 1940 they made a profit of 140 as against 100 in 1928 ; in the year 1941 they made a profit of 114·9 and in the year 1942 they made a profit of 110·3.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : What about recent times ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIAR : We have not got the figure yet. In 1944 of course the price has been fixed. As the Honourable Member is aware, in 1943 coal was selling at any price. I do not know how far collieries shared in the high price, how far middlemen shared in that high price, and how far other agencies that get in even between the middlemen and the consumer, shared in the prices. I have given figures up to 1942, which are the latest I have got.

And that leads me to the allegation which my Honourable friend Pandit Kunzru gave expression to in this House that colliery proprietors have definitely lowered production because of the excess profits tax and because coal being a wasting asset they were not inclined to produce as much as they would otherwise have done. This allegation has been made several times and we had to examine this question carefully. While on the one hand, there is some reason for colliery owners to suggest that with reference to a wasting asset the incidence of the excess profits tax should not fall in the same manner as it would fall on other industrial production and industrial concerns, Government did not for a moment hesitate in coming to the conclusion that any colliery which for the sake of escaping from the excess profits tax conserved its coal production and refused to produce or unfairly prevented the production of as much coal as it should have done or the normal production of coal should not be allowed to do so. As I say, we went into this question very carefully and I want to tell this House having ascertained figures from individual collieries, some of the biggest, that I found no truth in this allegation whatsoever, no truth in the allegation that colliery companies are not producing as much as they should or they would if under normal circumstances, because of the incidence of excess profits tax on the profits which they would make. In fact at the present time the production of market collieries has gone up. We have of course in recent months given them certain inducements, certain reliefs from the excess profits tax, certain bonuses. But apart from that, except in the case of one or two big collieries,—I had a statement prepared of the production of nearly 8 of the biggest and most prominent collieries in Bengal and Bihar I must say in fairness to them that the figures placed before me showed that their production had not gone down since corresponding periods of 1942 or 1943, in the year 1944. Sir, the question of the drop in production has to be considered from various points of view. Let me make it quite clear that I am not speaking on behalf of all the collieries and that I do not for a moment

suggest there might not be a few who have been trying to escape from the excess profits tax by lower production. My Honourable friend says that 400 or 500 companies, small and big, are producing coal. There may be cases of some black sheep here and there. But on the whole speaking for the industry as a whole, Government is satisfied that that was not the attitude that was taken. There has been a great deal of talk. I know that several Government officials themselves have said that this is probably the reason why production has been falling off. I know that managers of collieries and not proprietors of collieries have gone about in one or two cases saying "What interest have we got in producing more so long as there is this excess profits tax?" That is the back chat in clubs which has produced this impression.

As regards the fall in production, there have been a great many causes. One of the foremost causes is this. Collieries being private companies must arrange for the import of essential equipment and other things as replacements for the collieries from various United Kingdom companies. It was a matter of private negotiation and private trade. Import licences were given by the Government as a matter of course. But whether the production of this was properly undertaken by their agents in the United Kingdom with whom they placed their orders, whether certain facilities were obtained there for the release of raw products which would enable them to produce this equipment, were all matters which were beyond the cognizance of the Government of India till the other day. It was only when that fact came to our knowledge and the crisis actually appeared on the horizon that we came to know that private colliery owners who had placed their orders were not in a position to get these replacements, coal mining equipment that we took up the matter in December of last year, and then Government made itself responsible for these things. It followed up the orders that were placed by private colliery owners; it had a special officer appointed in the United Kingdom to chase up these orders; it made representations through the Secretary of State to His Majesty's Government for the release of the necessary materials for the purpose; and the Supply Department took upon itself the charge of getting these things for the colliery owners which for the previous 18 months at least they had in vain tried to get from the normal trade channels which were supposed to be functioning till then. That is one of the reasons why in many of these bigger collieries production of coal had to go down.

Another reason which is on the surface which most members have referred to is the fact that labour had fallen, that labour had been naturally tempted to better work and better paid work. Let me say this, that during this war period it has been abundantly clear that in every country where coal is being produced the same sort of problems have arisen. In the United Kingdom, in the United States of America and in India, in fact in every one of the Allied countries, except in those totalitarian countries where perhaps conditions are such that nobody can refuse to work, the same problem has arisen, labour unwilling to work in these coal mines. I need not go into the history of what happened in the United Kingdom and how even a strong Minister like Mr. Bevin drawn from the labourers' camp has not been able to completely solve this problem. Competitive work at better prices, at better rates, work overground instead of underground—and underground work is the least compatible of all kinds of work to any labourer and the labourer would prefer to do overground work if he can escape from underground labour—all these have contributed to the taking away of labour from the collieries into more attractive fields. When this fact was brought to the notice of Government, the Government of India began to take steps to screen these labourers as far as possible, so that much of the labour which was really colliery labour may be retained in the collieries. I do not suggest that we have been wholly successful in this screening process, that private contractors should not recruit colliery labour for military works, that they should as far as possible go to other areas and recruit military labour—and in the conditions in which we are in this country where identity cards are not available for everyone, so that his identity and the nature of the work that he was doing may be known, it is available of course as regards 40 million population in the United Kingdom. Under these conditions, whatever embargoes may be put, whatever ordinances may be passed by the Government of India for the purpose—and in some cases we have said that certain areas should be closed for recruitment to any

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but colliery labour—even under these conditions it may not be possible completely to stop this outflow of ordinary colliery labour for what I have called more attractive labour elsewhere. Those are roughly the conditions under which the output has fallen, and we are trying our best to improve the position, and we are trying to do it in two ways. The first is by getting the machinery that is required for getting more coal out of the mines. Special machinery from America has been ordered. A special officer—Brigadier Westrop—had been there to get this machinery, and he has come back with some of the machinery. That machinery is of so specialized a character that only Americans, for the time being at least, in the initial stages, could work it. We have recruited a certain number of American men to work that machinery and to train Indians in course of time to work it. That machinery is just beginning to get going. Other kinds of machinery from the United Kingdom and the United States of America have been ordered and they are well on their way, and by January most of the machinery will have come in. Steps to get other things required by the coal-owners have been taken by Government. For instance, safety lamps, which were ordered long ago and which we found to our consternation had not come in; we have now ordered that they should be sent by air, so that the production in some of the mines may not be held up. All these difficulties had arisen over a period when it was not realised that the amount of coal that would be required would grow more and more.

Sir, there has been a great deal said about various departments being in charge of this industry. Various departments were in charge under the conditions under which it existed, the Labour Department being mainly in charge of labour welfare—it still continues to be in charge of it. Railway collieries were being managed by the Chief Mining Engineer under the Railway Board. But the private collieries, like any other industry, were left to fend for themselves. Under the conditions created by the war it was recognised that that could not go on, and that is the reason for the changes that have now come over.

Now, Sir, my Honourable friend referred to the scanty information that was given by the Supply Department in answer to his questions, that it was not in the public interest to disclose figures of the actual output of collieries. He said that this was a thing which he could not understand. The location of the Jharia and Raniganj coalfields was well known to the Japs, therefore what is the harm in giving the output in 1943? In matters of this kind, where it is said that it is not in the public interest to disclose some information, particularly in this matter the public interest being that the Defence Department authorities consider that it ought not to be disclosed, I do not feel competent to judge of this fact whether it is possible to disclose it. I confess I am utterly incompetent to judge from the defence point of view whether the fact that so many million tons of coal are produced in the country is an important fact or not. I must leave it to the Defence Department authorities who are competent to judge it from the point of view of defence, and, having taken their advice, it is with the utmost reluctance that I am denying myself the pleasure of giving my Honourable friend all the information that my head is throbbing with. It is for no other consideration that this information has been withheld from my Honourable friend. Let there be no misunderstanding whatsoever that for any reasons which are supposed to be embarrassing to the Government this kind of information has been withheld from this August House.

There has been some criticism in the papers, and my Honourable friend has repeated it today, that our export policy is not sufficiently clarified, and that there is something sinister or something shady in the fact that while we say we send coal to Ceylon, the coal actually finds itself either in Italy or in Lisbon. The Minister of Mines in Great Britain says that Indian coal has gone to Italy. Well, Sir, I confess that as Member in charge of this I am utterly ignorant as to where this coal has gone. The transaction is very simple. Ceylon has for many purposes been brought within the economy of India as far as possible. With reference to coal it has been agreed that for various considerations Ceylon should be supplied with coal from India. The Government of India has agreed to export to Ceylon a certain amount of tonnage—a very fractional amount, let me say here. Then comes the question how

it shall go. Instead of shipping coal from Calcutta direct to Colombo, what the Ministry of Shipping, which arranges shipping for the whole world today so far as Allied countries, including America, are concerned, says is this: "You sent this particular coal to a dump in the Middle East or to some other place as we may direct. When the ship reaches Cairo or Alexandria, the coal is unloaded. On the return voyage we shall send coal from South Africa to Colombo." On some occasions this has been done. This is merely to conserve shipping facilities. What happens to the coal earmarked for Ceylon when it goes to Cairo is a thing which I do not know and which, I venture to think, is a thing which I need not concern myself with so long as an equivalent quantity is delivered at Colombo. That is the simple position. There is no mystery about it. If the coal, ship, when it comes to Cairo, is asked, as an emergency measure, to go to Genoa or Lisbon, it is a matter which, I venture to think, the Government of India need not worry itself about.

Now, Sir, let me come to the Resolution proper. My Honourable friend has suggested that a committee may be appointed to go into the question of the coal industry as to how its production can be increased and to come to some decision as regards amalgamation or nationalization. Sir, at the present time the Government of India have taken into consideration various aspects of coal production and have introduced certain measures of control over the coal industry. The first and foremost was the fixing of a definite price for coal at the pithead. This had repercussions of a very grave nature, and those repercussions cover, as I have already said, the entire field of labour conditions. We are able to dictate what labour conditions should prevail at a particular place, because I have assured the coal trade of a certain fixed price. Government have also taken powers to see that the required quantity of coal is produced; certain targets are fixed for various collieries, and if any colliery does not come up to that target level powers have been taken to see that that is done, and if we have reason to think that a colliery is not playing fair, Government have taken power to take over the management of the colliery for the time being and work up the production of that colliery to the required level. There are other control measures also that have been taken.

Reviewing the whole of the coal position as I see it, I feel now that a great awakening has taken place, and there is great enlightenment on the subject both in the Government of India and the public, and they are able to take a longer view of the coal position than they took before. Sir, I am not indulging in heresay, but as I reviewed the position of the coal industry in this country over a period of years I came to the conclusion that the coal industry felt, and the country generally accepted, that coal was merely a fuel for burning, and that it had no other interest and no other value. Scientific ideas have now come to this country, as they have elsewhere, and the conservation of coal has become one of the biggest and most important problems in this country—conservation of coal generally, and the conservation more particularly of special kinds of coal, of metallurgical coal, for instance, and of various high-grade coals which can be used more efficiently and better and for more productive purposes than merely as fuel for Railways or for various other industries in the country. These questions have to be considered with reference to what we propose or hope to do in the industrialization of the country in the future. And here let me give my own personal opinion with reference to what fell from my Honourable friend Mr. Mealing. He said that probably in the post-war period there would again be a depression in the coal trade and that we might find that we were producing too much coal for absorption and consumption in the country. One does not want to be a prophet, and much less does one wish to be over-optimistic in a matter of this kind, but having given the best consideration possible to this subject and having taken a view of what the likely position in the post-war period is to be, I give it as my personal opinion that there will be no falling off in the consumption of coal in this country, and for a variety of reasons. Coal, we now see, is required for more purposes than merely running our locomotives and the few industries that exist in the country. At the present time it is perfectly true that industries are not getting the required amount of coal. Their production is not likely to be very much lower than what it is today in the immediate years after the war. But more than that: we have been and are finding continuously additional uses for coal, and with the possibility of greater industrialisation in the country, I venture to think that, if

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anything, coal consumption will go up, and not go down, from its present figures in the post-war years. There is one industry, for instance, about which a great deal has been said, and about which I may speak at greater length in another place, the fertiliser industry. Government have decided that a certain kind of fertiliser should be produced in this country. Now, as far as I can see, coal is going to be the main raw product for the production of this fertiliser, and if the hopes of the Foodgrains Policy Committee are realised—if not merely 350,000 tons which Government have set down as their target for immediate production, but 2 to 3 million tons of this fertiliser, which the Committee has recommended should be produced, is to be actually produced—I venture to think that a very large quantity of coal will be required for this purpose. Incidentally I may mention that the Technical Mission on Fertiliser Industry which has been sitting for some months in this country, and which has just submitted its report to Government, recommends strongly that cooking process through the utilisation of coal is the most economic and best method for producing ammonium sulphate in this country. It considers the electrolytic process by the use of electricity as very costly. Now, that is one illustration of an industry which will need coal. Here I have a pamphlet of the Scientific Industrial Research Committee, where the Director has given a number of uses to which coal may be put with reference to chemical and other products. I know from my own knowledge that schemes for development of industries in this country are afoot, and some of them would require large quantities of coal.

But the problems of coal industry are many: conservation of proper kinds of coal, working of particular seams for particular purposes, methods by which the most efficient working of collieries can be ensured. With reference to conservation of coal I may point out that the Burrows Committee has referred to sand-stowing. So far sand-stowing has been resorted to merely as a measure of safety and not for conservation of coal. In this way large quantities of coal are lost and may be utterly lost to the country if proper measures are not taken.

I have also been down in the coal mines, and I would like to emphasize what my Honourable friend, Mr. Sapru, has said as regards conditions underground. For a variety of reasons, and mainly because of the rules made by the Chief Inspector of Mines, the conditions in these mines are far better than they are in England. A man can walk head erect in any of the collieries, which means 6 ft. is the distance which separates the roof from the floor at any stage of these collieries, whereas in England it is 3½ ft., and a man has to work in a crouched position all the time. It is said that they prefer it well that is an extraordinary fact, but in any case our men and women are not working under these conditions in any of the collieries.

Sand-stowing for the purpose of getting all the coal available in these cases is a problem which the Government of India will have to tackle.

Then, Sir, there is that great difficulty, that great evil which has invaded the collieries as it has invaded some other industries in the country—agricultural problems are aggravated in their difficulty and a solution becomes more embarrassing because of that evil—namely, fragmentation of holdings. Smaller and smaller holdings with ridges round them making it impossible either for mechanical ploughing or even to serve as an economic holding are one of the worst features of agriculture that that has followed the break-up of the joint family system. In another Department of the Government of India plans are being considered how best to get over it. In some provinces through the cooperative movement an effort has been made to amalgamate these holdings and bring them to a more economic size.

If fragmentation of holdings in land in the agricultural field, is an evil, how much greater is it an evil if fragmentation of holdings takes place underground in these collieries. This fragmentation has been going on as the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam remarked. Every one of these collieries has a 25 ft. wall round, and if this fragmentation goes on 50 ft. of solid coal is lost to the country, and cannot be extracted afterwards. This is an evil which has to be checked.

I found recently that owing to the Excess Profits Tax—that was the reason alleged by some of the colliery owners themselves—collieries have been sub-divided, and independent collieries have grown up out of small holdings, so that Excess Profits Tax may be avoided. We are taking steps to see that at least no further sub-division will take place, and the Coal Control Board over which I had the honour

of presiding, have made the unanimous recommendation that under the existing powers or under the Defence of India Act—before any proper legislation can be taken up—Government of India should take steps to stop further fragmentation of these collieries, and we would take steps in that direction.

These are some of the problems of the coal industry; rationalisation of the industry is called for, and Government are prepared to consider what steps can be taken to prevent these and other evils and rationalise the industry. But I may say one thing. We are in the thick of the fight at the present time, and are trying to get as much coal as possible and satisfy the various industries—we have not satisfied them, I am acutely aware of it, but considering the conditions under which we have been working during the past few months, I can only say this—that we have stopped further deterioration in the coal position. I do not claim to have done much more than that. If things had been allowed to continue as they had been during the last two years, there would have been a worse famine with reference to coal than the food famine which overtook Bengal. We hope the upward course will begin from January. We hope that conditions will be better so far as production is concerned from the beginning of the next year.

My Honourable friend, Mr. Mealing, referred to transport difficulties. Whether we will be up against transport difficulties is more than I can say. At any rate I can say this. It may be that transport difficulties will to a certain extent offset production facilities which we hope to have next year, but we hope that on the whole conditions would be easier than they have been during the past few months. As I said, this Government feels that this is not the time to have an inquiry of the kind proposed when the industry is trying to adjust itself to very difficult circumstances. Certain kinds of control are functioning, and more controls are intended to be enforced, like the prevention of fragmentation of holdings, by Government. At the proper time—it would not be long—Government are prepared to consider an investigation into the rationalisation of this industry.

I have done.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM Mr. Chairman, the speech which the Honourable the Supply Member has just delivered was very illuminating and lucid and at times it acted as a sedative, to make us go over and sleep and feel that everything that can be done is being done. I recognise and give him full credit for all that the Supply Department has done in this matter. But the wording of my Resolution is not a condemnation of the handling of the situation by the Supply Department but an expression of our dissatisfaction with the handling of the situation by the Government, and when I say “by the Government” I mean its handling all along for the past five years. It was formerly, Sir, the illegitimate child of the Labour Department. It was later adopted by the War Transport Department and now the baby has to be carried by the Supply Department. I feel, Sir, that there are definite indications that the colliery owners have been misusing the occasion of India's difficulties and Government's preoccupations and enlarged needs to make undue profits. The Honourable Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar reminded us—and rightly—that at the present moment share prices are not reliable indication of the real prosperity of the industry. It is the uncertain element of war profiteers' investment which is responsible for some inflation of prices. Even discounting this factor, one has the glaring example of the textile mills where the prices are more than 50 per cent. down now from what they were in June, 1943, when the textile control was started. Compared to that, there is not even a stoppage in the rise in prices of the coal shares and I am tempted to think that commercial people—a large number of those who have money to invest—take into account the pros and cons to such an extent that even the inflationary rise in prices caused by the speculators would not have lasted so long as it has lasted in the coal industry had there been no solid bases. There is no indication of reduction in prices of shares as in the case of the textiles.

I was really surprised to find that it was only in December 1943 that Government woke up to the realisation that stores and other things which are required by the collieries have to be purchased through the Government. It was the general complaint of the colliery owners that they have had to buy things at exorbitant prices.

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I would remind the Honourable Member of the Mill Stores Priority Committee of the Textile Control Board, which used to meet weekly, examine all the indents from different mills and recommend certain mills, give them quota and other help. This is being done right from the beginning of the introduction of control of the textile industry. If there had been a genuine effort on the part of Government to help the coal industry to increase its production, that should have been the first step. The Honourable Member has said that a warning has been given. I do wish that this warning should not remain a paper warning. I would remind him that in the case of textile control, the Textile Commissioner has already taken possession of certain mills, in other mills the distribution has been taken over from private hands and other methods have been adopted in order to make the control effective.

Sir, the Honourable Member rightly stressed the fact that fragmentation is going apace and he said that he will not allow any further fragmentation. I think the right course would have been for all the fragmentations which have taken place during the war to be treated as null and void and we should at least go back to the condition which prevailed at the time the war began. The condition of the coal trade has never been happy. I quite concede that the best which he has done for the coal industry is fixation of price and that will go a long way to better the condition not only of supply but also of labour and of the industry itself. So far so good.

The real reason why I have been so anxious to have a Committee is that the Coal Committee which was appointed by Government in 1936 was appointed for a specific purpose. It did not take into account the other items which have now come to the forefront, for instance, technological improvements. It will come perhaps as news that even in 1935, 19.74 per cent. of the coal raisings was done by hand. In those days 74 per cent. was raised by steam power and only 6.23 per cent. was raised by electric power. A backward country can be backward, but at the present time, when everything is being done at high pressure, when aeroplanes are being used to bring things from America, it is high time that India did assert its right on the United Nations for the supply of the necessary equipment without which industrialisation or even production cannot proceed.

I welcome the statement which was made the other day in the Assembly about Wattle Bark from South Africa. Cannot India take up the same attitude in this matter and ask America and the United Kingdom to supply us with the essential gear and the essential materials which will help India to raise more coal?

Sir, this Committee does not mention the number of collieries which are equipped with power cutting tools. Even in reply to my question I was told that 63 mines in British India were fitted with power coal cutting tools. It does not mention what proportion of the coal is cut by the power tools. It is no use having power cutting tools of inferior quality. I wish that Government had been able to tell us about coal cutting as it has developed in other countries. I am told, Sir, that in the United Kingdom coal cutting is about 5 tons per person per day. In the U. S. A. it is said to be 7. In the Rhur (Germany) it is stated that the best result is 17½ tons. In the U.S.S.R. there are workers who work up to 200 tons per day. And in India, Sir, the figure is 119 tons per year. What others do per day we do per year. That 119 tons is according to Government statistics. According to the figures of this Committee there has been a great deal of deterioration now. Formerly the figures were 138.9 tons above and 203 tons below ground. Is it an indication that the Government—when I say the Government I mean the Government and not the Supply Department—is it an indication that every effort has been made and all that could be done has been done by the Government? We recognise all the difficulties. I quite concede that labour could not be prevented from going over to war work and I think it would have been cruel, low paid as they are, to have prevented them from earning more money which they could do in other walks of life. Nevertheless I do assert that a technological inquiry into how we can increase the production by means of the introduction of machine tools is urgently called for. You have asked for 26 coal cutters and 180 coal drills. That is all that you have placed orders for. Considering that your production is something in the neighbourhood of 35 million tons—even without your statement we can guess and I do not think I am making a great error—for 35 million tons a year you have indented for 26 coal cutters.

Any responsible Government would have been ashamed of the smallness of its demand and that too after so much trouble. All this is due to the fact that the present Government of India feel that they have no backing behind them, that they cannot approach any of the Allied Powers, the United Kingdom or the United States of America, with that confidence and determination and with the power to retaliate, which a responsible Government would have done. There is no blame on any particular person. It is due to the system under which our Honourable Members are working, divorced from every responsibility and every shred of power.

Sir, I do feel that one of the reasons why statistics are not being given to us is that there is a great deal of diversion of coal produced in India towards war needs. I would have no objection for essential war needs. Even if the total supply of coal is required for essential war needs I would not mind if civilians are deprived of it. I find that under the garb of supplying Ceylon my coal goes to Italy and H. M. G. is able to get South African coal for Ceylon. Then why have this drain on India and why should India be responsible for supplying Ceylon. It is nothing short of obtaining things under false pretences.

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIAR: I may say that the amount of coal that is sent to Ceylon is 1.5 per cent. of the monthly production and consumption.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I was referring to that as a case in point. What I am referring to is the bunker coal for loading ships which come into India. It is possible for us to supply bunker coal up to the next port. If bunker coal could be supplied from Ceylon, a large amount of coal which goes to shipping would have been avoided. And there are other instances in which non-essential war needs are supplied by India because of the fact that there is no one to fight for India—

THE HONOURABLE SIR FRANCIS MUDIE (Home Member): Wheat ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: The Honourable the Home Member is very powerful as far as we are concerned ; as far as the Indian people are concerned he is all powerful and all in all ; he can do and undo anything. But *vis-a-vis* H. M. G. I do not think he has got much of a force, especially as Mr. Amery is there.

I regret, Sir, that in spite of the eloquent speech of the Supply Member I do not see my way to withdraw my Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE THE CHAIRMAN (the Honourable Sir David Devadoss): Resolution moved :

“This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to appoint a committee to enquire into the coal situation and report on the means to increase production, including compulsory amalgamations or nationalisation, if necessary.”

The question is that the Resolution be adopted.

The Council divided :

AYES—7

Buta Singh, Hon. Sir.
Dalal, Hon. Mr. M. N.
Hossain Imam, Hon. Mr.
Kunzru, Hon. Pandit Hirday Nath.

Mahtha, Hon. Rai Bahadur Sri Narain.
Padshah Sahib Bahadur, Hon. Saiyed
Mohammed.
Sapru, Hon. Mr. P. N.

NOES—23

Banerjee, Hon. Mr. R. N.
Beynon, Hon. Lt.-Col. A. C.
Charanjit Singh, Hon. Raja.
Conran-Smith, Hon. Mr. E.
Das, Hon. Mr. Mahendra Lal.
Ghosal, Hon. Sir Josna.
Gibbons, Hon. Mr. J. M. B.
Hissamuddin Bahadur, Hon. Lt.-Col. Sir.
Hydari, Hon. Sir Akbar.
Jogendra Singh, Hon. Sir.
Jones, Hon. Sir Cyril.
Khurshid Ali Khan, Hon. Nawabzads.

Lal, Hon. Mr. Shavax A.
M homed Usman, Hon. Sir.
Mealing, Hon. Mr. K. W.
Menon, Hon. Sir Ramunni.
Mukherjee, Hon. Sir Satya Charan.
Noon, Hon. Sir Firoz Khan.
Patro, Hon. Sir A. P.
Prior, Hon. Mr. H. C.
Ram Chandra, Hon. Mr.
Roy, Hon. Sir Satyendra Nath.
Sobha Singh, Hon. Sardar Bahadur, Sir.

The Motion was negatived.

RESOLUTION RE PLACING OF ALL SPECIAL TRIBUNALS UNDER THE CONTROL OF HIGH COURTS OR OF A NEUTRAL DEPARTMENT.

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL (Bombay : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I move :

“ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that all special tribunals for the trial of offences be forthwith transferred from the administrative control of Departments of the Government of India and placed under the administrative control of High Courts or at any rate of a neutral Department like the Legislative Department. ”

Mr. Chairman, on this Resolution I will be very brief. The terms of my Resolution are so obvious that I need not detain the House very long. It is, Sir, a cardinal principle of English jurisprudence that every accused must have a fair and impartial trial. In order to give the accused a fair and impartial trial it is necessary that the judiciary should be separated from the executive Government. A famous Chief Justice of England once said : “ Justice must not only be done : it must *appear* to be done ”.

Sir, I am against special tribunals as compared to ordinary courts, because ordinary courts are subject to control and, superintendence of High Courts and there is an appeal from them to the High Courts, whereas these special tribunals are not subject to any such control, superintendence or appeal. I realise that we are living under an emergency, that we are living in exceptional times, and it may not be possible to do away entirely with all the special tribunals. But what I cannot understand is how these tribunals could be under the control of a department which is itself responsible for prosecutions and interested in the results of those prosecutions. Even in the case of civil tribunals like the Income-tax Appellate Tribunal, Government have themselves seen the impropriety of their being under the control of departments which are responsible for the prosecutions and interested in the results ; they have forthwith transferred the Income-tax Appellate Tribunal from the Finance Department to a neutral department like the Legislative Department of the Government of India. Therefore, I cannot understand why tribunals, for the trial of offences, like the bribery and corruption tribunals should be under the War Department which is intimately concerned with the preparation of cases coming before these tribunals. I do not want to cast any aspersions on the members of these tribunals, but there is a certain amount of apprehension in the minds of the public that the members of these tribunals are liable to be influenced in their decision by the fact that they are subordinate to a department which is itself interested in the prosecutions and in the results of such prosecutions. It is therefore the duty of Government to remove this apprehension by taking away these tribunals from the departments concerned and bring them under the control of High Courts or in the alternative, if that is not immediately possible, at least under the control of a neutral department like the Legislative Department of the Government of India. Sir, I move.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR (Madras : Muhammadan) : Sir, I strongly support the Resolution which has just been moved by my Honourable friend Mr. Dalal. As has been observed by him, it is one of the fundamentals of jurisprudence that we should provide not only for dispensation of impartial justice but also should see to it that every possible effort is made to inspire confidence in the parties which go before a tribunal and in the public generally. The public should have confidence in the tribunal or the magistrate before whom the trial is held, they must know that the tribunal or the magistrate is completely above-board and not at all in any way subject to any influence.

As has been observed by the Honourable Mover, it is possible that the special courts by which some special offences are being tried, may in some way be influenced by the fact that they are subordinates of the Department which is interested in the prosecution of the people whom they try. It may be that they may not be influenced by this fact to the extent that they may not be fair to the people whom they try, but still the very fact that they are open to this suspicion will go to undermine the confidence which it is necessary to inspire in the minds of the public. I therefore, Sir, strongly support the Resolution. I think there is nothing very difficult to prevent Government from carrying out the suggestion which

has been made in this Resolution. It is undesirable that the very Department interested in the success of the prosecution should have control over the members of the tribunal trying the case, and as obviously it is not intended to exert any influence on the tribunal trying the case, it should be quite easy for Government—and it is, I think, really fair—to arrange that the tribunal is not under the control of, or is not composed of members who are subordinates to the Department which is interested in the prosecution. Therefore I give my whole-hearted support to the Resolution which has been moved.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU (United Provinces Southern : Non-Muhammadan) : Mr. Chairman, I should like to give this Resolution my support. The considerations which can be advanced in favour of it have been stated by the Honourable Mr. Dalal and the Honourable Mr. Padshah. I do not think it is necessary for me to dilate on them at any length. The effect of this Resolution, if it is accepted by Government and the Council, will be that the commissioners or the judges who will be members of the special tribunals will be appointed, not, as we usually see, by the Home Department, not by the War Department, not by the Supply Department, not by the Department concerned, but either by a High Court or by a neutral Department like the Legislative Department. Now we are suggesting that change, not because we say that the men who have been appointed have not been fair or impartial—they may have been fair and impartial, I hope they have been fair and impartial in all cases we are suggesting this change because we feel that in principle the accused should have the feeling generated in him that he is going to have a fair and impartial trial is right and proper. If the judge is appointed by the prosecutors, then you get a combination of functions, and in the mind of the accused the judge is not regarded as impartial as he should be. It is for this reason that the Honourable Mr. Dalal has suggested in this Resolution that the power of appointment of judges or commissioners should reside in a High Court or in the Legislative Department.

I do not wish to speak at any length on the manner in which special tribunals have worked. We have had experience of special tribunals in the provinces and know what they mean. I have come across cases—ordinary cases of burglary, ordinary cases of dacoity which have nothing to do with politics whatever tried under the Ordinances, which gave no right of appeal to a High Court. We have lived through difficult times in our province, and we know how magistrates have massacred justice and how they have disregarded all rules of procedure. I can state from my experience cases of a revolting nature, revolting in the sense that in the matter of procedure the magistrates and the special tribunals did anything they pleased because the High Court had no proper supervision over them. Now even if we pass this Resolution the High Court will not come to possess any power over them. The only thing that we shall be assuring by passing this Resolution—assuming that it is accepted by Government—is that the commissioner or the judge will be appointed by a High Court or by a neutral Department like the Legislative Department. I must not be understood to support, by supporting this Resolution, in any manner or form, the principle of special tribunals. I have a clear conscience in this matter. I voted against the Defence of India Act. I can say with a clear conscience that I am not responsible for all the atrocities that occurred in the name of law and order in various provinces in this country during a certain troublous period.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU (United Provinces Northern : Non-Muhammadan) : Mr. Chairman, I support the Resolution that has been moved by Mr. Dalal. The arguments in favour of it have been very ably stated by the speakers who have already taken part in the discussion. I should like, however, to make one or two observations on the subject before us. The special tribunals to which this Resolution refers were appointed at various times for various purposes. The earliest of these tribunals are perhaps those that were appointed in August 1942 and immediately afterwards. So far as these tribunals exist, I strongly feel that there is no reason for keeping them under the administrative control of the department which initiates the prosecutions. I am well aware of the fact that in certain circumstances the cases tried in accordance with the special procedure laid down in the ordinance authorising the creation of these tribunals

[Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzer.]

can be revised by a judge of a High Court, but I believe that the Judge has to be appointed by the Governor of the province concerned. It was so under Ordinance II of 1942 which was invalidated by the Federal Court, but which has now been validated by the recent decision of the Privy Council. I see no reason why the old procedure should be retained. Things have changed a great deal during the last two years, and if any justification existed for the appointment of special tribunals empowered to follow a certain procedure in 1942 it does not exist now. In any case whatever procedure these courts follow, there is no reason why the trying officers should not be appointed by a High Court, and why a regular appeal should not lie to a High Court.

Sir, special tribunals or courts empowered to employ special procedure have not been appointed for one purpose only. My Honourable friend, Mr. Dalal, referred to tribunals for the trial of cases of bribery and corruption. Is there the least reason why the Commissioners forming a Tribunal should be appointed by any executive authority? I am sure that every Department which has the power to appoint Special Tribunals wishes that full justice should be done to the accused placed before them. But the method that is being followed now is, in my opinion, fundamentally wrong. Whatever justification there may be for having Special Tribunals, there is absolutely no reason now why cases of bribery and corruption should be tried by Commissioners appointed by the War Department or any Administrative Department of the Government of India and not under the full control of the High Courts. For these reasons, Sir, I give my full support to the Resolution moved by the Honourable Mr. Dalal. I am sure this Resolution does not relate to offences which come under the military law. They stand in a separate category. But, barring such cases, I see no reason why the demand made in this Resolution should not be accepted by the Government or by the Council.

Before I sit down, Sir, I may perhaps give an illustration to show the danger of allowing the Executive Departments of the Central Government or any other Government to appoint Special Courts. I have been reliably told that in one Province at least an attempt was made to use the summary procedure prescribed by Ordinance No. II of 1942 for the trial of cases which had nothing to do with the disturbances that occurred in August 1942 and afterwards. There was, I understand, an attempt to apply the special procedure to the trial of ordinary cases. My Honourable friend Mr. Sapru tells me that a few cases of an ordinary kind were actually tried under this Ordinance. I too have been told, Sir, of certain cases of this character. Perhaps the information of my Honourable friend Mr. Sapru relates to the very same cases that were mentioned to me. This shows the great danger of allowing the Executive Government to appoint Magistrates for the trial of cases of any particular kind. It shows the necessity of placing the Special Courts under the control of authorities which are above suspicion. The Resolution before us refers to two such authorities, namely, the High Courts and the Legislative Department. If for one would prefer the High Courts to the Legislative Department, but I recognise that the Legislative Department, which has a long tradition behind it of considering cases from a judicial point of view will be a far better authority for the control of Special Tribunals than the Home Department or any other Executive department.

THE HONOURABLE LT.-COL. A. C. BEYNON (Nominated Official): Sir, I would like to make it clear at the outset that I confine myself to those Special Tribunals which are under the control of the Government of India. The recommendation that these Tribunals be placed under the administrative control of the High Courts is regarded as impracticable since these Tribunals have all-India jurisdiction, and can accordingly try cases in and from any Province. Government, however, concede the soundness of the principle underlying the Resolution and will take up the matter of the transfer of Special Tribunals to the control of what my Honourable friend refers to as a neutral Department. The actual transfer may take a little time. Sir, I hope that in view of this assurance my Honourable friend will withdraw the Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL: Mr. Chairman, the reply, of my Honourable friend the Member representing the War Department has been very conciliatory. Government accept the principle of the transfer but they say it will take a certain amount of time to make adjustments. I realise we are in a war emergency, living in exceptional times, and I am prepared to accede to the request of the Government. On the assurance that Government accept the principle of my Resolution, I beg leave of the House to withdraw it.

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

(The Honourable Mr. Nikuhja Kishore Das, in whose name stood the next Resolution, was absent when called.)

RESOLUTION *RE* RIGHTS OF INDIANS DOMICILED IN DOMINIONS, COLONIES, ETC.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: (United Provinces Southern: Non-Muhammadian): Mr. Chairman, the Resolution that I desire to place before the Council for consideration runs as follows:—

“This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to take steps to protect and safeguard the rights of Indians by bilateral Agreements between the Government of India and the Governments of the Dominions, Colonies and Protectorates in which Indians are resident or domiciled and to which in future emigration may be permitted by the Government of India.”

Mr. Chairman, I am somewhat labouring under this difficulty—a difficulty of my own creation—that I did not, when I saw the ballot today, think that my Resolution would be reached today. If the speech that I make appears to be of a somewhat perfunctory nature, my apology would be that I did not anticipate that this Resolution would come up for discussion at 4-20 P.M. today. I had hoped that it might be taken up at about 5 P.M. so that I might formally move and have priority for the 16th. With this apology I will go on to develop the arguments in favour of my Resolution. Mr. Chairman, it is hardly necessary for me to point out how important, from the point of view of the prestige and status of this country, the question of Indians settled abroad is. It is, therefore, a matter of some legitimate satisfaction that in recent months the position of the Indians Overseas Department has been enhanced. The Indians Overseas Department was separated from the Education Department and created as a separate Department in August 1941. Now it is called the Commonwealth Relations Department. I think that is a name which more accurately describes the nature of the work that that Department has to do. Personally I should like that Department to take over much of the work that the External Affairs Department does so far as Indians settled abroad are concerned. At the moment its activities are confined to countries which are included within what is called the British Commonwealth and the Empire. I should like its activities to be widened but that is a question which is outside the purview of this Resolution and I will not go into it. Though I have used the word “agreement”, I should like to make it clear that I have used that word in a rather wide sense. I include it to mean arrangements, conventions or any other equally efficacious instrument which would enable our relationship with individual units of the British Commonwealth and Empire to be governed so far as the status and position of Indians is concerned. You may ask me why I emphasise the bilateral nature of these agreements. What is the necessity for any bilateral agreement? Sir, my first reason for suggesting that the principle of bilateral agreements should be accepted is that such agreements would provide for direct and more intimate contact between the Government of India and the Government of the country concerned. I have divided the Governments I have in mind into three classes. I have divided them into Dominions, Colonies and Protectorates. So far as we are concerned, we are neither a Dominion nor a Protectorate nor a Colony nor exactly even a complete Dependency. We are theoretically now at liberty to negotiate directly with the Dominions; we are supposed to have liberty to negotiate directly with such countries as Ceylon and Burma. I hope it will be possible for us to negotiate directly with other countries also to which I shall refer.

The second thing that I want is that these bilateral agreements should be based upon the principle of reciprocity and I am suggesting bilateral agreements as it may be desirable in arriving at these agreements to take into consideration varying local

[Mr. P. N. Saprú.]

factors. The same type of agreement may not do in the case of all countries because, as I shall show, the problems differ with the various countries with which we have to deal and therefore the bilateral type of agreement, bilateral arrangement, would be more suitable as it would enable us to make allowance for local variations. There would be no one standard of our own by which we would be bound ; there would of course be certain fundamental principles which we shall observe with regard to all arrangements. But subject to these fundamental principles, bilateral agreements would give us scope for variation having regard to the nature of the local problems with which we may be dealing at any particular time in regard to a particular country.

I do not think it is necessary for me to give you exactly what the population of Indians settled in the various parts of the British Commonwealth and Empire is. I will just indicate the main countries in which we are to be found. For example in Ceylon, according to the 1940 census figures, we had about 800,000 Indians ; in British Malaya 748,829 ; in Mauritius 269,885 ; in Kenya 44,635 ; in Uganda 13,026 ; in Zanzibar 14,242 ; in Tanganyika 23,422 Indians ; in Jamaica 19,039 ; in Trinidad 161,106 ; in British Guiana 142,736 ; in Fiji 94,966 ; in Canada 1,599 Indians settled in Vancouver ; in Australia 2,404 ; and in New Zealand 1,146. In South Africa with which I do not propose to deal—and I will explain the reasons why I am not dealing with South Africa a little later—we have over 2 lakhs and then we have some Indians in some other places also. The first proposition is that India has a direct interest in the Colonies and Protectorates where Indians are settled as a result of more or less 100 years of contact with them. Now I will divide for the purposes of developing my case the territories into three regions. The first region I would describe as the Caribbean region. In the Caribbean region we have British Guiana, Trinidad, Jamaica and British Honduras. There is a long history so far as this region is concerned. Emigration of Indians started in the year 1837. Indians went there as indentured labourers. A great many of them are working in the sugar plantations in this region. We had some missions and committees sent to these Countries but I will not talk about them. I shall pass over all the period and come to about 1938 when Lord Moyne's Commission was appointed to enquire into the position in these countries. Now, so far as Indians there are concerned, our principal difficulty is lack of proper information in regard to them. We are not in direct contact with them. We do not know enough about them. They are too far away from us. It is for this reason that we have been pressing that there should be an Agent appointed in this region, and the suggestion that I would make is that there should be a High Commissioner or an Agent appointed for these three places, Jamaica, Trinidad and British Guiana. These countries too should have the right of representation in this country if they so choose ; they can send their representatives to India so that they may be in touch with our Government in the same way as our representative in those countries will be in touch with those Governments. Their representative will be able on any particular occasion to tell them what the strength of feeling on any particular question in regard to India is. I attach importance to our diplomatic representation in this region as that will enable us to maintain contact and interest in our nationals settled in these countries.

Sir, we know that the constitutional future of these three countries in the Caribbean zone is in the melting pot ; we do not know yet what ultimately the constitutional arrangements in these regions will be. But whatever may be the constitutional arrangements in regard to these countries, it will be necessary to see that in these constitutional arrangements the rights of our nationals are protected. That will be one of the first duties of any Indian Agent or High Commissioner that we send to these countries.

The second responsibility which one would like to cast upon such a representative is to see that a portion of the fund which His Majesty's Government say they will make available—they say they propose to place a large sum at the disposal of these colonies over a period of ten years for intensive development—is utilised for the benefit of Indians. It is desirable to ensure that in the development that takes place in these colonies Indians also get a share. Indians in these places are educationally

backward. Education in Fiji, Trinidad and Jamaica is more or less in the hands of missionaries. The whole position was reviewed by the Council on a Resolution which was moved by me on the 5th August 1943, and I pointed out then what the position of Indians there was. Mr. Tyson, who appeared before the Commission of Lord Moyne, stated the case of the Government of India for an Agent, and he strongly advocated that there should be an Agent appointed in these colonies.

I shall now pass on to what I would call the Pacific zone. I have said that our most important need so far as countries of the Caribbean zone are concerned is information. Our second concern is to see that our countrymen who are settled in these countries get an opportunity for raising their standard of living and for improving their standard of education in any post-war reconstruction scheme that His Majesty's Government undertake in pursuance of any colonial policy that they follow in accordance with the recommendations of Lord Moyne's Commission. The other zone, the Pacific zone, which is important from our point of view, is situate in the Pacific area. In the Pacific area the most important of our interests are represented by the island of Fiji. In Fiji we have the largest number of Indians in the Pacific area. And there, the most important question so far as Indians are concerned is that of land. There has been a great deal of controversy about it. I do not think it will be permissible for me within the limits of a speech which will cover the entire British Empire and the British Commonwealth to go minutely into this question. But it is desirable that we should have a proper Agent or other representative in Fiji and we should come to an agreement in regard to this question with the Fiji Government so that he may be able to watch our interests. We may concede the right to Fiji of having itself represented in India if it so chooses. We may have a High Commissioner for New Zealand who may be entrusted with the work of looking after our interests in Fiji also. We have a High Commissioner in Australia. We may have an exchange of diplomatic representatives with New Zealand. The High Commissioner who may be appointed for New Zealand may be entrusted with the work of looking after the interests of our nationals in Fiji.

I now come to what I shall call the Indian Ocean area. In this area there are four countries where we have large interests. First of all comes Burma. We had about a million Indians settled in Burma before the war. To be precise, they were not "settled", because Burma was part of India before 1937 and they were there. Burma is our first interest so far as our nationals are concerned. Then we have interests in Malaya. We had about 800,000 Indians in Malaya. Then the third interest is in Ceylon. The fourth interest is in Mauritius. In dealing with these countries our point of view will have to be somewhat different from the point of view that we shall have to adopt towards the arrogant white races of South Africa or of Kenya and Southern Rhodesia. Here I would suggest that it might be desirable for the Government of India to control immigration, in other words, enter into bilateral agreements with these countries under which we may voluntarily put upon ourselves some restraint in the matter of immigration of our labour to these colonies. It is all right for us to stand on our right of unrestricted immigration to Ceylon, to Burma, to Malaya, and so on. But after all there is no racial problem involved so far as these countries are concerned. They want restrictions so far as Indian immigration is concerned not because they consider themselves racially superior to Indians, but presumably because they have got some economic interests to protect. In bringing about bilateral agreements with these countries, for a big country like India which aspires for the leadership of Asia along with China, it will be necessary to take into special consideration the need of the Burmese, the need of the Sinhalese, to exploit their own country with their own labour. Of course, when we are negotiating with these countries commercial or trade agreements or agreements in regard to other matters which may be of interest to them, we should not omit to take into consideration the status of Indians settled in these countries. They are entitled to have a fair dealing, and there can be no surrender on our part. Indians in these countries must be regarded as equal subjects with the other sections of the population. If they want our labour, it will be necessary for us, before we allow our labour to go to them, to see that our labour will get a fair deal, and that it will continue to get a fair deal, but it may not be necessary for us to go to the extreme length of saying—we have got a right to flood your country with our labour, we have got a right, just as the British

[Mr. R. N. Saptu.]

capitalists claim, to exploit you. Our attitude towards these small countries, as a big country, may well be different from the attitude of the British exploiter in Ceylon, of the British exploiter in Burma, and of the British exploiter in India and all other parts of the world, or, for the matter of that, from that of his cousin, the American exploiter. Therefore, I should like separate agreements based upon the fact that we have cultural ties which bind us to the Burmese people, which bind us to the Sinhalese and which bind us to the people of Malaya and in arrangements of this nature I should like, Sir, the Department of Commonwealth Relations not to be the mouth-piece of Indian imperialism, but to be the mouth-piece of that enlightened Indian democracy which wishes to establish on a basis of equality happier relations between India and these countries.

I will now come to the last zone, the African Zone. In the African Zone we have got Kenya, Uganda, Zanzibar which is a British Protectorate, and Tanganyika which is a mandated territory, but which is for all practical purposes a British possession. Now, here, in this African Zone we shall have to see that no undue encroachments are made on the rights of Indians. In the post-war period we shall have, first of all, to ensure for them political equality. In Kenya we have a Communal franchise, the highlands there are reserved for the whites. So far as Uganda and Tanganyika are concerned certain restrictions on the re-entry of Indians were recently announced. I raised this question in the last session of the Council, but they were, I was assured, of a temporary nature. It will be within the recollection of the House that some announcement was made by the Honourable Mr. Banerjee in regard to them lately. We know as a matter of fact that General Smuts and the South Africans want to establish a white empire in Africa. The whole African continent will lie at the feet of the victorious nation which may prove to be Great Britain, and when I say Great Britain it may prove only to be South Africa. General Smuts would like to have a sort of federation in which Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika will play their part and of which South and North Rhodesia will be members. In the matter of policy towards Indians there is not much difference between General Smuts and Dr. Malan, and this policy will be pursued ruthlessly in these areas with the result that the position of Indians will deteriorate. Now before that position arises, our Government should take steps to secure bilateral agreements with these countries and ensure for the Indians there to the utmost extent possible a fair deal. It may be necessary for that purpose for us to have an Agent or a High Commissioner stationed in Kenya. If the Kenyans want, they also can have their agent stationed in India. I have no objection to a reciprocal arrangement of that nature. This is so far as the colonies and the protectorates are concerned.

So far as the Dominions are concerned, you will see that I have kept them out of the regional zoning. We have about 1,500 odd Indians in Canada. We know that there are immigration laws there. We have got to find out what exactly is the status of Indians there. I think we have got 2,400 Indians in Australia and a thousand odd Indians in New Zealand. We want to get for the Indians who are settled in Australia and New Zealand a fair deal. They have the franchise in Australia, but there may be administrative discrimination against them in the matter of appointments. In any case we want to develop commercial relations with these countries, and we should utilise the development of these commercial relations to see that the status of Indians settled in these countries—in Canada, Australia and New Zealand—improves. It is important that we should have relations with Canada which is so near the United States. It is desirable for us to have mutual interchange of diplomatic representation with Canada from more than one point of view. On the other hand I have not considered it necessary to deal with South Africa. So far as South Africa is concerned, I understand a special day will be given to us, but apart from the fact that a special day is going to be given for South Africa, I have deliberately excluded it from this enumeration of the countries with whom I should like to have, in the post-war world, contact, bilateral agreements—not only agreements in regard to emigration and the status of Indians, but also agreements in regard to trade and commerce. I have excluded South Africa because, speaking

for myself, I do not wish to have anything to do with South Africa. The South African for me is no better than and no worse than a Japanese or a German. I consider him just as criminal, I consider General Smuts and Dr. Malan just as bad as Hitler or Mussolini and all the gang whom the United Nations are denouncing. If we had our way, we would have nothing to do with them. We would have them dealt with as enemies of racial good will. It is a very strong and irresponsible statement for any member of the Opposition to make, but this represents our feeling. I think that these men are full of racial pride and I cannot understand the distinction between a Germany which oppresses the Jews and a South Africa which oppresses the Indians. The only difference that I can see is that the Jews have got white colour, and the Indians in South Africa are not of white colour. Some of them may have white colour but all of them have not white colour. That is the only difference. So far as South Africa is concerned, there is no question of any agreement, or understanding or anything of that sort. We shall have an understanding with the South African when he becomes a more reasonable creature, when he comes to learn that the Indian is just like any other human being and that he is just as much entitled to the rights and privileges if he has been settled in South Africa for generations as any other Indian.

Sir, I have taken a good deal of your time but the main idea underlying my Resolution is that the period between now and the end of the war should be utilised by the Commonwealth Relations Department to improve, if necessary by bilateral agreements—it is necessary that we should take into consideration varying local conditions—of Indians abroad. The principle, so far as the political side is concerned, is that there can be no surrender on our part in regard to the fundamental principle that there shall be full political citizenship for India everywhere in the British Commonwealth and the Empire.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM (Bihar and Orissa : Muhammadan) : On a point of information, Sir. Do the Protectorates and the Colonies have this power of entering into bilateral agreements ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : As I pointed out, there is the Colonial Office. I visualize that these Colonies should be freer, if not entirely free, from the stranglehold of Imperialism in the post-war period.

THE HONOURABLE THE CHAIRMAN (the Honourable Sir David Devadoss) : Resolution moved :—

“ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to take steps to protect and safeguard the rights of Indians by bilateral Agreements between the Government of India and the Governments of the Dominions, Colonies and Protectorates in which Indians are resident or domiciled and to which in future emigration may be permitted by the Government of India.”

Discussion on this Resolution will proceed on the next non-official day, i.e., the 16th.

STATEMENT OF BUSINESS.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN (Leader of the House) : I should like to suggest, Sir, that we meet on Monday the 13th at 12 NOON to continue the discussion of the Resolution of which notice has been given by the Honourable Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru.

The Council then adjourned till Twelve NOON on Monday, the 13th November 1944.