

11th March 1942

**THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES**

Official Report

Volume II, 1942

(11th March to 2nd April, 1942)

**FIFTEENTH SESSION
OF THE
FIFTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
1942**



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

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The Honourable Sir ABDUR RAHIM, K.C.S.I.

Deputy President:

Mr. AKHIL CHANDRA DATTA, M.L.A.

Panel of Chairmen:

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Lieut.-Colonel Sir HENRY GIDNEY, M.L.A.

Sir HENRY RICHARDSON, M.L.A.

Sir COWASJI JEHANGIR, Bart., K.C.I.E., O.B.E., M.L.A.

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Sir ABDUL HALIM GHUZHNAVI, M.L.A.

Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

CONTENTS.

VOLUME II.—11th March to 2nd April 1942.

	PAGES.		PAGES.
WEDNESDAY, 11TH MARCH, 1942—		MONDAY, 16TH MARCH, 1942—	
Member Sworn	959	Starred Questions and Answers	1145—52
Starred Questions and Answers	959—67	Motion for Adjournment <i>re</i> Alleged unmannerly and rude Treatment by a British Officer of the Information Department—Ruled out of order	1152—53
Unstarred Questions and Answers	967—70	The Industrial Statistics Bill	1153
Motion for Adjournment <i>re</i> —Alleged misconduct of Soldiers at Hujur Paga near Poona—Leave refused	970—71	The Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marking) Amendment Bill—Introduced	1153
Shortage of Wheat and Wheat Flour in Delhi—Withdrawn	971, 1014—33	The Indian Tolls (Army) Amendment Bill—Introduced	1153—54
Message from the Council of State	971	The Indian Finance Bill—Discussion on the motion to consider not concluded	1154—1200
Election of Members on the Standing Committee for the Department of Commerce	972	TUESDAY, 17TH MARCH, 1942—	
Election of Members on the Standing Committee for the Department of Communications	972	Member Sworn	1201
Election of Members on the Standing Committee for Roads	972	Starred Questions and Answers	1201—10
Election of the Standing Finance Committee for Railways	972—73	Unstarred Question and Answer	1210—12
Election of the Central Advisory Council for Railways	973—75	Short Notice Question and Answer	1213—16
The Weekly Holidays Bill—Presentation of the Report of the Select Committee	975	Election of Members to the Standing Committee for the Department of Commerce	1216
The Indian Finance Bill—Discussion on the motion to consider not concluded	975—1014	The Cantonments (Amendment) Bill—Introduced	1216—17
THURSDAY, 12TH MARCH, 1942—		The Indian Finance Bill—Discussion on the motion to consider not concluded	1217—68
Member Sworn	1035	WEDNESDAY, 18TH MARCH, 1942—	
Starred Questions and Answers	1035—38	Member Sworn	1269
The Indian Finance Bill—Discussion on the motion to consider not concluded	1038—88	Starred Questions and Answers	1269—76
FRIDAY, 13TH MARCH, 1942—		Statements laid on the Table	1276—78
Starred Questions and Answers	1089—90	Motion for Adjournment <i>re</i> Closing of certain Latrines to the Clerks of the Railway Clearing Accounts Office—Ruled out of order	1278—79
Statements laid on the Table	1090—93	Election of Members to the Standing Finance Committee for Railways	1279
The Indian Finance Bill—Discussion on the motion to consider not concluded	1094—1144		

PAGES.	PAGES.
WEDNESDAY 18TH MARCH 1942.	
Home Department Declaration of Expenditure issued under the Registration of Foreigners Act	1279—80
The Indian Finance Bill—Discussion on the consideration of clauses not concluded	1280—1328
THURSDAY, 19TH MARCH, 1942—	
Starred Questions and Answers	1329—33
Unstarred Questions and Answers	1334—36
Election of Members to the Standing Committee for Roads	1336—37
Election of Members to the Standing Committee for the Department of Communications	1337
Election of Members to the Central Advisory Council for Railways	1337
The Industrial Statistics Bill—Presentation of the Report of the Select Committee	1338
Election of a Member for the Central Committee of the Tuberculosis Association of India	1338
Election of Members for the Standing Committee for the Department of Labour	1338
The Indian Finance Bill—Discussion on the consideration of clauses not concluded	1339—89
FRIDAY, 20TH MARCH, 1942—	
Starred Questions and Answers	1391—97
Motion for Adjournment re Alleged Rowdyism by Soldiers at Bareilly—Postponed	1397—98
The Indian Finance Bill—Passed as amended	1399—1415
Resolution re Moratorium on the payment of arrears from the Railway Revenues—Adopted	1416—24
The Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marking) Amendment Bill—Passed	1424—25
The Indian Tolls (Army) Amendment Bill—Passed	1425
The Cantonments (Amendment) Bill—Passed	1425—26
Statement of Business	1426
MONDAY, 23RD MARCH, 1942—	
Members Sworn	1427
Starred Questions and Answers	1427—37
Unstarred Questions and Answers	1437—39
Motion for Adjournment re Alleged Rowdyism by Soldiers at Bareilly—Not moved	1439—40
Home Department Declaration of Exemption issued under the Registration of Foreigners Act	1440
Election of a Muslim Member for the Standing Committee on Pilgrimage to the Hejaz	1440
Election of Members for the Standing Committee for the Department of Civil Defence	1441
Demands for Supplementary Grants	1441—73
TUESDAY, 24TH MARCH, 1942—	
Member Sworn	1475
Starred Questions and Answers	1475—91
Unstarred Questions and Answers	1491—95
Statements laid on the Table The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill—Presentation of the Report of the Select Committee	1495—97
The Indian Limitation (Amendment) Bill—Passed	1497
The Indian Companies (Amendment) Bill—Passed	1497—1501
The Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application (Amendment) Bill—Passed	1501—02
The Federal Court (Supplemental Powers) Bill—Passed	1502—03
The Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill (Amendment of Section 4)—Passed	1503—04
The Reciprocity Bill—Postponed	1504—05
The Delhi Muslim Wakfs Bill—Resolution for reference to Joint Committee—Adopted	1505—07
The Indian Succession (Amendment) Bill—Circulated	1507—08
The Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill—Circulated	1508—09
	1509—10

PAGES.	PAGES.
TUESDAY, 24TH MARCH, 1942—contd.	
The Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application (Second Amendment) Bill—Circulated	1511
The Usurious Loans (Amendment) Bill—Motion not moved	1511
The Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Bill—Introduced	1512
The Sugar Industry Protection Repealing Bill—Introduced	1512
The Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill (Amendment of Sections 386 and 539-B)—Introduced	1512
The Indian Tea Cess Repealing Bill—Introduced	1512
The Indian States (Protection against Disaffection) Amendment Bill—Introduced	1513
WEDNESDAY, 25TH MARCH, 1942—	
Member Sworn	1515
Starred Questions and Answers	1515—23
Unstarred Questions and Answers	1524—33
Competency of the Indian Legislative Assembly to entertain a Bill relating to a certain class of Multi-unit Co-operative Societies	1533—36
Messages from the Council of State	1536
The Weekly Holidays Bill—Passed as amended	1536—51
The Industrial Statistics Bill—Passed as amended	1551—63
TUESDAY, 31ST MARCH, 1942—	
Member Sworn	1565
Starred Questions and Answers	1565—81
Unstarred Questions and Answers	1581—93
Transferred Starred Questions and Answers	1593—97
Transferred Unstarred Questions and Answers	1597—1602
TUESDAY 31ST MARCH 1942—contd.	
Motion for Adjournment re Proposals of the British War Cabinet concerning India—Leave refused	1602—04, 1616—17
Election of Members to the Standing Committee for the Labour Department of	1604—05
Election of a Member to the Central Committee of the Tuberculosis Association	1605
Election of a Member to the Standing Committee on Pilgrimage to the Hejaz	1605
Message from the Council of State	1605
Statement laid on the Table re Cases in which the Lowest Tenders have not been accepted by the High Commissioner for India	1605—09
The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill—Passed	1610—16
WEDNESDAY, 1ST APRIL, 1942—	
Members Sworn	1619
Starred Questions and Answers	1619—29
Unstarred Questions and Answers	1629—34
Message from the Council of State	1635
Election of Members to the Standing Committee for the Department of Civil Defence	1635
Resolution re—	
Release of Political Prisoners and Detenus—Negotiated	1635—56
The Supply Department—Withdrawn	1656—74
Appointment of a Committee on the Kamaran Quarantine Station—Withdrawn	1674—86
THURSDAY, 2ND APRIL, 1942—	
Starred Questions and Answers	1687—94
Short Notice Questions and Answers	1694—95
Statements laid on the Table	1695—98

- PAGES.	PAGES.
THURSDAY, 2ND APRIL, 1942—concl.	THURSDAY, 2ND APRIL, 1942—concl.
Motion for Adjournment re Alleged misconduct of European Soldiers at Sar- nath—Disallowed	The Sugar Industry (Pro- tection) Repealing Bill— Circulated
1698—1700	1703—21
Home Department Declar- ation of Exemption issued under the Registration of Foreigners Act	The Indian Tea Cess Repeal- ing Bill—Motion to refer to Select Committee— Negatived
1700	1721—32
The Delhi Muslim Wakfs Bill—Nomination of Members to the Joint Committee	The Abolition of Whipping Bill—Introduced
1701—02	1732
The Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Bill—Cir- culated	Message from the Council of State
1702—03	1732

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 11th March, 1942.

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber of the Council House, at Eleven of the Clock, Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim) in the Chair.

MEMBER SWORN.

Mr. M. Khurshid, M.L.A. (Government of India: Nominated Official).

STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

(a) ORAL ANSWERS.

RESTORATION OF FOREMAN'S GRADE IN COPPERSMITH SHOP, JAMALPUR RAILWAY WORKSHOP.

167. *Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: (a) Will the Honourable the Railway Member please state whether it is proposed to restore the Foreman's grade in the Coppersmith Shop at the East Indian Railway Workshops at Jamalpur in view of the responsibilities attached to the post and the supervision work involved? If not, why not?

(b) If the answer to part (a) above be in the negative, do Government propose to restore to Mr. Gaynor, the prospects open to employees of other shops and trades and which were open to him till 1935 of promotion to the grade of Rs. 650 as being the senior-most man in his grade?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: (a) and (b). I have no information of any such proposal, but the question is not one which would require a reference to Government, who have no proposals in respect of Mr. Gaynor under consideration.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: Sir, I refuse to accept the answer as it is very unsatisfactory. I gave the Honourable Member sufficient time to find out and yet he says "I have no information". I will ask the question again.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member cannot ask again the same question.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: Sir, I claim that when an Honourable Member of this House takes the trouble to put a question and it is admitted by you, Sir, can Government throw that question into the waste paper basket and refuse to answer?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): It has been ruled often in this House that whether an answer given to a question is satisfactory or not, it is not the business of the Chair.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: Is it not the business of the Honourable Member in charge of this Department to give satisfaction when a question of this innocuous nature is asked? Does not the Honourable Member throw this question to my face when he gives the answer he does?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member may have other remedies.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: What other remedy have I? I have but to appeal to you for protection.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member knows that I cannot compel any Government Member to answer a question in a particular way which will satisfy the questioner.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: Then I move the adjournment of the House.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I cannot adjourn the House simply because the Honourable Member asks for it.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: I ask you, Sir, as one of the senior Members of this Honourable House that I do not wish to be insulted or disrespected in this manner by the Honourable Member on any question that I have asked. I have every right to expect a satisfactory answer to my question.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: There is no question of insult. I had said that I had no information of any such proposal under consideration. That is a fact.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: I asked for no proposals. I had asked for a distinct reply to a distinct question of an act of gross injustice to an individual?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Part (b) of the question inquires if we have certain proposals. I said we have no proposals.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: The rest of the question is not answered at all. You have flouted it. Part (b) is a direct question, and not a proposal. You turn it down saying it is a proposal and thus you evade the question.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: The Honourable Member's question in part (b) is, "Do Government propose to restore to Mr. Gaynor etc.", and my answer is "they do not".

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: Will the Honourable Member please tell me why they do not?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: That is an entirely different question.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: I now ask that supplementary question.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: I do not consider that this is a matter in which the Government should interfere.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: It is getting into a chronic habit with the Government that "they do not propose to interfere".

RAILWAY OFFICIALS' TRAVEL BY SALOONS.

168. *Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Railways please state if his attention has been drawn to the latest statements published in the papers throughout India by Mr. R. K. Sindhwa, M.L.A., Member, North Western Railway Advisory Committee, in connection with the overcrowding of third class passengers on railways?

(b) Is it a fact that he made a suggestion requesting the authorities to forego the travelling by special carriages and saloons?

(c) Is it a fact that the Agent, North Western Railway, and other officials of the Railway travel by special carriages?

(d) If so, are Government, in view of the shortage of locomotives and cutting down of a number of railway trains, prepared to ask the railway officials to travel by ordinary first class compartments?

(e) If not, the reasons therefor?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: (a) Yes.

(b) Government have no information as to whether a specific suggestion has been made by this gentleman to Railway Administrations.

(c) Yes.

(d) and (e). General Managers of Railways have already been requested to curtail the use of saloons to the greatest possible extent and to consider the possibility of the attachment of saloons, when they must be used, to goods trains in preference to passenger trains.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know if the Honourable Member himself has any definite suggestions with regard to the stopping of special trains and saloons?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: There are no special trains involved. I have made suggestions to various persons in regard to saloons including my own colleague.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know how many special trains are in the running which are causing inconveniences to ordinary passengers, first and second class?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: The bulk of the special trains are for military traffic. I cannot give details of these.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Are there any special trains on account of civil Officers?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: There are no officers entitled to special trains. A special train is required for His Excellency the Viceroy, and for Governors of Provinces on special occasions.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Are there any special trains for refugees?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: I want notice of the question.

ALLEGED BRIBERY IN SUPPLYING WAGONS ON NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.

169. ***Mr. Lalchand Navalrai:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Railways please state whether, in view of shortage of wagons for booking of goods on the North Western Railway, complaints have been made that several railway officials demand a large amount as illegal gratification before they supply the wagons?

(b) Is it a fact that the attention of Railway Authorities has been drawn from time to time to this alleged practice of the railway officials?

(c) Is it a fact that Mr. R. K. Sidhwa, M.L.A., Member, North Western Railway Advisory Committee, has given concrete instances to the Divisional Superintendent, North Western Railway, Karachi, of such bribetaking before booking of goods?

(d) If so, what steps do Government intend to take to stop this practice of bribery?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: (a) and (b). I understand that certain complaints of this nature have been received.

(c) I have called for the information.

(d) The Administration will doubtless take deterrent action in proved cases.

OUTGOING PASSENGERS FROM CALCUTTA.

170. ***Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi:** Will the Honourable the Communications Member be pleased to state what was the number of outgoing passengers, in excess of the estimated normal figure of passengers, who travelled between the 10th December, 1941 and 31st January, 1942 from Calcutta by the East Indian, Bengal Nagpur and Eastern Bengal Railways, separately?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: I have not got figures for all three Railways upto 31st January. The exodus had practically ceased by about the 25th January. The following are the figures available of the increase in the number of outward passengers over the same period of the preceding year: E. I. Railway 10th December to 25th January, 887,000; B. N. Railway 9th December to 31st January, 18,000; B. and A. Railway 9th December to 26th January, 159,000, making a total of 514,000.

NON-ISSUE OF RAILWAY TICKETS TO PILGRIMS FOR KUMBHA MELA, ALLAHABAD.

†171. *Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: Will the Honourable the Communications Member be pleased to state why the pilgrims to Kumbha mela were prevented from attending the same, the railway administration having been instructed not to issue tickets for Allahabad?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: I would refer the Honourable Member to the Press Communique which issued on the 22nd December, 1941.

AMALGAMATED BENGAL AND ASSAM RAILWAY AND EFFECT ON SALARIES, ETC.

†172. *Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: (a) Will the Honourable the Communications Member be pleased to state whether, by the amalgamation of the Assam Bengal Railway and Eastern Bengal Railway, the all inclusive salaries of officers (some or any) have been decreased by reason of their re-appointment on the Bengal and Assam Railway?

(b) Have the all inclusive salaries of the subordinates formerly belonging to the Assam Bengal Railway been decreased as a result of their re-appointment on the Bengal and Assam Railway?

(c) How many subordinates have been affected by the offer of re-appointment on lesser pay and what were their lengths of service?

(d) How many subordinates have resigned or voluntarily retired due to their proposed re-appointment on lesser pay?

(e) In the matter of re-appointment of the officers, did Government consider the minimum qualification of the officers as required under the rules of Federal Public Service Commission?

(f) How many officers of the former Assam Bengal Railway in the Audit Department possess the required qualification in accountancy?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: (a) and (b). Yes, in some cases.

(c) and (d). Government have not these particulars, but I have called for information of the numbers in question and a reply will be laid on the table of the House in due course.

(e) No, as the officers concerned were already working as such, Government did not consider it necessary to apply to them criteria applicable to fresh recruits.

(f) I am not clear as to the meaning of "the required qualifications in accountancy", as accountancy qualifications are not prescribed on State Railways for admission to the Accounts Department.

EXPENDITURE ON AMENITIES FOR EMPLOYEES ON BENGAL AND ASSAM RAILWAY.

†173. *Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: Will the Honourable the Railway Member be pleased to state:

(a) the number of European and Indian employees in the Bengal and Assam Railway; and

†Answer to this question laid on the table, the questioner being absent.

- (b) the contribution made by the railway towards:
- (i) the education of each European child,
 - (ii) the education of each Indian child of the railway employees, and
 - (iii) the Institute and other welfare expense per capita for an Indian and an European employee?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: (a) I have called for information and a reply will be laid on the table of the House in due course.

(b) I regret that I cannot undertake to direct an investigation to be made regarding each child, but if the aggregate amounts spent on European and Indian education and on European and Indian institutes are readily available, they will be supplied.

OFFICERS IN THE INDIAN ORDNANCE SERVICE.

†174. ***Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam:** (a) Will the Honourable the Supply Member be pleased to state the total number of officers in the Indian Ordnance Service and of them how many are Indians (Anglo-Indians not being included)?

(b) What is the total number of foremen and of them how many are Indians (Anglo-Indians not being included)?

(c) Are the pay, prospects and other establishment privileges of an Indian foreman the same as those of his European colleague?

(d) What are the pay and prospects of ordnance apprentices recruited and trained in Government ordnance factories?

(e) Are Government prepared to set a definite time limit, say, ten years, by which all the personnel of the ordnance service will be completely Indianised? If not, why not?

The Honourable Sir Homi Mody: The information is being collected and will be placed on the table of the House when ready.

RAILWAY CLUBS RESERVED FOR EUROPEANS.

†175. ***Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Communications be pleased to state if it is a fact that there are certain clubs in the railway premises, maintained by the railway, e.g., the swimming club at Pahartali, which are reserved exclusively for the Europeans whether belonging to the railway or not?

(b) Is it a fact that an Indian officer from the commencement of his service has to become a member of the European Institute without option or exception and to make compulsory contribution whether he avails himself of it or not?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: I have called for information and a reply will be laid on the table of the House in due course.

†Answer to this question laid on the table, the questioner being absent.

PERMISSION TO HINDU RAILWAY EMPLOYEES FOR BECOMING MEMBERS OF THE HINDU MAHASABHA.

†176. *Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Communications please state if it is a fact that the Muslim railway employees at Pahartali are not debarred from becoming members of the Muslim League, and the Anglo-Indian staff from becoming members of the Anglo-Indian Association? If so, are Government prepared to officially permit the Hindu staff to become Members of Hindu Mahasabha?

(b) Is it a fact that the late Mr. Nolan, Chief Engineer, was the President of the European Association, Chittagong and Mr. Fossberry, the Power Superintendent, the President of the Anglo-Indian Association, and Mr. Abdul Hamid Khan, the President of the Lilla Fund of Pahartali?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Glow: (a) and (b). I have not these particulars and regret that I cannot undertake to supply information relating to activities of this kind while the Assam Bengal Railway was under Company-management. Rule 23 of the Railway Servants Conduct Rules, printed as Appendix XI to the State Railway Establishment Code, Volume I, prohibits Railway servants on State-managed Railways from being members of political associations, and the attention of the administration will be called to its applicability to former company employees who are now employed by the State.

STEPS FOR PROTECTION, ETC., OF RAILWAY EMPLOYEES IN CLASS I ZONE.

†177. *Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: Will the Honourable Member for Communications please state what steps Government propose to take to adequately protect and compensate for the lives and properties of the railway employees in Class I Zone?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Glow: In Class I Zones appropriate Civil Defence Measures for the protection of railway personnel are being taken, in consultation where necessary with local civil authorities. As regards compensation the War Injuries Ordinance 1941 as amended by Ordinance No. 1 of 1942, the War Injuries Scheme 1942 and the War Injuries Regulations 1942 apply to railway personnel.

COMPLAINT AGAINST THE RAILWAY CINDER CONTRACTOR AT LUCKNOW.

178. *Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi: (a) Will the Honourable the Railway Member please state whether it is not a fact that the cinder contractor at Lucknow used to supply cinders to the Railway staff at the rate of annas 3 per maund without any limit? If not, what was the real condition?

(b) Is it or is it not a fact that the system of supply adopted was that specific days were allotted for the different departments and on those dates the members of those departments used to get the necessary supply?

(c) Is it or is it not a fact that about January 1942, the contractor refused to supply the required quantity of cinders to the Railway employees on the ground that he had not got a sufficient supply in stock?

†Answer to this question laid on the table, the questioner being absent.

(d) Is it or is it not a fact that on enquiry it was found that during all the time the contractor was supplying large quantities of coal to outsiders, and making large profits due to the rise in price of coal?

(e) Is it or is it not a fact that after this the quantity of cinder to the Railway employees had been fixed, and it was left at the option of the contractor to supply the coal in any quantity he chose at the residence of the employees, charging them cartage for the same?

(f) Is it or is it not a fact that there is a general complaint amongst the Railway employees that now the contractor supplies cinders only when he has got sufficient quantity of inferior cinder and dust, and sends it to the employees' houses where they have not even the facility of testing the correct weight of the cinders supplied?

(g) Has the Honourable Member considered the advisability of removing this complaint of the Railway staff by restoring the old method of rotation while retaining the quota of supplies and rates fixed recently?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: (a) to (f). Information is being collected and will be placed on the table of the House on receipt.

(g) No.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi: May I know when the Honourable Member has not got information, why should he say "No" to part (g)?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: The Honourable Member asked me in part (g) if I had considered the advisability of taking a certain action, I said, I had not.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi: He has not considered the whole case yet?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: No.

CINDER CONTRACT AT LUCKNOW RAILWAY STATION.

179. ***Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi:** (a) Will the Honourable the Railway Member please state when the contract of the present cinder contractor at Lucknow is due to expire?

(b) At the time when the present contract expires, do Government propose to consider the advisability of giving the contract to some other contractor after calling for tenders by means of advertisement?

(c) Have Government considered the advisability of handing over the contract to the Co-operative Societies of the Railway Servants?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: (a) Information is being collected and will be placed on the table of the House on receipt.

(b) This is not a contract given by Government but by the Administration.

(c) No.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi: Who gives the contract?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: The Administration.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi: After these complaints have been received, have Government considered the advisability of just persuading the Administration to give the contract to the co-operative societies so that there may be no complaint and the benefit may go to the railway employees?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: My answer to part (c) was "No".

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi: The answer was in the negative on the ground that the contract was not given by Government, but by the Administration, or was there any other reason?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: It was in the negative on the ground that no facts are before me as yet, and there has, therefore, been no question of consideration on this point.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

RAISING COSTS OF COAL AT STATE COLLIERIES.

47. Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Will the Honourable the Railway Member please state what were the estimated and actual raising costs per ton f. o. r. colliery siding inclusive of depreciation, cess, royalty and other charges for each of the state-owned collieries for the years 1939-40, 1940-41, 1941-42 and 1942-43?

(b) Did Government grant or allow or propose to grant any enhanced rate over the tendered rate to any of the raising contractors at these collieries in view of the extra costs of raising during war period? If so, to what extent?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: (a) The information required is obtainable from the Pink Books for Collieries covering revised and budget estimates for the years in question which are available in the Library of the House.

(b) No enhancement on tendered rates has been paid to the contractors; but in some cases new contracts have involved higher rates.

COAL REQUISITIONED FROM BENGAL AND BIHAR COALFIELDS.

48. Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Will the Honourable the Railway Member please state if Government have requisitioned any quantity of coal from Bengal and Bihar coalfields since November 1941?

(b) Is it a fact that Government paid annas 8 per ton more than the tendered price of that particular quality of coal?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: (a) Yes.

(b) The only requisitioning of which I am aware was on behalf of Defence Department to whose representative this question should be addressed.

NON-ACCEPTANCE OF LARGER QUANTITY OF GOOD QUALITY COAL FOR RAILWAYS.

49. Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Will the Honourable the Railway Member please state reasons for not accepting larger quantities of good quality coal offered by tenderers against loco. tenders for 1942-43 in view of the recent notification in the press by the North Western Railway and the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway that they are obliged to restrict passenger and goods traffic due to shortage of coal?

(b) Is it a fact that out of 2,86,000 tons accepted against the second tender for 1941-42 the Railways did not place orders with the collieries for over 2,00,000 tons of coal?

(c) Is it a fact that only about 1,45,000 tons are in arrears against contracts for 1941-42 of State Railways up to the 31st December, 1941?

(d) Is it a fact that the Railway Board did not exercise the option to take ten per cent. more on accepted quantities against loco. tenders for 1941-42, although it was offered by the majority of the existing contractors?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: (a) The notifications of the North Western and Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railways were issued due to a serious fall in the stocks of coal at sheds and depots. The quantities of coal accepted against the tenders for 1942-43 are expected to be adequate to meet consumption during that period.

(b) Information in this connection is being collected.

(c) Yes.

(d) The option was not exercised although the right to exercise it was in all the contracts.

FUEL VALUE OF CERTAIN QUALITIES OF COAL.

50. Mr. K. C. Neogy: Will the Honourable the Railway Member please state if Government consider that there is any difference in the fuel value of (i) Jambad Kujora, (ii) Kenda, and (iii) Satgram qualities of coal? If so, what is the approximate percentage of difference?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Arithmetic fuel values are not now maintained but I am given to understand that, for most railway purposes, these coals can be regarded as approximately of the same standard.

STEPS FOR FULFILMENT OF ACCEPTED LOCO. COAL TENDERS.

51. Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Will the Honourable the Railway Member please state whether all the collieries, which have been granted contracts against loco. tenders for 1942-43, have accepted the allotted quantities? If not, how many tenderers have declined, and for what quantities of coal?

(b) What steps do Government propose to take regarding collieries which would not agree to supply the accepted quantities against the tenders for 1942-43?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: (a) The reply to the first part is in the affirmative and the second part does not arise.

(b) Does not arise.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO COLLIERIES FOR MAXIMUM RAISINGS OF COAL.

52. Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Will the Honourable the Railway Member please state if Government have considered the desirability, under the existing war conditions, of encouraging all classes of collieries to effect raisings to their maximum capacity?

(b) Have Government considered the desirability of adopting a policy to spread loco. contracts over a large number of collieries instead of allotting heavy quantities to collieries quoting slightly lower rates, and to grant economic rates to collieries having due regard to the quality of their coal?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: (a) This question should be addressed to the Honourable the Commerce Member.

(b) Railway contracts are spread over as large a number of collieries as is practicable and economic.

SUPPLY OF WAGONS AT COLLIERIES.

53. Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Is the Honourable the Railway Member aware that the bases fixed for supply of wagons at collieries are calculated on inaccurate figures?

(b) If so, what steps do Government propose to take to rectify the errors?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: (a) and (b). I have heard this opinion expressed from more than one source but have no particulars. If the Honourable Member has information that inaccurate figures of stocks or of raisings are being furnished, and will supply such information to the Railway Board, the attention of the Coal Wagon Supply Committee will be drawn to the matter.

SYSTEM FOR PROMOTIONS ON NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.

54. Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: (a) Will the Honourable the Railway Member please state what is the system of making promotions, on the North Western Railway? Is it based on seniority or recommendation rolls?

(b) Is the system of recommendation rolls introduced by the General Manager or it is discretionary with various officers?

(c) In view of the likelihood of the diversity of methods, do Government propose to issue orders with regard to preparation of the recommendation rolls to observe uniformity on the whole system, which would *inter alia*, lay down that such recommendation should not be the absolute right of the officers but should be based on the reports from the immediate in-charge of the employee concerned?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: (a) In posts which are not selection posts, the senior men are promoted if not declared unsuitable. The recommendation rolls merely state the men who are considered fit for promotion, the senior men not included in the rolls being thereby declared unsuitable for promotion.

(b) It is understood the orders were issued by the General Manager and are of long standing.

(c) Government have no reason to believe that the present practice is unfair and can, therefore, see no reason to issue any orders on the subject.

MOTIONS FOR ADJOURNMENT.

ALLEGED MISCONDUCT OF SOLDIERS AT HUJUR PAGA NEAR POONA.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh has given notice "that the business of the Assembly be adjourned for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, necessity of taking immediate steps to put a stop to the misconduct of soldiers as evidenced by the damage to shops and molestation of women as near Hujur Paga at Poona, the attack on restaurant and shops resulting in heavy damage to these and injuries to Watchman and Tonga Driver, Poona Cantonment, of such a grave nature as to necessitate the adoption by the Bombay Corporation of a Resolution referring to the nervousness and panic caused in the public of Bombay and praying for early steps to remove these".

Has the Honourable Member any idea as to when the incident took place?

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh (Nágpur Division: Non-Muhammadan): I have verified from the papers in the Library. This incident seems to have taken place on 28th February. I got the news from the Vernacular paper *Kesari* at Poona, edited by a responsible gentleman. The first part of the news is referred to as molestation of women near Hujur Paga at Poona.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member need not read the whole extract from the newspaper. I simply wanted to know when the incident took place, so that I can decide whether it is an urgent matter.

Have Government got to say anything on this?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor (Government of India: Nominated Official): Sir, my point is that the dates on which these alleged incidents are said to have occurred have not been given, and it is very difficult for Government to know exactly to what particular incidents the Honourable Member refers. And the incidents are said to have taken place at Poona while a Resolution has been passed by the Bombay Corporation; but the date on which the Bombay Corporation passed the Resolution has not been given. So the matter does not appear to be definite.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I understand it is reported in the *Bombay Chronicle* of the 7th March.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: This matter has been referred to in almost all the newspapers, e.g., the *Bombay Chronicle*, *Harijan*, and all the vernacular papers.

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: That was my first point. Steps have been taken about this matter which is one for the local police and for law and order. But the main point I wish to make is the want of definiteness about it.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Mr. Deshmukh seems to make out that it is a case of military discipline. I think the motion is in order. Apparently, according to this motion, the alleged misconduct of soldiers has been taking place for some time until it culminated in a Resolution being passed by the Bombay Corporation which is reported in the *Bombay Chronicle* of the 7th March. If the allegation is at all well-founded that indicates want of discipline among the soldiers. Is there any other objection to the motion being moved?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: I object to the motion being moved.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): As objection has been taken, will those Honourable Members who are in favour of leave being granted rise in their seats?

(A count was taken.)

As less than 25 Honourable Members are in favour of leave being granted, leave is refused.

SHORTAGE OF WHEAT AND WHEAT FLOUR IN DELHI.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next motion stands in the name of Mr. Nauman who wants to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the failure of the Government of India to make necessary and adequate arrangements of supply of wheat and wheat flour in the Capital City of Delhi which is causing a serious situation. Is there any objection to this motion being moved?

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar (Commerce Member): No, Sir.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The motion will be taken up at 4 o'clock today.

MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL OF STATE.

Secretary of the Assembly: Sir, the following Message has been received from the Council of State:

"I am directed to inform you that the Council of State, at its meeting held on the 10th March, 1942 agreed without any amendment to the following Bills, which were passed by the Legislative Assembly at its meetings held on the 18th and the 24th February and the 5th March, 1942, namely:

1. A Bill further to amend the Indian Penal Code;
2. A Bill further to amend the Cotton Ginning and Pressing Factories Act, 1925;
3. A Bill to provide for the extension of the time limited by or under the Indian Patents and Designs Act, 1911, for the doing of acts there-under; and
4. A Bill to extend the date up to which certain duties characterised as protective in the First Schedule to the Indian Tariff Act, 1934, shall have effect."

ELECTION OF MEMBERS ON THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE.

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar (Commerce Member): Sir, I beg to move:

"That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Honourable the President may direct, three non-official members to serve on the Standing Committee to advise on subjects in the Department of Commerce."

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The question is:

"That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Honourable the President may direct, three non-official members to serve on the Standing Committee to advise on subjects in the Department of Commerce."

The motion was adopted.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS ON THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow (Member for Railways and Communications): Sir, I beg to move:

"That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Honourable the President may direct, four non-official members to serve on a Standing Committee to advise on subjects, other than 'Roads', dealt with in the Department of Communications, during the year 1942-43."

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The question is:

"That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Honourable the President may direct, four non-official members to serve on a Standing Committee to advise on subjects, other than 'Roads', dealt with in the Department of Communications, during the year 1942-43."

The motion was adopted.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS ON THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR ROADS.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow (Member for Railways and Communications): Sir, I beg to move:

"That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Honourable the President may direct, six members to serve on the Standing Committee for Roads which will be constituted to advise the Governor General in Council in the administration of the Central Road Fund during the financial year 1942-43."

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The question is:

"That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Honourable the President may direct, six members to serve on the Standing Committee for Roads which will be constituted to advise the Governor General in Council in the administration of the Central Road Fund during the financial year 1942-43."

The motion was adopted.

ELECTION OF THE STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE FOR RAILWAYS.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow (Member for Railways and Communications): Sir, I beg to move:

"That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as may be approved by the Honourable the President, eleven members to serve on the Standing Finance Committee for Railways for the year commencing 1st April, 1942."

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The question is:

"That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as may be approved by the Honourable the President, eleven members to serve on the Standing Finance Committee for Railways for the year commencing 1st April, 1942."

The motion was adopted.

ELECTION OF THE CENTRAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RAILWAYS.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow (Member for Railways and Communications): Sir, I beg to move:

"That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as may be approved by the Honourable the President, six non-official members to serve on the Central Advisory Council for Railways for the year commencing 1st April, 1942."

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Motion moved:

"That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as may be approved by the Honourable the President, six non-official members to serve on the Central Advisory Council for Railways for the year commencing 1st April, 1942."

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad (United Provinces Southern Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, every member of the Railway Finance Committee being an *ex-officio* member of this Advisory Council, if some one stands for the former and is not elected he will have no chance of being a member of the latter also by this method.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: I take it there is nothing to prevent one member from standing for both if he chooses.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: The election for the latter may take place after the result of the former has been declared.

Sir F. E. James (Madras: European): Sir, may I make one point? This question has arisen before, but my point is that the nominations may be fixed on separate days. That is to say, nominations for the Finance Committee may be fixed on one day and those for the Advisory Council may be fixed for a subsequent day after the result of the first is declared. In that way the difficulty advanced by my Honourable friend would be avoided.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I understand that is being done. That will be seen when I announce the dates.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani (Tirhut Division: Muhammadan): Sir, this is an elected Committee. I find from the proceedings of this Advisory Council as well as those of the Standing Railway Finance Committee that important matters are discussed there. But we are quite in the dark as to the nature of the discussions and also as to whether all the members agreed to the proposals or whether any objection was raised by any one. If proceedings similar to that of the Public Accounts Committee and Military Accounts Committee be drawn up, I think this will help those who are not on the Central Advisory Council for Railways. I hope that Government will consider this suggestion and will see their way to adopt it if there is no harm done to their policy.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: I think if my Honourable friend will study the proceedings of this Council he will find that where important points are put by members they are very often mentioned in the summary of the discussion. I feel sure that he would not advocate that we should put down, as we do in this House, *verbatim* every thought or suggestion that proceeds from a member. The great advantage of a committee is that one can talk with a certain amount of liberty across the table without making formal speeches and without the fear that every idle phrase will be reproduced in print. Another advantage of having only a brief summary is that we have on occasions in this Council to discuss matters that are confidential. For example, at the last meeting we discussed certain matters involving military assistance and we also discussed certain negotiations relating to the Bengal North Western Railway which could not suitably be disclosed in their entirety. I think the present system by which we do occasionally give a short indication of the trend of the discussion is sufficient and that with a large committee of this kind with representatives of all sections of the House, the House ought to feel confidence in those whom they have elected that they will put forward the views of themselves and their parties with freedom and with skill.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I think I can speak as one of the oldest members of this Committee. I want to . . .

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member ought to have thought of this before. If he wants to put any question, he can certainly do so.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: Sir, I am fed up with questions, so I will ask no more today. I was going to say that. . . .

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has perhaps lost his turn.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: I thought one could talk after the Honourable Member had spoken.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has lost his turn as the Mover has already replied.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani: Sir, may I know from the Honourable Member in charge whether any member's suggestion is put down without his asking or only when he insists to have his views recorded?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: No, I have never heard of any member insisting that his views should appear in print. As I have said, only leading points raised during the course of discussion are put down in print.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The question is:

"That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as may be approved by the Honourable the President, six non-official members to serve on the Central Advisory Council for Railways for the year commencing 1st April, 1942."

The motion was adopted.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I may inform Honourable Members that for the purpose of election of members for the Standing Committee for the Department of Commerce, Standing Committee for the Department of Communications, Standing Committee for Roads, Standing Finance Committee for Railways and the Central Advisory Council for Railways, the following dates have been fixed for receiving nominations and for holding elections, if necessary, namely:

	Date for Nominations.	Date for election.
(1) Standing Committee for the Department of Commerce.	13th March, 1942.	17th March, 1942.
(2) Standing Committee for the Department of Communications.	13th March, 1942.	18th March, 1942.
(3) Standing Committee for Roads .	13th March, 1942.	18th March, 1942.
(4) Standing Finance Committee for Railways .	13th March, 1942.	17th March, 1942.
(5) Central Advisory Council for Railways .	18th March, 1942.	20th March, 1942.

I hope that will suit the convenience of Honourable Members.

The nominations for all the four Committees and the Council will be received in the Notice Office upto 12 Noon on the dates mentioned above for the purpose. The elections which will be conducted in accordance with the principle of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote will be held in the Assistant Secretary's room in the Council House, New Delhi, between the hours of 10-30 A.M. and 1 P.M.

THE WEEKLY HOLIDAYS BILL.

PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE.

Mr. H. O. Prior (Labour Secretary): Sir, I present the Report of the Select Committee on the Bill to provide for the grant of weekly holidays to persons employed in shops, commercial establishments, restaurants and theatres.

THE INDIAN FINANCE BILL.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman (Finance Member): Sir, I move:

"That the Bill to fix the duty on salt manufactured in, or imported by land into, certain parts of British India, to vary the rate of the excise duty on motor spirit leviable under the Motor Spirit (Duties) Act, 1917, to vary the rate of the excise duty on kerosene leviable under section 5 of the Indian Finance Act, 1922, to vary the rate of the excise duty on silver leviable under the Silver (Excise Duty) Act, 1930, to levy customs duties in addition to the duties of customs leviable under the Indian Tariff Act, 1934, to fix maximum rates of postage under the Indian Post Office Act, 1898, to fix rates of income-tax and super-tax and to continue the charge and levy of excess profits tax and fix the rate at which excess profits tax shall be charged, be taken into consideration."

[Sir Jeremy Raisman.]

Sir, I have only one observation to make at this stage. I would like to appeal to the House to bear in mind the circumstances with which we are at present faced. The enemies are at the gate of India and many Members on these Benches have the most urgent tasks of the highest importance to perform in these days. I would, therefore, appeal to the good sense of the Members of this House to assist in the despatch of this business as much as possible. The Government have no desire whatever to restrict or curtail the expression of the opinion of Members of this House on matters of general public importance, but I do appeal to Members to realize that there are many urgent and vital tasks to be performed by the executive officers of Government and I trust that they will assist the Government to enable this business to be disposed of with as much despatch as may be possible.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Motion moved:

"That the Bill to fix the duty on salt manufactured in, or imported by land into, certain parts of British India, to vary the rate of the excise duty on motor spirit leviable under the Motor Spirit (Duties) Act, 1917, to vary the rate of the excise duty on kerosene leviable under section 5 of the Indian Finance Act, 1922, to vary the rate of the excise duty on silver leviable under the Silver (Excise Duty) Act, 1930, to levy customs duties in addition to the duties of customs leviable under the Indian Tariff Act, 1934, to fix maximum rates of postage under the Indian Post Office Act, 1898, to fix rates of income-tax and super-tax and to continue the charge and levy of excess profits tax and fix the rate at which excess profits tax shall be charged, be taken into consideration."

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, before you place the Finance Bill before the House, I desire to make a statement through you to the Government. This Bill is taken advantage of by everybody to express their view points on many and varied subjects and this takes much time. But I agree entirely with the Finance Member when he appeals to the House under the urgent circumstances of the War to shorten our speeches as much as possible. But, Sir, I want to make an appeal to you, and through you to the Government considering the multifarious subjects which we discuss. May I ask the Government to have one of its members representing the Department under discussion or his Deputy present in the House to hear what we have to say? Otherwise, our remarks and suggestions are of no value at all, except on financial matters and which the Finance Member who is always here to note. I beg of the Government to have some one representing the Department that is being discussed.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I understand Government have been making some arrangements of that kind.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: Sir, what do we usually witness on these occasions—the Finance Member very bored with what we are saying, sitting in his seat with his Deputy; while the other benches are empty. This has been my experience for many past years. I make this appeal and I hope it will not be in vain.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): So far as I remember, Government do take care that some Government Member representing each Department is present to take note of the proceedings. I suppose that will be done on this occasion also. It does not necessarily mean that the Honourable Member in charge need be present.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow (Member for Railways and Communications): I think the practice has been to ensure that some Member on these benches takes notes of points, so that if possible a reply could be given. It does not necessarily imply that there will be representatives of all Departments; some Departments are not represented here.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): If notes are taken, I suppose that means

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: I do not want to stress the matter. I am quite satisfied, provided notes are taken and those notes are transferred without delay to the Departments concerned and we are informed of the action taken; otherwise we are all talking in a vacuum.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I suppose that is done.

The Honourable Mr. M. S. Aney (Leader of the House): I think notes are always taken and they are communicated to the Department concerned.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: I am sorry, but I feel—in fact I am sure that many of the things we say on the Finance Bill are not taken notice of at all.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai (Sind: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I feel glad that I have got an opportunity to initiate the debate on this Finance Bill. I have heard the advice of the Honourable the Finance Member . . .

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Appeal, not advice.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: I will take it as an advice. Anyway I will be benefited by that appeal or advice and shorten my speech and give only specific points for consideration. Now, we are at a stage of the budget where the Honourable the Finance Member has been asking for supplies to be given for the Defence of India and its administration, and this he wants in order to balance his budget. I do not agree with him that he really requires the balance to be budgeted in the manner in which he has put forward. He asks for Rs. 12 crores by means of taxes. At this time, such a demand for taxes is adding to the country's miseries. He has admitted that the enemies are at the gate. I am of opinion that at this time the country considers the discussion of this Finance Bill to be a secondary subject; and they feel that at this time the Finance Member should not have come forward with additional burdens. What is the country concerned with at present is, not the question of supplies, though of course they say there should be no further burden, but questions with regard to their life and security of their property. Therefore, I say that this Finance Bill plays but a secondary part, though it is important. In considering the question of safety and

[Mr. Lalchand Navalrai.]

security, of the country, it behoves the Government to make it very clear as to what measures have actually been taken and what measures they want to take in order to achieve this object. I consider this to be the most important thing at this moment. The first question which occurs to me is what military preparations have been made at the ports and against air raids. The war in Malaya, Singapore and Java has made it clear that those places fell for two reasons

Sir Cowasji Jehangir (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Mr. President, my Honourable friend is raising most important points on the question of defence, and there is not a single Member of Government in the Defence Department present.

Sir Gurunath Bewoor (Government of India: Nominated Official): Sir, I am present here in the House.

The Honourable Mr. M. S. Aney: I want to assure the Honourable Member and the House that even if the Member in a particular Department be not present, there is somebody to take note of the points that are made.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: My voice will reach him there, no doubt; but what I want is that he should be nearer to move for immediate help. I was saying there were two causes for the failure. One was unpreparedness, and the efforts were made too late; and the other was want of equipment. Men, both Indians and British, were there, though the Indians were more, but they had not full equipment. The result was disastrous and we know it full well. Now that the Japanese have more or less control of the Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, their attention will now be drawn towards India. I am not in the know of things; it may be that Japan is now at the very door of Calcutta or Chittagong; but I am submitting that the same mistakes which were committed in Singapore and Malaya and Java should not be repeated here in India. God forbid it. Therefore, I have to give a warning to the Government that these allegations of which they are accused—and there are reasonable grounds for believing that the allegations against them are true.—I ask the Government to come forward and tell us frankly what arrangements they have made instead of keeping the people of this country entirely in the dark.

Sir, the other day I put some questions in this House, and what replies did I get? The replies were to the effect that we should be satisfied with the arrangements they have made, and that the Government of India have got adequate means to meet any attacks on India. Sir, we are not satisfied with such bald replies. We might get the same blows which Burma and Rangoon have got. Therefore, since we are not at all satisfied with such hollow replies, we would like to know the exact arrangements they have made. I asked the Defence Secretary the other day by means of a question as to what arrangements the Government had made at the ports. Sir, we have learnt,—and I think the fact is not denied by the Government,—that Japanese submarines are now in the Indian waters, some of them have got entry into the ports of India, perhaps some of them may be lurking in the Bay of Bengal and we heard the other day that some of them caused some loss to ships. It may be that they have gone further off to the Arabian Sea, to the Indian

Ocean; it may be at any moment they might start doing greater mischief to ships in the Indian Ocean. Therefore, we consider that the reply given by the Defence Secretary is very unsatisfactory. How can we be satisfied with such a reply—that the Government have made adequate arrangements? Not only that, Sir, but the Government of India throw the responsibility of the Central Government on the shoulders of the Provincial Governments.

Even in regard to that when I specifically asked what arrangements had been made in Karachi and Bombay, the reply of the Defence Secretary was the same. We all know the financial position of the Provincial Governments. I have been thinking that the Provincial Governments are also in the stage of thinking. They are thinking and thinking and doing nothing. If that is the case, then I think woe be to the Government. We have now reached a stage when we can frankly say that the British Government has failed in India. It has failed us till now, but at the present critical stage in the history of this country, they have failed us entirely. It means ruin for India and ruin for them too. Therefore, Sir, I submit that the Government of India should take the people into their confidence with regard to any arrangements they might make for the defence of the country so that we may be satisfied that the arrangements made by the Government are really adequate in regard to aeroplanes, anti-air guns and so on. At present we are very doubtful about it.

Then, Sir, military arrangements should receive the prior consideration of the Government, and all possible steps should forthwith be taken to defend the country. Government should not say that they are considering what measures they should take and when the emergency arises they will adopt suitable measures. That sort of reply will not satisfy us at all.

Then the next point is with reference to civil defence arrangements. When I asked some questions about this, the reply was that the Provincial Governments will take care of civil defence arrangements. On that point, we must take a lesson from Burma. We have read all about the happenings in Burma after it was bombed, and things there have gone so far that the editor or correspondent of a paper who had gone there describes the condition there as really woeful. He says that as soon as he went there, a large part of Rangoon was under fire. Houses had been burnt and looting was going on, and all sorts of atrocities were being committed—by whom—by the hooligans and the unlawful elements. Now, what arrangements have you made against preventing a repetition of such things here? Should we be satisfied, when such things actually happen here, with the Mayor or Premier or the Law Member of a Provincial Government coming forward and saying: 'I am going to do such and such thing for you'. That would indeed be an impossible position. I put a question the other day—this is what I asked—

"Is it a fact that the Government of Madras has issued a communiqué to the press; if so, what facilities have Government provided for the evacuees such as free transport facilities, monetary assistance where necessary, and the safeguarding of property as well as the education of their children; if not, why not? Is there any such danger as mentioned in part (a) for Bombay and Karachi ports, if so, what steps are Government going to take, and what facilities are Government providing for people of these ports?"

[Mr. Lalchand Navalrai.]

Now, what was the reply of Government? I will read only a portion of it. 'Yes, but not of the same degree or immediacy'. It is left to the Governments to decide when and what publicity should be given as regards those who have no duties to perform leaving the ports of Bombay and Karachi and as to any measures those Governments may propose to take in the matter. Are the Members of the Central Government merely to sit here with folded hands drawing their fat salaries, travelling in special saloons, living in furnished palatial houses at such a time like this? Do they think that nothing should be done by them and everything should be left to the Provincial Governments. They fully know that some of the Provincial Governments are running with a deficit budget and some of them on subsidies

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: What about the deficit of the Central Government?

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Yes, but what I say is that the allocation you have made with regard to this money is not correct. You should borrow at this time to fill up the deficit. Don't pay the Americans at present with regard to their Lease-Lend supplies. Wait for a time. Where is the hurry to pay them?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: I am not paying them at present

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Yes, you are taking it in accounts, otherwise that money should remain separate; that money should be used for balancing the budget and for taking other measures for saving India. You are adjusting it in accounts and then showing it on paper that 47 crores represents the deficit, and that the people of this country, who are already burdened with taxation, should give you another 12 crores.

Now, as I was saying the Government of India are throwing the entire responsibility on the shoulders of the Provincial Governments, and I do not think the House will be satisfied with such an arrangement.

Then, the next point I should like to touch is with regard to the production drive for speeding up the production and supplies of foodstuffs like fodder, wheat and other staple foods, manufactured goods and so on. What is the condition with regard to these? Are we bankrupt in this respect also? Have the Government made any attempts to lay by sufficient grain and foodstuffs for the purposes of this country? They have not. The very fact that in the capital city of this country, Delhi, you cannot get wheat, you cannot get flour, even the servants of hotels and others come to us and tell us that they cannot get wheat at all—that very fact is enough to prove that you have not exercised your responsibility properly. I submit that the Government have failed all through and in all directions with regard both to the safety and the very living conditions of the people of this country. Let me say why this paucity in wheat and other commodities has happened. In the first place, I blame the Government for not having had control over food grains and others from the very beginning. They left the field free and for what purpose? I can see now from the budget speech of my Honourable friend that he wanted to increase the purchasing power of the people so that he could get more income-tax. That was one device to get more taxes. That was a wrong policy. The control should have been exercised from the

very beginning, in which case the poor people would not have suffered and they would not have come crying now. Even at this moment, what is the help you are giving? With all the professions that you are making, with all the control that you are going to have, it is too late, and everything in this connection is dilatory. I will refer to one more reason for the paucity of wheat. I am told and I have read in the papers also that much of the wheat has been exported with the intention of helping other countries. I am told, for instance, that much of the wheat had been exported to Iran. No doubt, the British people have gone to Iran, but why should they not get help from other countries? Why from India, I ask? India itself wanted help. You take away all the military people of India in thousands and thousands outside to help other countries, to help the imperial and even foreign countries in some places. Why should that be done, and why should foodgrains of this country be exported to Iran and other places? I was very sorry the other day to read the speech of Mr. Alexander with respect to their intention and the care that they are taking of their own country during this war time. I put a question in this House on this. What he said was that the British Government should take care of the centre, that is, of the countries where the British people or the British Government were being assailed—in the Middle East or on Russia's side—that the British Government should take care of the centre and leave the question of Japan to a later date when they will be in a position to kick Japan out. Are they able to do it now? Therefore, the policy of the Government is bad. The policy of the Government seems to be, do not care for India, do not care for any other country, care for Britain, their Isle. That is an absolutely wrong policy. We have been left with nothing in our hands to defend our country. From the beginning they have taken upon themselves to do that. They have always been saying, you are minors, we are your guardians, we will take care of you. But they are taking care of us really for the purpose of exploitation and nothing more.

Then I come to the question of transport facilities for Indians abroad, from areas occupied by the enemy and from war zones,—transport without racial discrimination. What arrangements have they made? No arrangements to bring Indians from Malaya, from the Phillipines, from Australia, from Java and from Sumatra. They have made no arrangements for that. They have done us a great harm there also. Therefore, at this moment whatever arrangements can possibly be made to transport these people over to India should be made without any reserve and as early as possible, and not to leave it to a time when they cannot possibly be brought from over there. In this connection, let me quote one instance that has been given in the press. I know it more or less personally—that what happened was really what was reported in the press. I said transport without racial discrimination ought to be made. After all, the Indians have helped the British more than their own people. The British have been at the top of their voice applauding us for that. They are giving us lip sympathy, they are expressing their admiration, but they do nothing more. They are not even at this moment desisting from racial discrimination. One Junabai

The Honourable Mr. M. S. Aney: Not Junabai, but Jummabhoy.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: I know you are wide awake, and I want that you will make other Members on the Treasury Benches also wide awake,

[Mr. Lalchand Navalrai.]

to do what you want to do. You do want to do many things, but perhaps there are many restrictions and obstructions in your way to achieve your object. But be strong. And we expect you to be strong. Having gone from our Party, be nationalist, be a strong nationalist. Tell them to their face that they have failed and that you will not allow them to fail hereafter.

An Honourable Member: Otherwise resign.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: That, of course, I would not say anything about. He has more wisdom than I have. Let me proceed
12 NOON. further, otherwise the Finance Member will blame me for taking the time of the House unnecessarily. What Mr. Jummabhai says is this. When there was the question of evacuation from Singapore, the result was that the British Government were not able to do anything. The British Government first tried to send away their own British people in ships. Then the question arose with regard to Indians and the reply given to them was that there were no ships available for them at all. Then what happened? These Indians were in a fix. They were in extreme difficulties and undergoing great inconveniences. So, they wanted to leave the place, even by swimming if they could possibly do it. As this gentleman puts it, one rickety ship was supplied to them which was not even seaworthy. Good many people flocked into it and they started from Singapore for Java. They thought that in Java they would get some help. After all, the British people were also fighting there and so they expected some help there. But let us see what happened to them there? After a short voyage the ship began to leak and their lives were in danger. Anyway, somehow they reached Java. But they were not allowed to disembark there. As this gentleman has put it, it was really a matter of shame. He is an eye-witness and he has suffered and there is no reason to believe that he was telling a lie. At Java, they would not give them any food and they were actually starving. When they found themselves in that precarious condition, they made an appeal to the authorities of that place. So, a ship was given to them and with great inconvenience they reached Ceylon. Of course, Java and Singapore are far away from India but Ceylon is, if I may so put it, just like a kith and kin of India. Now, what happened to them there? Here also they were not supplied with food and were not given other facilities. Is it not shameful? Ceylon is asking that we should give her help, but when they treat our nationals in this way, can we have any sympathy for them? They have already harmed us by saying that Indians should not go to their country and should not hold any posts there. They are not giving the Indians there the rights and privileges of a citizen. This is the behaviour of these people towards Indians.

Now, I come to the next question regarding the transport facilities and accommodation for evacuees from different parts of India which are apprehended to be attacked by the enemy. As you know, Sir, this matter is left to the Provincial Governments, but the point is whether the Provincial Governments have done anything so far for the evacuation of persons for various ports, such as, Calcutta, Bombay and even Karachi. What arrangements have been made in those places for their evacuation? They said they would be able to go themselves. But how will they do it and where will they go? Their families and their property are there.

How can they leave those places willingly unless it is absolutely essential that they should do so? If they leave those places, there is panic and this panic is caused by Government itself. So, I say the enemy is at the door and you must make some proper arrangements. But you say make your private arrangements? Is that fair? Is it not shameful? Then, I say that these Provincial Governments have made no arrangements whatever for the evacuation of the people. Take, for instance, the Sind Government. They say that they are making arrangements for these people at Thatta. But they have done nothing up to this time. Everything is in the making. So, I say this is another point which should be considered.

Then, with regard to the increased transport facilities within India. At the time of war and at the time of danger there ought to be free movement in the country and the people should be able to move freely from place to place. For instance, if there is a danger at Karachi and they want to go to the Upper Sind, how will they go? Have you got sufficient facilities for that? In the like manner, have you got sufficient arrangements for moving them to other parts of India. I know that some people would like to go to Hardwar and Dehra Dun. Have you got arrangements for carrying them to those places? They would like to go to such places where they may not be bombed from the air. Therefore, this is a separate point that I have mentioned with regard to the free transport in various parts of India.

Now, let us compare the transport facilities that we had before with the transport facilities that exist today. Formerly, we used to have canal system and also the river transport system and we used to go from one place to another by means of boats and ferries. Government is, of course, making India scientific in the matter of transports but they are shortsighted in the matter of having hampered with internal navigation. They have thereby done a great harm to the country for the time of a crisis like the one we are having now. They had put up regulators and they had put up many bunds and obstructions in the rivers and canals with the result that the navigation has come to a standstill. Now, we have lost all those means of transport. Then, came these scientific railways. They have not got enough of these railways at this time. The other day I was sitting as a member of the Railway Advisory Committee at Karachi and there the question arose with regard to overcrowding and also with regard to the shortage of trains. On account of the shortage of trains, sometimes, there is so much overcrowding that people are compelled to pull the alarm chains. Now, what was the reply given? The General Manager was very frank and I liked him for his frankness. He said that they were helpless and they could not meet the present demand. They had no sufficient locomotives, no sufficient wagons and no carriages. They had removed some tracks even, he said. Thus no one would be surprised if in course of time even the track by which we go to Delhi from Karachi were taken away. So, where are we now? Even in the primitive days we were very much better off. So, I submit that in this matter Government is to blame and they cannot but admit it. The reason of their helplessness is that they have sent out their locomotives or most of the workable locomotives. They leave lame things which will cause accidents, they leave disabled things which will take us half a day to reach our destination for a journey which should not occupy more than an hour.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): There are many other Honourable Members who wish to take part in the discussion. I hope the Honourable Member will be brief.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: I shall conclude soon, Sir. With regard to that also arrangement should be made. But I am very doubtful how to do it. We shall have to take to bullock carts travel these days. They are also good. When I was a child, my grandfather took me to Hardwar from Sind, part of the way in bullock cart. From Multan we took a steamer. My point is that even these bullock arrangements are not being made. The bullock carts have lost their custom because of the introduction of lorries and railways. With regard to these difficulties, it looks as if we are crying over spilt milk. Unless milk is shown, how can we drink. They should not wait for a long time to make these arrangements.

A word, Sir, with regard to the proposed American Mission. When the industries were crying for expansion and when this House also passed Resolutions for industrial expansion, nothing was done. Now, it is said that an American Mission is coming over to India with regard to developing or helping the industry. I should sound a note of warning here. It should be made clear that nothing would be done by this Mission which would in any way retard or prejudice the growth of Indian industries in the post-war period. This should be taken note of and things arranged accordingly.

Now, I come to the Budget and I will not take long. With regard to income-tax, my humble submission is with regard to assessment of income-tax from persons who have suffered heavily owing to war. Either it should be remitted or it should be postponed or suspended or time should be given to the assessee to render accounts after the war is over. All businessmen suffered heavily in Burma and Malaya and Far East. All these places are now closed to business now. Their agents and employees are scattered all over the Far East, some of them have been killed in the war, some have fallen prisoners in the war. The proprietors in India could not complete their accounts and submit income-tax returns for want of full particulars. Therefore, the production of accounts would be impracticable at present.

Now, I come to the proposed income-tax on the poor whose income is between Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 2,000. At one time, income-tax was levied on incomes between Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 2,000; but the Legislature objected to this being done. How much will the Honourable Member earn by this? He will only earn curses. Again with regard to the submission of income-tax returns, I submit, the forms are very complicated; especially when the Honourable the Finance Member is going to lower the limit of taxation, these returns will be very difficult. The Income-tax Department at present shows great distrust. Circulars should be issued at once that there should be no distrust when these returns are submitted. From my experience I can say that the Income-tax authorities, in every case, say that the returns are wrong and they call for books. That is another inconvenience. I hope the Honourable Member, Mr. Sheehy, will take note of this and remedy the grievances. There are real inconveniences in making returns because they are complicated. In every case

the returns are being rejected and account books are sent for. Again, even if the account books are prepared by competent auditors, they are also rejected. There is too much interference with Assistant Commissioners of Income-tax. They are simply given orders by the Authorities. They are actually being told that the Income-tax Department requires so much of revenue and it is up to the Assistant Commissioners to collect the required amount. Then, there is also interference with regard to appellate jurisdiction. It was intended that there should be no interference by way of instructions given to the Appellate Assistant Commissioners. What is done in practice? Let the Honourable the Finance Member, let Mr. Sheehy who is very sympathetic find out if I am correct or not. I submit there is too much interference with Appellate Assistant Commissioners also. There should be no interference with Tribunal also.

Now, a word with regard to telephone arrangement. I see the Director General looking at me at this moment because I am referring to the telephones. Perhaps he was in a reverie till now, and now he looks at me. I submit trunk telephone sections are absolutely necessary because they are of great help. Wherever there are no telephone connections, such connections should be established. I am referring to the connection in Sind, on the right side of the river. There is no telephone connection between Kotri and Ruk. To my questions, the reply has always been that the line will not be remunerative. Have you tried it? You have tried in several places and they have all become remunerative. Here also you had better try and then say whether it is remunerative or not.

A word about the second grade staff in the Postal Department. With regard to the revision of the scales of pay, the policy of the Government seems to be that the scales of pay should be on a par with what other Government servants get in those provinces or localities. With regard to Sind, the Provincial Government is not able to give proper pay to their servants because there is a deficit budget. What about Baluchistan? The Provincial Government gives to the second grade staff there Rs. 55—5—75—75—7—110. The Postal Department gives to their second grade staff there Rs. 45—90. They have made several representations and I hope the Postal Department will give some attention to these representations.

Now, I shall summarise in a few words what I have been saying till now. I have made it clear to the House that the Government must make some arrangements for our safety and for security of our life and property. There ought to be some internal arrangement otherwise during this war or after this war, we will be in a precarious condition. After all they say that any private arrangements that might be made should be either under the supervision or with the concurrence or rather under the command of the Government. I also spoke about transport and about internal arrangements for transport. With regard to income-tax I said that at this time the assessment should not be raised any more but Government should be satisfied with adjusting their accounts in some way. I also said that conveniences in the matter of demand of income-tax should be given to foreign merchants and the general people. And if the level of income-tax be brought down below Rs. 2,000 the middle class people who will be affected should be given more facilities.

Sir Vitthal Narayan Chandavarkar (Bombay Millowners' Association: Indian Commerce): Sir, I thank you for giving me an early opportunity to take part in the discussion on the Finance Bill. I do so with a great deal of hesitation and a considerable amount of difficulty because this is the first time I am speaking on the finances of the Government of India. Moreover, in this seat I have succeeded a gentleman who occupied the position for over 12 years with conspicuous success and always made brilliant contributions to the discussions in this House. I cannot claim either his experience or his knowledge or the gift of entertaining his audience with after dinner stories.

Sir, as I was listening to the Honourable the Finance Member's speech I recollected an occasion,—I do not know whether he recollects it,—in 1922 in Bombay, a small dinner party where both he,—then Mr. Raisman an ordinary Assistant Collector of Customs, and I were present. At that time, some important financial question was agitating the public mind and during the dinner Mr. Raisman came out with a brilliant discourse on exchange policy, index figures, price levels, inflation and deflation, to which we all listened with rapt attention. On my way home, I said to my brother who was the host that Mr. Raisman was a misfit in the Customs Department and with his knowledge of finance he should really be in the Finance Department and have a share in controlling the finances of the country. I also said that I was glad that even in the year 1922 we were getting members of the Indian Civil Service who, as in the old days, in addition to being administrators always continued to be students.

Sir, this is a most critical time in the history of the country and we have to be careful when we speak either in this House or in private and in public. I am most anxious, and I am sure a large section of my countrymen are equally anxious, that we should not say anything in criticising Government which might be misunderstood by our enemies and create an impression that we are not behind our Government and England in this war. But this is an obligation which most of my countrymen and I are prepared to impose upon ourselves. But there is all the same a greater obligation which Englishmen, whether official or otherwise, ought to impose upon themselves; because every word that an Englishman utters, whether on the floor of this House or outside, speaking before the Chambers of Commerce or on public platforms or in private conversation, is apt to be misunderstood in the present atmosphere which is very tense.

I am sorry the Honourable the Home Member is not here, but I recall to my mind a recent speech he made on the floor of this House which has caused a great deal of pain to the people outside the House. And I say 'pain' because the Honourable Member and I belong to the same district in the Bombay Presidency, I by family connection, and he, by connection of service; and every villager in that district, even now, speaks of Maxwell of Kanara with admiration and with gratitude. Only the other day after that speech was delivered, a resident of that District came to me and said, "What has happened to our Maxwell Sahib?" I stress this point of view, because we Indians are a very proud and sensitive race. We realise our helpless condition. Englishmen have often shown a spirit of racial arrogance; but when we are all in difficulties, they and we, they should be all the more careful when they speak in this country. This is an appeal I make to the English people. It is not a question of belonging to a ruling race, or of racial superiority, or of the White man's burden:

it is a question of every man's burden and of a fight for freedom, democracy and humanity. In these times of crisis my appeal to my English friends is this: be careful of what you say; drop all the tradition of racial arrogance, the theory of European domination and that you are the ruling race and were born to rule. Drop all such talk and feel like us, and that is the only way to secure the whole-hearted co-operation of the people of this country.

Sir, as I said, we have to be very careful. I am always asked what it is that we can do to help Government and help England in this war. I know we are helpless. I remember an occasion two or three years ago when a high dignitary of the Church said to me at a lunch,—I believe at that time Bombay was considered to be in greater danger on account of the Italian advance in the Middle East,—“I suppose all of you people will run away as soon as Italian bombers threaten Bombay”. And I said to him, “What else can we do? What else have you taught us to do? And how can you blame us if we do run away? Throughout all these years, one and the most important activity of the Government of India which you have completely kept in your hands is the Military Department. Have you, during the last 70 or 80 years since the Queen's Proclamation, made any attempt to identify Indians with the defence of the country? You have relied upon an Army which we pay for. Every attempt made, from the days when the Congress was founded, for the association of the Indians with the defence of the country, has been treated with contempt. And if now when there is danger we feel inclined to run away, the whole responsibility is on the shoulders of those who had control of the military policy of Government”.

But we can, in spite of all that has happened, do a great deal to sustain the public confidence in the conduct of this war, and that is by the moulding of public opinion. When I was speaking in Madras last year one of the members of the audience, evidently belonging to the Congress party, asked me, “What is the sanction behind your Political Party?” To that my reply was, “What is the sanction behind any party or any Government? The only sanction that can sustain in the long run is the sanction of public opinion”. As I said, all that we can do now is to rally public opinion behind the Government. Therefore, it is not a question of Government asking for our co-operation; it is a question of people like us asking for the co-operation of Government and their officers in our efforts to rally or to steady public opinion and to make the public realise that we must be behind the Government in the conduct of this war.

Sir, people think that war can be won by armaments alone. But if you look at what happened in France, you will realise that the whole of France with a well-equipped military organisation, with a large army, navy and air force, etc., completely collapsed, because the people of France had no heart in the war. But what happened in England? England was not at all prepared for war. As far as land forces were concerned, they were relying upon France and the position became very critical after the epic withdrawal from Dunkirk. But public opinion was rallied by speeches of leaders like those of Mr. Churchill, who succeeded in bringing the whole country behind the Government and the war effort. It is not the first time in the history of England that such a thing has occurred; and I am sure people who have read history will recall similar occasions when the elder Pitt rallied England and Abraham Lincoln rallied America. I want such an atmosphere to be created in this country. Now, therefore, if I

[Sir Vithal Narayan Chandavarkar.]

Speak frankly in criticising the Government, I should not be misunderstood. I want the Government Benches to realize that we are here to make them understand what the public feels. There was never a time in the history of this country when the Government was so completely divorced from public opinion as at present. We have got our representatives in the Executive Council at the Centre, but in the provinces there is no Ministerial Government. The Governors are doing their best to carry on the administration with the help of official Advisers—not that I am in favour of non-official Advisers. Such an arrangement will not solve the problem. Public opinion, which alone can act as sanction behind the Government, is absolutely lacking in the provinces and it is in such atmosphere that rumours are easily spread and readily believed in by even educated people, and some times even by Government officers. The main cause why rumours are allowed to play such a havoc is due to the fact that Government are completely out of touch with public opinion, and if we speak frankly as I propose to speak here today, my object in criticising the Government is to tell them what we feel, so that, if possible, a bridge can be constructed between Government and the public, and Government can be made to appreciate what our difficulties are, and, if possible, to give effect to the proposals which we might make on the floor of this House.

Sir, I shall now come to the Budget. I think I should like to congratulate the Honourable the Finance Member on the policy of repatriation. I am not an expert economist nor am I an expert on monetary policy, but taking a long view of things and from the political point of view to the extent that he has freed us from the control of the financiers of the City of London, he has made it easy for us to secure self-Government. I was told that at the last Round Table Conference our representatives were informed by the London financiers that they wanted financial safeguards because they had large funds invested in India. To the extent our debts have been paid off, the case for financial safeguards will no longer obstruct the solution of the political problem. But I would like to ask the Honourable the Finance Member one question: Sterling balances are still accumulating and are bound to accumulate in London in the near future. How does he propose to deal with such future accumulation of sterling balances? To what advantage to India does he propose to utilize the sterling balances which may accumulate in London in future?

Then, Sir, a point has been raised about Lease and Lend arrangements. What the Honourable the Finance Member has said is, I believe, that not that we are making any cash payments actually to England but that we are debiting the various budget heads and an equivalent amount is taken to credit under a Suspense head. If I am wrong, the Finance Member will correct me, but the impression in the minds of several people in the public is that we are making actual cash payments, while England's liability to the United States has not yet been determined, and this impression has been strengthened by an announcement of a Senator in America that American Government are not going to insist on England making any payments in cash under the Lease and Lend arrangement. I would like to tell the Honourable the Finance Member that we want exactly the same treatment from England which England is going to get from America and, secondly, if this credit is not to be utilized for making any payments, it must be used, I submit, for remitting taxation and not for any other purpose. (Interruption.) What I said was that the Finance

Member is debiting the various budget heads for goods received from America and the equivalent amount is carried to a credit under the Suspense Account which will remain so till the final settlement is arrived at between England and America.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: May I ask the Finance Member this one question: In the Suspense Account to which these amounts are being debited, the money is actually being used, I understand, for the purposes of India and not being banked as my Honourable friend seems to believe. They are being put into the Suspense Account which is a book entry. In all commercial and business institutions the amounts in the Suspense Account is used in the business. So the amount is being used for Government purposes. Am I correct?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Certainly.

Sir Vithal Narayan Chandavarkar: As we use funds for capital expenditure and not for revenue items of expenditure.

Now I come to the income-tax on low incomes. Here, I feel the Honourable the Finance Member might have left these people alone. I agree that he has coupled his proposals with what looks like an attractive scheme. It may have been attractive some days ago but in view of the present war situation, I doubt whether many people will take advantage of the Honourable the Finance Member's scheme. I suppose the idea behind this scheme was inspired by Keynes' proposal of national savings. As regards these middle classes we all know that, while their standard of living is much higher than that of the skilled workmen who are earning much higher wages than the middle class people their wages have not increased to the same extent as the wages of the skilled workmen have increased as a result of the war. The margin of saving in India especially among these people is very low indeed. If you want to encourage savings, it cannot, in my humble opinion, be dealt with in an isolated manner. Mr. Keynes' scheme before it was even attempted in England had to be preceded by several steps of a restrictive character. The whole economy of the country had to be placed on a rationed basis. All consumers' articles had to be rationed. This will be a very gigantic task for a country like India. Without therefore getting what he wants, I am afraid the Honourable the Finance Member's proposal is going to irritate a large section of the public who are not already very sympathetically inclined towards the Government and who are in the habit of blaming the Government for all their misfortunes. The result will be that bitterness will unnecessarily be created and increased. Any scheme of national savings before it can be given effect to must be preceded by a careful enquiry and placed on a scientific basis, and, therefore, I submit, that the proposal to tax lower incomes is likely to do more harm than good.

There is one suggestion in this connection which I would like to make. When the Income-tax Act was revised in 1939, the exemption limit in regard to Provident Fund, Contributions, Insurance premia, etc., was fixed at 1/6th of the income or Rs. 6,000 whichever was less. Now that the taxation rate has been raised, I am wondering whether it will not be possible to give some relief to the middle class by raising this exemption limit. I do not want this exemption limit to be given as a free gift to these people. They should get benefit of the increase in the exemption

[Sir Vithal Narayan Chandavarkar.]

limit only if the amount in excess of the present limit is invested in war savings or war loans. That will help the campaign for national savings to a certain extent. It will also give some relief to the people and, I think, it will serve as a better incentive for people to invest their savings in war loans and war savings. There must be a limit to the exempted amount; otherwise my friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, might invest most of his income in war loans and get exemption of income-tax! Sir, I make this proposal for the consideration of the Government, because I do feel that the limit of Rs. 6,000 is very low now having regard to the fact that the rate of taxation has been considerably increased.

I would like now to come to the Ways and Means position. I feel that in this matter the Finance Member has not been very conservative in his estimates. I think that if the present war situation continues, the withdrawals from the Post Office Savings Bank and encashment of Cash Certificates will be on a much larger scale than he has estimated. When dealing with the Ways and Means position, I would like to ask the Finance Member one question. What are the arrears of income-tax and super-tax to be collected? If my information is correct, it represents a very large sum, which, if collected quickly, might relieve the position of the Government. Of course, I am not in the secrets of Government and so I do not know what the exact figure is; but there is a feeling—I am not referring to the discussion which took place recently on the administration of the Income-tax Department in this House—but there is a feeling that the income-tax authorities, especially the Central Department, are always carrying on investigations and they are interested—and I do not blame them—to eke out as much as possible, with the result that very important cases have not been disposed of, according to my information. Now, one of the principles of taxation is that taxation must not only be simple in basis but also that taxes should be speedily collected. The collection of taxation is as important as the method of assessment; and I hope the Honourable the Finance Member will go into this question and see that the arrears are collected as speedily as possible and for, even if it is a question of loss of a few thousands here or there, the money, if collected, will ease the situation to a considerable extent.

Another question which I would like to ask is whether in preparing his estimates of income-tax and super-tax proceeds, the Finance Member has taken into account the fact that the Excess Profits Tax is allowed as a charge for the purpose of assessment of super-tax and income-tax. I am connected with one or two concerns where I am told even the standard profits have not been yet worked out and the Excess Profits Tax might vary from three or four lakhs to about 60 lakhs. There may be several other concerns which may be in the same position. Now, if Excess Profits Tax is a charge to be taken into account before income-tax and super-tax are levied, then will it not affect the estimates made by Government in regard to income-tax and super-tax, if the position in regard to the Excess Profits Tax—to use a well-known phrase which is very common nowadays—is very fluid?

The other point I wish to make now is about the A. R. P. expenditure. Government have been pleased to announce that A. R. P. expenditure in industrial concerns will be allowed as an item of expenditure. We may have to spend the money immediately, and we may not be able to get

the full allowance in one financial year; and my submission is that this expenditure should be allowed, like depreciation, to be carried over for more than one year, if necessary.

I come now to the additional duty imposed recently on raw cotton. The constituency which I represent and also the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association have strongly protested against the imposition of the duty. I quite realise the difficulties of the Government and their anxiety to come to the rescue of the cotton grower. It is in our interests, especially of the industry which I represent that the cotton grower and the agriculturist must be protected, because after all he is the mainstay of our existence: and if as a result of the war his position is going to be affected, we are always prepared to concede that the position of the agriculturist must be maintained and that he should prosper. At the same time, I would like to put the point of view of my constituency. Tariff Board after Tariff Board, beginning with the Noyce Board have been asking us to go on to fine counts, with the result, that—leave alone the question of American or Egyptian cotton—Indians have invested money in Africa for the cultivation of long-staple cotton, and a lot of African cotton and foreign cotton is coming in. It is difficult for us to change over from fine to coarse counts, because the lay-out is such that it cannot be disturbed very easily. Government have not taken our difficulties into account. We do not want to be very harsh in our criticism, because, we realise the times are abnormal; but at the same time I would like to draw the attention of Government to one aspect of their action.

I am not in these times against Government taking action by Ordinance. But there is another question which affects all the industrialists very vitally: it is the question of war risks insurance of factory buildings and equipment. We have been pressing this question on the attention of Government for more than a year and Government have taken no action. We were told that the Government were frightened of the Assembly and, therefore, they did not want to issue an Ordinance on the eve of the Assembly Session. But in the case of raw cotton they did not think of the Assembly. On the eve of the Assembly, they simply issued an Ordinance. Now, when I heard of this I wanted to know, since when have Government begun to be really frightened of flouting the Assembly? My submission is that the question of war risk insurance is such a very important question that the Government should have taken action long ago; and I am sure that this Assembly would not have blamed Government for taking such action. Even today we have no Government proposals before us, and we know what has happened in Malaya, Singapore and Burma. With all these facts before them, I really do not understand why Government have not taken any action in this matter. It should have been possible for them to issue an Ordinance long ago. They have done this in regard to war injuries to workmen; they have introduced several other war measures by Ordinance; and in this matter also if they had taken similar action, the industry would have felt that after all the Government were alive to its interests.

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee (Bombay Central Division: Muhammadan Rural): It is coming shortly.

Sir Vithal Narayan Chandavarkar: I am not sure. I was told that the Bill would be introduced early this Session, and I hope it will be

[Sir Vitthal Narayan Chandavarkar.]

introduced as early as possible and that it will be put into force without any further delay.

One word more before I conclude. In all democratic countries, people's representatives have generally no hesitation in voting supplies and expenditure. There they feel that after all the government which is in charge of the finances of the country is their own government and responsible to them. Here, the position is very artificial. We have really no control over expenditure. The war is in our country and, therefore, it would not be right for us to vote against the Finance Bill; and if we vote for the Finance Bill—at least I am voting for it—it is not because we are satisfied with the policy of the Government but we feel that this is not the time for putting forward even a gesture which might make our enemies feel that we are not behind the Government in this war. But that does not mean that Government should not be alive to the other side of the question, that we have no real control over expenditure.

We are told there is no scope for retrenchment. I think one of the fundamental canons of finance is that retrenchment is not a thing which comes up only when there is depression; retrenchment to be effective must be continuous and not spasmodic. Throughout the Government have to see that they avoid wasteful expenditure. I agree that in war time it is impossible for Government to keep such a watchful eye. But we, who have no share in the administration of the country, and who cannot compel Ministers to resign when we do not like their policy, are in a very difficult position. When we offer criticisms, Sir, our anxiety is all the greater, because there is a feeling in the heart of our hearts that everything is not all right, that a lot of money is wasted, and if statements are made here which the Treasury Benches think are of an irresponsible character, they cannot blame us; they must blame the present position,—and that brings me to the constitutional question. Only two months ago an European industrialist, a friend of mine, while driving with me—he was not from Bombay but from some other place,—said to me—'Well, Chandavarkar, what is the solution of the problem? I feel things are not going on happily; there is something radically wrong'. I said to him—'What is wrong is the present Constitution'. He said; 'I entirely agree. I have come to the conclusion that whatever may be the consequences, we have to take risks and hand over the control of the Government to the people of the soil and that is the only way we can continue the connection between England and India, that is the only way by which this connection which can be called friendship between England and India, can be maintained'. Sir, even English people here have now begun to realise this fact—I do not know what the Englishman at Home thinks about it. I feel very strongly on this question. I belong to a moderate school of thought. We feel that the ties between England and India are so great that whatever may be the sins of omission and commission, there is a great responsibility thrown on the Englishman, because he is the person who has got something to give. He must come forward and say 'Here is what I propose to hand over to you. You settle your differences between yourselves'. Now, I ask, is England free from all differences? We heard the other day that when Mr. Churchill was in America, there were intrigues amongst certain backbenchers to get rid of him or to undermine his influence. Even in spite of what is going on in England today, is England absolutely free from all personal bickerings and personal bitterness? After all, most of the party differences, I submit, are due to

personal antipathies. If the personal antipathies are swept off party differences will be solved automatically. And is England free from personal antipathies? Why should England tell us—you settle your differences and we shall give you this or that? Has Mr. Churchill ever said—you come before me with an agreed constitution, and I will give it to you? I do not remember either Mr. Churchill or Mr. Amery or the Marquess of Zetland has ever made such a statement.

Sir, the whole atmosphere is unreal and will continue to be unreal, and the position of people like us is getting more and more difficult, because it is for us to mould public opinion. Unless people feel that they have got a stake in the country nothing can be done by anybody. I heard recently a broadcast I could not catch the name of the General who is supposed to have said three hundred years ago.—“Give me an army of men who know what they are fighting for, and who feel what they are fighting for, and we shall win any war”. Sir, I tell the Britishers now, and I tell the politicians in England to make us feel, to make us realise that we have got a stake in this war. It is no use making me and my friend, Sir Cowasji, realise that we have got a stake because we have got other stakes too, but you should make the man in the street, who has got nothing to lose, you should make him feel that he has a stake in this war, and the leaders of public opinion should be taken into your confidence and power should be handed over to them. It may be possible for some die-hards to say that the interests of the masses would be sacrificed, and that the masses would not like such a change. But, Sir, I say this that the masses would prefer to have their own countrymen in charge of the administration than any other person. I am referring to this, because it has gladdened my heart, and I am sure it would gladden the heart of every Englishman, when I say that I read recently the speeches delivered by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Mr. Rajagopalachariar and Pandit Gobind Vallabh Pant, and I have also read the article written by Mr. Gandhi in the *Harijan*. These leaders who have gone to jail more than once have now come forward and made statements which, Sir, have steadied public opinion more than anything else. I do not belong to their school of politics. I disagree with their methods and their views but that does not prevent me from acknowledging openly and saying that these leaders have done far more to steady public opinion in India than anybody else, and I ask English politicians to take note of this, that in a country like India, these people, who were looked upon as the enemies of England, have, when England was in great difficulties, when the temptation was so great to make them exploit these difficulties, come out and made statements, in which they have asked the people to forget the sins of omission and commission of England in the past and to look at the war in its correct perspective. This fact alone ought to make people like Mr. Churchill and Mr. Amery think that if the problem is solved quickly and generously, India will be saved, and not only India, but along with India, England, and America, and above all democracy and humanity.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan (East Central Punjab: Muhammadan): Sir, let me observe at the outset that being a Muslim Leaguer I am committed to opposition of the Finance Bill. You will remember that at the last Session of the Assembly when we walked out and did not participate in the proceedings of the Assembly for over a month, we declared that inasmuch as the Indian Government had not listened to our proposals, and had spurned them though what we required was absolutely just, we opposed the Finance Bill. Since then there has been no change in the

[Maulana Zafar Ali Khan.]

position. The Government in its wisdom remains adamant. So are we. And I should like to point out that when I say we, I mean the ten crores of Muslims throughout the length and breadth of India, and to ignore their requests, to ignore their demands would be committing political suicide. There are some people who are trying to persuade the British Government to believe that the Muslim League is not the power that it claims to be. The real spokesmen of India are the Prime Ministers of Bengal, the North West Frontier Provinces and Sind. They can speak in the name of the Muslims of India, because they happen to be in power, because they are the premiers of their provinces. Sir, this logic stands self-condemned in the light of the real facts. Sir Jeremy Raisman, Sir Reginald Maxwell and Sir Andrew Clow, who is elevated to the Governorship of Assam,—instead of being in their places, should accompany me—I would carry them throughout the length and breadth of India to meetings which are attended by thousands and thousands of Muslims, who now stand shoulder to shoulder under the banner of Mr. Jinnah and who assure him that they would shed their last drop of blood for the honour of Muslim India. Only then the eyes of my friends sitting on the Treasury Benches will be opened. Only then they will realize that they will be doing no good by introducing any changes in the present constitution in the middle of the war and for even two years after the war in accordance with the wishes of these Premiers. There will be no general elections either to the Central Assembly or in the provinces. So they are taking shelter under the umbrella which is held by the British Government. If they were to resign today and if there were general elections, you will find that Muslim Leaguers will sweep the polls throughout the length and breadth of India. It is no use telling anybody that the League should be ignored.

I find a special message was sent to Mr. Churchill this morning by my friend, Master Tara Singh—and he tells him—‘Establish
 1 P.M. a national Government in the Centre, consult the Sikhs, if you don't consult the Sikhs then something will happen, ignore Mr. Jinnah’. Similar messages are being sent to the Prime Minister and articles are being contributed in some of the dailies in England, but this won't help matters. So, having explained the position of the Muslim League I once more declare on the floor of the House that unless and until the proposals put forward by the Muslim League in the name of the ten crores of Muslims of India are accepted, there is no getting out of the political tangle. It is very easy to get out of it if once the British Government makes up its mind. There are differences between the Hindus and the Mussalms, but I think that forces are working which will bring these two together. Unless and until they come together there is no breaking this tangle. So, if you only do your duty, and make up your mind to part with real power then the differences between the Hindus and the Mussalms would be a thing of the past. My Honourable friend, Sir Jeremy Raisman, is personally a very charming gentleman, very courteous, very polite, but once his mind is made up to force us to vote supplies, then he is adamant, and at that time, in spite of what my Honourable friend, Mr. Lalchand Navalrai, has stated, Sir Jeremy Raisman is equal to ten Aneys, Sir Reginald Maxwell is equal to 20 Sir Sultan Ahmeds, and Sir Andrew Clow is equal to 100 Modis. These three are the real Government, the others do not count, let them pardon me. When the Finance Member asks us to vote 133

crores for war, he is faced with a deficit of 47 crores. He wants to make up that deficit by borrowing 35 crores—from whom? Shall I say, America?—and makes up the balance of the deficit by taxing the poor people of this country to the tune of 12 crores. We have to bow down our heads before him, before His Majesty as there is no help for it. But let me assure him and assure those who sit with him, that if the money had been spent properly to promote the successful prosecution of the war, we would not have minded, in spite of our greatest differences with the British Government, because, after all, we have lived together in this country for 150 years, and in spite of Dyers and O'Dwyers we have still a soft corner in our hearts for them. Actually, I admire the Britisher for his character. I have been to England myself. I was there for about a year and met the British people. I came to the conclusion that as long as the Britisher remains in England he is the finest gentleman. But directly he crosses the Suez Canal and comes to India, he becomes a sun-dried bureaucrat, he wants to rule. As I was saying, this money is not being spent properly. The home as also, the foreign policy of the Government are a series of uninterrupted blunders. They started with one great blunder, the occupation of Persia, Iraq, Syria, and they thought that the western flank of India was safe. Had I been in the place of Mr. Churchill, do you know what I would have done?

Sir F. E. James (Madras: European): You would have lost the war.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: I should have asked my dear friend, Turkey, to take possession of all those territories and be responsible for what happened.

Mr. M. Ghiasuddin (Punjab Landholders): Supposing Turkey had refused?

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: I would have asked Mr. Ghiasuddin to take charge. This was a great blunder. You know, after all, although we are British Indians, still we are Muslims first and British Indians afterwards. We still feel for Persia, for Iraq, for Syria, and I wish that Government had not committed that blunder. Now comes the second blunder. It was the separation of Burma from India. We protested vehemently against this separation, Hindus and Mussalmans both said over and over again that Burma was a part and parcel of India, with nearly the same civilisation. There were many cultural and economic relations between India and Burma. Indians had invested crores and crores of rupees in Burma. But they would not listen to us, and the result is what it is today. In this connection there was another great blunder. The Prime Minister of Burma, U. Saw, went to England. There he was the guest of the British Government. Many parties were given in his honour and many fine things were said to him, but when he placed a proposal before the Prime Minister of Britain that Burma should be given Dominion Status, it was refused point blank. It was after that that unfortunately he fell into the meshes of Japan and he was arrested. This arrest was another great mistake.

Sir F. E. James: He is still the guest of the British Government!

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: These mistakes are being committed in India also today. I have read in the papers that Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar

[Maulana Zafar Ali Khan.]

has been arrested. Why? I do not know. Ostensibly, because he is the President of the Forward Bloc. Either declare the Forward Bloc an unlawful body, or release him. But you won't do either. You give the impression that in India there are people who have sympathies with Japan. There can be no greater blunder than to let the impression go abroad that there is a single Indian who is in sympathy with the Japanese, but you are going on with your old game.

Sir Reginald Maxwell is not here, otherwise he would have dubbed me as a Quisling. Had he been here, he would have charged me with being a Fifth Columnist. I would ask him, if you believe that Allama Mashriqi, who is lingering in internment in Madras, was a real Fifth Columnist and was a pro-Nazi, then why did you release him? If you have released him, what is the use of keeping him on in Madras which is momentarily in peril of being bombarded by Japanese cruisers or submarines? Madras is being evacuated, but he is still there. Then we have been asking you to release the detenus, and the political prisoners. You say, there are only about 400 or 500 of them, but the Home Member quietly informs us that, if he released these prisoners, there would be great danger, as if it was a greater danger than the danger which confronted Malaya, the danger which confronted Singapore, Java, Sumatra, Celebes, Timor and the Northern part of Australia. According to the Home Member these are not dangers, but it is a danger to release a few unarmed poor fellows who have been rotting in jail. This is one of those uninterrupted series of blunders to which I have referred.

Sir, even this Bill is a war Bill and we must look upon it in that light. We have been treated to an ABCD politics lately. To it, in the natural course of affairs I will be added too. A stands for America, B for Britain, C for China and D for Dutch. The Dutch element has been eliminated altogether. C is being eliminated because the Japanese have cut the Rangoon-Prome road and the Burma-China road has also been cut and, therefore, it will be difficult to supply China with arms and ammunition, with which alone the Chinese can carry on the war. It is very difficult for Russia to send them supplies by the overland route. So, the only way by which they could be supplied with munitions of war was this Burma-China road. They say there is another road in Assam. Perhaps His Excellency Sir Andrew Clow will see to it that the road is properly constructed. I met him in the lobby yesterday and I congratulated him heartily on his elevation to the post of the Governor of Assam. I hoped that his reign there will be a historic one in the light of the events that are happening in Burma and he said he hoped so too. Now, the China and the Dutch element being eliminated, there remain America and Britain. America is an unknown quantity. For very many months we have been hearing of a talk of dollars in millions, billions and trillions. We have been told that America will be able to build so many thousands of aeroplanes in one month. Where are those thousands of aircrafts? The Dutch waited and waited and no help reached them. England is also trusting her future to the help that America may give. This is un-British altogether. If the Britishers have to fight, let them make up their mind that they will fight, single-handed with backs to the wall. But if their hopes are centred in Russia or America, it will be the greatest blunder that they have ever made. But what is the deciding element? It is neither

A nor B nor C nor D but I. It is India which will settle the whole affair and it will be 40 crores of people living in this country who will ultimately decide the situation. But are you really taking India into your consideration? I am afraid not. You only want us to vote credit and to give you so many crores of rupees but we are nowhere in the picture.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member may continue his speech after Lunch.

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

The Assembly re-assembled after Lunch at Half Past Two of the Clock, Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta) in the Chair.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: Sir, a cataclysmic change is coming all over the world. It will not be the same world after the war as we find it today. Imperialism of the British brand or of any other brand will be given a burial, I hope it will be a decent burial, never to come out of the grave again. It will be succeeded by democracy. But democracy, if it follows in the footsteps of its predecessor, that is to say if it pushes the strong to the front and crushes the weak, then it will share the fate of its predecessor. While speaking of this democracy, I will say something about Dominion Status of the Westminster type. We are being told that after the war is over, our masters today who will be our comrades tomorrow will grant us Dominion Status. Now, Sir, the question is who wants Dominion Status in India? The Indian National Congress does not want it, at least the spokesmen of the Congress do not want it, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru does not want it, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari does not want it, and we, Muslims, do not want it at all. What does Dominion Status of the Westminster type signify? It signifies the rule of the majority and it signifies the domination of the majority, it signifies that when the majority says, two and two make five, the minority shall not have the right to rebut and say that two and two make four. If Dominion Status is granted to India, India will remain as dissatisfied with her lot as she is today. In the case of the Muslims, they will fight it tooth and nail. They will not allow Dominion Status to come to India so far as they are concerned. So far as the Muslims are concerned, they have made their position clear. The Muslims in India are ten crores in number and they have made up their mind that, in the coming India which is in the making they will have at least some spot where they shall be given the opportunity of rising to the full height of their cultural stature, living under conditions in which alone they can face a fighting world. What are those corners in India? The corner of the North West Frontier of India and the corner of the North East Frontier of India. The North-Western corner region comprises the North West Frontier Province, the Punjab, Sind and Baluchistan. In the Eastern region, the zone comprises Assam, Bengal where the Muslims happen to be in a majority. Unfortunately, this scheme which goes by the name of Pakistan has not been understood by our friends. They have not analysed it dispassionately and in a calm manner. After all, what does Pakistan mean? Pakistan means that in regions where the Muslims happen to be in a majority they shall be entitled to the rights of the majority, but

[Maulana Zafar Ali Khan.]

in the case of Muslims, their exercising the rights of the majority means full consideration to the rights of the minorities. . . .

Bhai Parma Nand (West Punjab: Non-Muhammadan): In Assam, the Muslims form only 34 per cent. and yet the Honourable Member says the Muslims are in a majority.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: I meant Assam and Bengal put together. Our conception of justice as laid down in the Holy Koran, it is this: let not the fact that your opponent happens to be a non-Muslim lead you to do injustice to him, be just, because that is true piety according to true Islam. When I talk of the Punjab, the North West Frontier Province, Baluchistan and Sind to form

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Don't mention Sind?

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: Because it troubles you. My Honourable friend, Mr. Lalchand Navalrai, seems to think that the people in Sind are all dacoits and murderers.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Many of them are born dacoits and murderers. Seven men were killed recently?

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: Killing goes on all over the world. How many men are killed in Europe daily? How many were killed in Burma, in Sumatra, Java and other places. So killing is there. The law of the survival of the fittest is there, which ordains that the weak shall go to the wall, but it is Islam which creates a normal position between the two. Justice on the side of strength is mercy and injustice to the weak is a curse.

So, you see, Sir, the Muslims will create a homeland of their own in India. It does not mean that the Hindus of these territories or the non-Muslims of these territories who want to have a homeland of their own shall be deported or sent to some other land. No, they will remain where they are, their rights will be respected and every consideration will be shown to them because if this consideration is not shown to them, the Muslim as a believer in the blessings of Islam loses his position altogether. So, I should like to inform the British Government, through this House, that if the demand of the Muslims, so often repeated by the Muslim League, is not conceded, the Muslims will create a terrible row in this country and they will not rest satisfied till their object is achieved. They have made up their mind. We do not want Dominion Status. We want India to be free and the Hindus, at least, ought to be satisfied that we have given to them the right of having their own Government where they can exercise the same powers in three-fourths of India, what we want to have in one fourth of India. At least we ought to have some share in our patrimony. India is as much ours as theirs. They are the big brothers and we are the smaller brothers. A division of this patrimony does not mean injustice on our part. We give to you what we want for ourselves. So, when there is a chance for you to have swaraj in Madras, in Bombay, in Central Provinces, in the United Provinces, in Bihar and in Orissa, why not take that chance. It is open to reason. Just think of its reasonableness. You will not get anything if you have made up your minds to ignore the Muslims altogether and to turn them out even from their homeland and reduce them to the position of helots

in a land which is as much theirs as yours. I appreciate the remarks made the other day by Sreejutt Rajagopalachari that the real and just demands of the Mussalmans must be met, and if you treat them in any other way so much the worse for you. That is what he says and I think he is right.

In this connection, Sir, I should like to say a few words about racial discrimination. The House will remember that when the war broke out Mr. Churchill having looked at the question from a higher point of view so far as the British interests are concerned, offered France the common citizenship of the British Empire; but, unfortunately, for France she refused it. But when the question comes up of a common citizenship for Indians in the British Commonwealth, the argument is flung in our face that if there is to be a federation of white nations India cannot be expected to be a part of it. So there comes the bar sinister of colour again, dividing the eastern and western world, and there it stands. Kipling said many years ago that 'East is East and West is West and the twain shall never meet'. We thought there had been great changes in the world and east and west were going to meet, and India was going to be the meeting point. But incidents still occur from time to time which are very disturbing. Let me remind Sir Andrew Clow, that the Railway Department in India is responsible for creating bad blood between Englishmen and Indians. When we travel in the second class some European comes and finds a 'blackie' travelling in that compartment and asks us to get out. It happens frequently in India and I had this experience myself. So racial discrimination and colour sense is the greatest bar in the way of the people meeting together. Never was there greater necessity for Englishmen and Indians coming together, putting their heads together and find out how the trouble can be avoided. But they do not do it. On the eastern side, as I have explained, our flanks are uncovered and on the western side there is danger and a great pincer movement is coming, Germany from the West and Japan from the East. They are coming like two millstones and they have made up their mind to crush India, but India will not be crushed. They do not realise what the hidden strength of India is. There are 40 crores of people with untold potential wealth in money and in resources and millions and millions of fighting men and brave men who have given a good account of themselves in Africa, in Malaya, in Burma and Sumatra and Java and elsewhere; these people can change the face of the East, only if you looked at the question from the highest standards and not from a narrow angle of vision which I call the British bureaucratic vision.

We, Mussalmans, placed as we are in India at present, look upon ourselves as soldiers first and everything else afterwards. The Punjab is the sword-arm of the Empire, they say. Thousands and thousands have gone to the East and to the West to fight the battles of England. Economically they are in a very weak position; culturally they may be in a strong position but economically they are at the last rung of the ladder. They look at themselves and find themselves pushed by nimbler wits. They are shedding their life-blood for what you call the British Empire; but the British Empire itself does not appreciate it. Earl Winterton the other day made a remark in the House of Commons that he was in the India Office for some time and he did not know what was happening in India. He asked how many soldiers there were in India and when no reply was given on the stereotyped plea that it would be against the public interest to disclose the number of troops he said, "What about the vaunted ones

[Maslana Zafar Ali Khan.]

million soldiers who had been lately recruited?" Then it transpired that of this one million three lakhs had been sent out to Persia, Iraq, Libya, etc. So still there were seven lakhs. Where are they and what are they doing? Are they properly equipped and have they got the necessary training? You get crores and crores of rupees out of us, but you do not give us any assurance that these seven lakhs of soldiers who are now in India will when the proper time comes give a good account of themselves, that they will be properly equipped and trained and that there will be a sufficient number of aeroplanes to help them if the fight comes to India. You have not given us that assurance yet, but you simply say that the necessary production is forthcoming. So, as I have said, the battle of the world will have to be fought on the plains of India in the near future. For that time Britishers must be prepared. If the Britishers are wise they will declare India to be free and not dilly-dally by talks about Dominion Status and after the war, and so forth. If you declare India to be free today and hold India responsible for the successful prosecution of the war I think you will have done what you ought to do.

In the meantime, while taking measures for the successful prosecution of the war, you should look to the internal affairs of the country so far as they relate to tranquillity on the part of the people living here. In every walk of life they are dissatisfied. This morning a gentleman told me, when the talk turned on racial discrimination, that young men with ability and training were simply turned out of military service on the plea that they are dull and lazy, and their only dullness and laziness consist in the fact that they happen to possess a little self-respect. The Britisher looked upon himself as the denizen of mount Olympus and looked down upon the Indian as an inferior being. This will have to be looked to.

Then, Sir, so far as the Mussalmans are concerned, they are dissatisfied with the way in which they are treated in respect of legitimate aid given to them. Take a small instance. The Associated Press and the United Press News Agencies which are doing very useful work are being subsidized by the Government of India. Many papers—English mostly, Indian papers also—receive help in the form of advertisements. They receive subsidies and they are carrying on their work successfully. In the case of poor Mussalmans, however great their fighting strength may be and however loud their protest may be, no such help is given to them. There is one Agency—the Orient Press Agency—recently started which is doing very good work. It is the only Agency which the Mussalmans possess, but it is being treated in a step-motherly manner. No help for it; no aid for it; no subsidy to it. Everything is going to others and not to the Mussalmans. So there is discontentment here. To secure their contentment, these deficiencies must be remedied and their proper share should be given to them. In this connection, I remind the House of the promise held out to the Mussalmans of India by Mr. Amery—I don't hold brief for him in everything that he does but sometimes he does a right thing also. On the 8th of December an offer was made to the people of India in which an assurance was given to them that the rights of the minorities would be protected and that no constitution would be framed without their approval and without their consent.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: I hope not.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: We are thankful to him for that

The Honourable Mr. M. S. Aney: The declaration was made in August, not December.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: Yes, on the 8th of August, that promise was made and if that promise is broken and he does anything which goes against its spirit then, I think, he will find himself and the British Government will find itself in great difficulty.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: I will join you.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: When I talk of the Mussalmans, I talk of all other minorities also. I talk of Sikhs; I talk of those who belong to the so-called Depressed Classes; I talk of the Anglo-Indian community. These are all minorities and we want our safeguards and we want our position under the new constitution to be something enviable and not unenviable.

Here, Sir, there are small things which show the mentality of the bureaucracy. They committed a great blunder, as I pointed out, of separating Burma. Then they separated Aden from India. Here they were a bit more reasonable but we did not know of the pranks they would play later on. In 1940, suddenly, the Government of Aden—the Aden Protectorate—issued an Ordinance the object of which was to prevent those Indians who had left the shores of Aden to come back to Aden and many other restrictions were imposed upon them. This Ordinance was issued in October, 1941, and the Government of India did not know of this Ordinance till December. So that is how the Government of India was sleeping over it and the Colonial Government did not pay any heed to it. Why this discrimination between the Arab and Indian on the one hand and Indian and Britisher on the other, I should like to know? But they have no answer. They cannot give answer. Supposing they say that the Arabs would be given their right of living in the land in which they were born and no outsider had the right to go and settle there. May I ask what right has the Britisher to remain in Aden? If they are so solicitous about the interests of Arabs, then Arabia should be for Arabs, Egypt for Egyptians, Iraq for Iraqis

Mr. N. M. Joshi (Nominated Non-Official): What about India?

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: India for Indians. I again say India for Indians.

An Honourable Member: Pakistan for Mussalmans.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: Pakistan for Indians, Anglo-Indians, Hindus and Sikhs—all of them. There will be a Pakistan in the United Provinces part of India where Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru will rule and there will be a Pakistan in the Central Provinces, in Madras, in Bombay and Orissa for the Hindus

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: What about Gidneystan?

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: I should like to come and pay you a visit there. I think Delhi will be for you.

[Maulana Zafar Ali Khan.]

I think this question of questions will be solved. I am not a pessimist. I am an optimist and I think things are shaping themselves in a fairly satisfactory manner. Again I remind you, Sir, that I believe in Hindu-Muslim unity. In the Punjab an atmosphere has been created in connection with the movement called the Beopar Mandal movement which has brought all the sections of the public—Hindus, Mussalmans, Sikhs and Christians, all of them—on one platform. I want that atmosphere to be created throughout India. Grave events are happening in the Far East and trouble is brewing nearer home and unless we put our heads together and do everything to keep the atmosphere tranquil there will be trouble. Let us make up our mind. Let us create harmony; and sink our differences. We Mussalmans have declared that the question of Pakistan can be shelved till after the war. In the meantime, we ought to put to ourselves the question, "What will be our duty?"

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: If there is unity, then India will be Ekistan.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: My Honourable friend, Mr. Navalrai, is always under the impression that some Sindhi will come and run away with him. I am speaking as a Pakistani. You make up your mind. Keep the objective before yourself and that objective will be achieved . . .

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: You said there will be one platform after the war and so I say

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Order, order; one Honourable Member at a time.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: During the war let us sink our differences and call upon our British friends to have a look at things in a proper manner and let us create an atmosphere in which we can all join together. If we cannot expect you to treat us in the same way as you treat the British people it is because it is our misfortune or fortune that we happen to be a shade darker than you all; and this bar sinister of colour lies between us. But we have to face the situation and the war is there and the situation is getting more and more critical every day. In order to face that situation we must create an atmosphere throughout the length and breadth of India during this war in order to see that the war is prosecuted successfully. So let us sink our differences.

Sir, I think I have said everything that I wanted to say, and I hope that my appeal will not go in vain; I make that appeal to Mr. Lalchand Navalrai, to Bhai Parma Nand, to Sir Henry Gidney and to Sir Jeremy Raisman the author of this Finance Bill, which I oppose.

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullahai Laljee: Sir, before speaking on the details of the Finance Bill, I should like to place before the House a most serious question which I feel bound to do. It cannot be denied that the predominant desire of the people at this moment is to know what is their position and what is being done for the defence of the country. A lot has been said and will be said about what is being done and what will be done. But I ask in all earnestness the Government Benches as to what is the mode by which they could place the facts before the country. So far, we have been taught that everything that the Government do is through

the representatives elected by the people. Having been seven years in this House I must admit that every day I feel that this Government tries to belittle the representatives of the people as much as possible. I am sorry when I make this allegation; but I say I am prepared to prove to the hilt that that is the position. In fact, when democracy is being preached, when we are told that you are out to fight for democratic rights—leaving aside the question of swaraj, independence, equality or otherwise—we find that even the constitution that has been given to us since 1935, a constitution of which these days nobody, no civilised government can be proud of, even that is not being carried out in the right spirit and in the right manner. I would not have even spoken these words, believing it was hopeless, but I have been emboldened to say these words after having heard the sentences read or spoken by the Leader of the House only on the 17th February, 1942, when moving a Resolution of appreciation and admiration at the visit of Generalissimo and Madame Chiang-kai-shek. These are his words:

"The Assembly which constitutionally represents the whole of British India"—it is constitutionally so, I admit—"can, therefore, speak for them authoritatively,"

Is that a fact?

The Honourable Mr. M. S. Aney: Yes; it can speak.

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee: What is the meaning of the word "Authoritatively"? I suppose the authority vested in me to speak those words, as I am doing—nothing more: I can utter with my own authority, with my own breath; that is the meaning of authority; that is exactly the position; nothing else. It goes on—

"will be doing the bare duty which it owes to the country it represents."

Now, what is our position? Before the war, we invariably had visits from His Excellency the Viceroy, addressing this House, telling us about our relations with foreign nations and the expeditions that took place in Waziristan and what not. May I ask in all humility whether the Government Benches have realised that for the last three years we have not been told about our foreign relationships, nor about the war at our gates. We Indians feel much more than any Britisher for our country, and it is no use telling us that we are not doing anything for our country or we shall not do. It is not under your inspiration or encouragement that we have to do it. We shall do it and we must do it; but let me tell you that this is not the way that the Indian people, this representative House, should be treated in these days when the fight for democracy is going on.

I will give you in short a list of the important events that have taken place. We do not know from the representative of His Majesty the King-Emperor to whom we owe allegiance, as to what is the state of affairs so far as our foreign relationship is concerned or what happens about the war. The war is not in Waziristan—it is at our gate. Then we were told, and I remember very well that the then Leader of the House, Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, visited Europe and so also Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, and they had personal knowledge of the things that were going on in the battlefield; but nothing of that sort was told to this House nor to the people, except the press report that was flung at us, and we had to judge for ourselves, and then we are told "Have confidence". We also know very well that His Excellency the Viceroy with all good intentions consulted or placed before the Leaders of the Opposition, which is exactly what is being

[Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee.]

done in Great Britain, when he sent out some few troops to Singapore and to Egypt. We thought that the opposition would be taken into confidence. We heard both Mr. Bulabhai Desai and Mr. Jinnah telling us how they were consulted, but that was in respect of a few hundred troops that were sent—hardly a thousand troops were sent then, I mean at the beginning of the war. Today thousands and thousands of my countrymen are being sent, and yet not a single Indian is being consulted. I challenge the Treasury Benches, I challenge my revered friend, Mr. Aney, to tell us whether in the matter of despatching Indian troops overseas even he as the senior Member of the Executive Council, is consulted. Sir, it was the privilege extended to the Opposition, a valued privilege I must say, which was extended to the Opposition, and this has been denied to us now. It may be due to some change in policy as some of our friends are not present in the House,—but I ask even my friend, Mr. Aney, who is a senior Member of the Expanded Council of which we boast so much, is he being consulted in regard to the despatch of Indian troops overseas. Can you cite a single instance in any part of the world where such a thing exists? Can any one here tell me, can any Indian Civil Servant, who are learned people, tell me whether there is any parallel to this in any part of the world, can my friends tell me of any instance from history of any democracy in which the members of the Government or even the Leader of the Opposition is not told about the position of the war or is not consulted before despatching large numbers of troops out of the country to die. . . .

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: Not to die, but to fight so that we may live.

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee: Certainly to die. It pains me to say that. But whatever the intentions of the Government may be in keeping us in the dark, we shall do what we can for our people and for our country. But let me ask my friends of the Treasury Benches to ponder seriously over the position they have taken up. How is it consistent with the democratic principles which you so loudly preach to everybody, how can anybody with his hand on his conscience go and tell his people to leave his fortunes to you in these circumstances and to trust you? You place me in that position as his representative and yet blame me. I cannot find a single Indian-born subject out of the 40 crores of our people who will be able to lay his hand on his conscience and tell the people that they should trust you, because he knows all about the movement of the troops of the true position of the war,—and yet in season and out of season you blame us. I wish, Sir, before the people become more restive and take to self-defence in the absence of any effective arrangements made by you, you would I mean Government will have sense enough to divulge their plans to the real representatives of the people and take the people into your confidence. Not in the way as some civilian said the other day—what he said was this—are we going to tell you all what we are doing so that you will go and speak about it in the bazars,—as if he was the only father or grandfather or the protector of Indians, as if we do not know our own responsibility, as if we do not know the A. B. C. of the thing to go about and speak all sorts of things in the bazars so that the facts may be known to the enemy and aeroplanes may come and bombard my home and children. Sir, this is the way they treat the Members of the Legislature. I say this is mostly done by whom—by the great Civil service including the Indian-born I. C. S. man.

Then, Sir, we have been told that the war is at our gates, and that the Government Members being very busy, we have been asked to cut short our speeches. And this appeal has come from whom? It has come from no less a person than a great financier, and a financier or businessman must know the amount of feeling engendered with regard to the affairs of a concern when it passes through critical times. Sir, only 120 Members represent here 40 crores of people, and they are being denied an opportunity to know the fact and thus be able to speak a word; my friend wants we should speak little, he does not want us even now to speak out our desires and our minds freely. Is it suggested, Sir, that the Members of the Treasury Benches are so busy all the 24 hours that they cannot hear a few words from us. . . .

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: No, he did not mean that.

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee: Yes, he did say it. Sir, I am one of those who has been here for the last seven years, and although I see for some time and even now empty benches here today. . . .

Dr. P. N. Banerjee (Calcutta Suburbs: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Poverty everywhere.

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee: Shameful poverty—non-attendance of the representatives of the people, representatives who are elected by the people. Sir, it is not a pleasure to be here now. What do people have now begun to say? People from various quarters don't want us to come to this House any more and they want us to be somewhere else. In fact, if we are not in other bodies we are threatened to be nobodies. It has come to that. It is only our conscientious duty to the country that compels us to come here. If I want to be somebody in my country in the present circumstances it is really much better not to be in this House at present. As my friend, Sir Vithal Chandavarkar, said, the position in which the moderates and others of their views are placed is not a happy one. It is only our duty which enjoins on us to come here in these circumstances and do what little we can for the cause of the country, and persuade Government to recognise public opinion through their representatives.

Then, Sir, a lot was said the other day with regard to supply of munitions. I was very glad when the Resolution was moved by my friend, Sir Frederick James, and I expected to get a lucid reply which we got but also a favourable consideration than we got yesterday. After nearly 3½ years the Members of this House, the representatives of the people, were given for the first time an opportunity to know the working of the great Supply Department. Sir, I am in a position to state that even the Members of the Defence Supply Committee which was formed after some time were not informed of the position which was so lucidly explained by Mr. Jenkins. . . .

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Distrust.

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee: What has been the result of it? The result has been this, that Sir Frederick James withdrew the Resolution. I do not know why he withdrew the Resolution or why the Members of his Group did not press it. The reply that was given on behalf of the Government to the Resolution was, in my humble opinion, lucid,

[Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee.]

nice and instructive, but not favourable to the point. The production question was cleverly mixed up, and I have begun to feel in my heart of hearts that the opportunity was taken to lay down that a Production Minister was not required.

Sir, I may say that most of the matters that I heard yesterday both from Mr. Jenkins and Sir Frederick James could be found in the discussion on the same matter and questions in the Hansard's Report of the House of Commons, for September, 1939, January, 1940 and June, 1941. In the official Report of Parliamentary Debates, Hansard, all these things can be found. They do not want to have here a thing which was approved of in England. It was discussed there and found to be necessary. The people at large all over know all about all these and such things but it was kept or attempted or advised to be kept as a secret only in respect of the 40 crores of Indians—although all these things were published in England over a year ago and the whole world knew all about it. Still, so far as India is concerned, it must be kept a secret, which means lack of confidence in us. Sir, I ask the Government to remove the suspicion from their minds. For goodness' sake, remove your suspicion soon, and consult the people who are vitally interested, if you really mean business, if you want real honest co-operation. What my friend said was very lucid, very instructive, I did feel it but here it is, all this has been only now after so much time has been discussed out here. I do not want to repeat in details but I tell you this much that as reported in these reports this country has been able, with its poor industrial development, to give a great help to Great Britain during the years 1939-40. I will read only two lines.

"The whole of the surplus capacity in India has been taken up and the Indian Government are bringing in production of various kinds and from various sources and from various private firms to help up."

During 1939 and 1940 this poor country had done all it could, and even now I am not sure whether we cannot do more. A lot has been said with regard to munitions. I have found also in this book, something said that machine tools are wanting, and the second thing is steel. What has been done in England? All the machine tools have been purchased wherever they may be found all over the world. Not satisfied with that, they have gone down the whole of their country and various other countries to buy second-hand machines. They have got a list, according to this book, of second-hand tool machines in Great Britain which have been acquired. May I ask whether any such attempts have been made in this country?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Yes.

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee: Have you got a list of second hand machine tools?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Yes.

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee: Have you been using all the machine tools in industrial concerns? Definitely no; that I know for myself, I need not ask for your reply.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Then it is the Honourable Member's duty to inform us if he knows of any that are not being used.

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee: I have been told only yesterday that we are short of machine tools and it is here and now my duty to bring it to the notice of the Finance Member!

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Is that so?

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee: You tell me just now and call upon me here and now to tell you all the particulars. I have come to know that authoritatively only now from the Secretary of the Supply Department. I need not rely upon this book or upon the newspapers, but the fact is I have got from the horse's mouth only 24 hours before that our Supply Department is short of machine tools.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: I do not know where the Honourable Member spends his spare time. But I should have thought that almost everybody knew that the Government of India had been searching high and low for any spare machine tools that were available in this country.

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee: A large number of my countrymen know a great deal more than what is being told to them, but that is not authoritative. What I know is this,— but what right have I got to tell you? Whom am I going to approach? There are some machine tools in this country and they are not all being used for the Supply Work.

The Honourable Mr. M. S. Aney: Is not the Honourable Member aware that Government stands in need of using every machine tool?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: . . . and trying to get them.

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee: I am aware of it. But the fact is this. Have they been able to get them? Have they endeavoured to get them through the people, or have they endeavoured to use the influence of the Members of this House? They have done nothing of the sort. I will give you one instance. (Interruption by Sir Cowasji Jehangir). I will tell you where the machine tools are. I have written to a Government Department and I am going to repeat. Have a little patience. It is a fact that I have written to the Government Department in charge of Defence as to what I mean, and I am going to explain to the Honourable Members of this House as to what I mean. I may be wrong, I am not an expert, but I will give you one instance. We have got more than 350 textile mills and every mill has got a very good workshop consisting of various types of machine tools. There are about 100 jute mills in India. There are about 250 big mechanical workshops. What has happened in Australia? It is on record here, and anybody who wants can find it here. All the industrial concerns in Australia were asked for a year and a half to use their mechanical workshops containing machine tools, to work for 12 hours at night and half time during the day time with their pilot engines.

I will also remind the Honourable the Finance Member one more thing, and there my Honourable friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, will bear me out. During the last war the mechanical workshops of many of the mills turned out shell covers. We have turned out shell covers in India during this war, and we have sent in large quantities to Great Britain, they do not want any more, but where did they do it? They did it in the railway workshops and the 300 shops which Government have. I give

[Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee.]

them all credit, they are producing a large quantity. But I see equally a large number of mechanical workshops lying in the textile mills and other industrial concerns which are not being made use of. It is not only in Australia but even in Great Britain, if you will read the proceedings, that they have been using the industrial concerns mechanical workshops for turning out machine tools. Why are you not doing so in India? You have got 300 workshops and there are further 800 Industrial concerns with workshops. Am I right? I say, we did turn out in last war many small useful things in our Industrial concerns, workshops, and they had been sent out to England. What I want to point out is this. We have many efficient and good workshops all over the country. The military people have started their workshops and are working them as first class mechanical workshops. The work turned out there is superb, nice, but what we are short of is the quantity. We have not got a large number of machines and therefore we have not yet so well organised them as to be able to get more out of them; all the machinery we want for our Government works to turn out what we want we cannot import. If that is beyond your control, I say all the industrialists will only be too glad, too happy to help you to turn out your articles in their workshops as fast as they could.

Sir Vithal Narayan Chandavarkar: May I interrupt the Honourable Member for a moment as he referred to textile workshops. Soon after the war broke out and the war became more intensive, Government carried out a survey of all tools and lathes that could be spared for Government work. The idea of making shells in the textile workshops was given up because Government thought that the most effective way of tackling the problem was to collect all the lathes and tools that could be spared from the textile workshops and locate them in the central standardised workshops. After the survey was made, we have spared as many lathes as were usable by Government and Government have taken them away. I understand that they have been located in central workshops where munitions are manufactured. Government have, therefore, already taken the co-operation of the textile industry in Bombay and that whole-hearted co-operation has been offered by the textile industry through the Millowners' Association.

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee: I quite agree with every word that my friend has said. In fact, he has not brought out the point that I am making.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: He has disposed of it.

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee: Certainly not. What he has said is this. You have taken the inventory. Now, let us be businesslike. You have certainly taken the inventory and you know what they have. We have got the spare which my friend has given you for war purposes. But what I mean to say is this. Are there not still 300 workshops in Textile Mills in different industrial centres with machinery which are not being used at night? See what Australia has done. With their pilot engines they have worked over time and at night. See what they have done in Great Britain. What I want to say is this that the industrial

concerns are prepared to do this provided you trust them. Give them the work and they will do it.

[At this stage, Sir Vithal Narayan Chandavarkar wanted to interrupt, but the Honourable Member did not give way.]

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: I am sorry the Honourable Member won't give way when somebody who knows the facts is prepared to state them.

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee: It is clear who feels it more. As I was saying, the industrial concerns are willing to do it, but who is going to trust them, who will allow them to do it? There is no confidence in them and there is no proper organisation with the result that as much as could be done is not being done. My point is this. Every kind of machine, in every nook and corner of the country must be made use of. That should be the policy. It is true that some lathes, wheel cutting machines, drilling machines and other kinds of machines have been given by the millowners but they have given their spares and not given all their workshops. We want to work these workshops day and night. They should be used during the day for their mills for such time as they are required for that work and during the night they should be used for turning out tools and munitions. They are not working for the production of the munitions at night.

Sir Vithal Narayan Chandavarkar: Mechanical workshops are also working at night.

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee: There are not many mills that are working for all the 24 hours.

Now, that is the position. I tell you honestly that what has been done in Australia and what is being done in England must be done in this country also. I know that there are even now second-hand machines available in all parts of the country. Not only in Bombay but even in Delhi such machines are available. It may be that they are more or less worn out but they are not almost entirely useless. But even from these worn out machines experts can remove some parts and can turn out some pieces to make some good machinery. In this way they are renovating the old machines. If you want to make use of them, you can do it. But you won't trust anybody. You do not trust even our moderate friends amongst whom is the Vice-President of the Mill-owners Association. Look at the way in which he spoke this morning and rightly too. Where is the trust?

Then, Sir, we have been often told about the A. R. P. work and the civic guards. I am not at the present moment out to denounce the Government movement as some of my friends would seem to think. In fact, in every town of importance there are four agencies working. The military, the police, the civic guards and the civil defence. Now, Sir, what do we find? For the civil defence, the fountain-head is the District Superintendent of Police or the Police Commissioner and the District Magistrate. The same is the case with regard to civic guards. The poor District Magistrate and the Police Superintendent have to do all this work in addition to their normal work. Is this organisation? Is this perfect working? If you entrust these officers with so much work in addition to their own work, how can they work? Then, Sir, we find that

[Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee.]

the civil defence people are given instructions, and rightly too, to keep in touch with the people in the *Muhallas* so that in case of a panic or bombardment they can get hold of the influential people in the *Muhalla* to help them. It was said in this House the other day that want of leadership was the cause of the failure of the A. R. P. in Rangoon. The civil defence people are asked to keep themselves in touch with the leaders of the various *Muhallas*. Is it not possible for this Government to arrange to keep themselves in touch directly with these leaders? I will throw out a suggestion for what it is worth. I am only speaking of civil defence at present and not of A. R. P. Nor am I mixing up the A. R. P. with the police or the military.

Now, you have got in all parts of this country what we know as local self-government. We also know it very well that at the present moment, in every part of the country the predominant demand, the incessant demand, the anxious demand of the people to their leaders is not for Swaraj or independence or Pakistan but a demand for their safety and proper defence. That is their demand today. Do you know that the people who have voted for the members of the local self-government, be they minor or major municipalities, or the Corporations or the Local Boards or the Local Legislatures or the Central Legislature have been approaching them? They have certainly approached them; they have been troubling them, bothering them and they expect them to help them in these critical times. Now, Sir, if you cannot trust people in big cities or if there are some reasons into which we need not go at present, one does not wish to put any obstacle in the way or any impediment in the way of some organisations. Surely, it will be admitted that in many parts of the country, you have got local boards which are not under the influence of any political body. You have got small and ordinary municipalities in the same position and the elected representatives thereon belong to the *Muhallas* and these elected representatives have got a regular list of the members residing in that locality because they are the voters. I know that every member who seeks election to a municipality has got a list of people residing in his locality. He visits the voters once or twice at least in six months or in the year with a view to canvass votes. Here is a man elected as a member of a regular constituted body known as the local board or municipality. These members are under your own District Magistrates and under the Chief Officer or the Secretary or President whatever you may call them according to the importance of the local body. A great majority of them are under the District Magistrate. If the District Magistrates were told that civil defence must be undertaken through these local bodies and that these members should be asked to take up this work more so and because their constituencies demand it in fact as I have said everybody is forcing his representative to do what little he can for civil defence then it would be safe and I may say all right for the people if you associate him with the civil defence. Unfortunately, with due deference I must say that this agency is not utilised. Why are you having persons to whom you give instructions to go to these leaders. Under the Local self-Government Act, the local bodies and municipalities are responsible for health, sanitation, welfare and food-stuffs. These are all the things you want for civil defence. Under the Act they are bound to do. There, the people want them to do, but still the Government will not condescend because my feeling is—I may be wrong, let me be wrong—

that the Government and its officials will not acknowledge according to their policy a position, a man elected by people and the Government will therefore not take his services. They will be satisfied only with a nominated member. That is the feeling foremost in the hearts of all. I hope that feeling is wrong. Elected representative, whether in a big municipality or a small municipality, he must be acknowledged as an important man in the locality by the Government. The fault lies in the Government in not recognising him and in seeking to go to other people who have no influence even though the District Magistrate and your District Superintendent of Police are the heads of the local self-Government bodies in many many places except in important cities. Furthermore it has often been said that we cannot interfere with Provincial Governments' work. It might be said that this is Provincial Government work. But certainly when you pay the money, you can lay down special conditions for these things. It is a well known fact that grants-in-aid are given to hospitals and schools and certain rules and regulations are laid down governing this grant. If any institution wants a grant in aid, it has to conform to these rules and regulations. Let the Government make it clear through the Local Governments that if any municipality or local board organises civil defence in their laid down ways under the supervision of the District Magistrate, then they will get so much grant more or less, and I am sure you will succeed.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): The Honourable Member has already spoken for three quarters of an hour. Of course, there is no time limit. He might consider bringing his remarks to a close.

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee: I see that non-official Members of the House like my remarks though the Government Members may not like them. I do not mind if the Government Members do not like my remarks, and hence, Sir, I wish to go on.

We have been told very often to be bold and the people should behave in the face of calamities like bombing or otherwise boldly. During the panic, there have been difficulties of transport which has already been referred to during the Railway Budget. We cannot now remedy that. We know that a lot of different varieties of transport facilities has disappeared either due to shortage of petrol or locomotives and so on. We were only told yesterday that certain arrangements have been made in Central India, probably in Central Provinces for those who go away from places like Bombay or Madras where they have no work. The Government communicate says that those who have nothing to do in the cities should go away. This is a very nice way of putting it. It is very difficult to understand whether many people can afford to remain in a city without having anything to do. The hint has been taken and many people have sent away their women and children. Surely, something must be made known to the people in large cities that certain arrangements have been made in certain areas near about their town or as in case of Bombay or Madras to go to the Central Provinces where they can safely go and live. It is not sufficient only to tell this to this House and that too only once in a way. Why is it not made public in Madras and Bombay that some arrangements have been made at least in the Central Provinces? What about Bengal, Bihar and Assam? I do not know yet where the people from Bengal, Bihar, Assam and Orissa have to go. I hope that some Honourable Member of this House from Government Benches, even now will tell us where the people

[Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee.]

from those provinces will or should have to go. Is the Central Provinces the only place where the entire population of India could go in case of air attack? While the Government simply rest content with the warning that people who have no business in the Cities should go into the interior although they have not told them where to go, and how to go.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Is there enough food in the Central Provinces for all people who might go there?

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee: I am serious. There is no reply to my question. That is the first essential thing. Where are the transport facilities for such large numbers of people to go to the Central Provinces? Of course, the railways are doing as much as they can. The first thing that is necessary is this question should be solved. I am very sorry I have taken such a long time waiting for a reply over this point. I ask my Honourable friends on both sides if there is any reply to my question where the people from Bengal, Assam or Bihar, Orissa, have to go, where the people from the United Provinces have to go? Or is it now definitely certain that there will be nothing like bombardment or anything like even a casual air raid in Bengal? Is it only Madras and Bombay that will be affected? If you are sure that only Madras and Bombay will experience bombing, I do not think that such assurance will hold water for a minute.

I do not want to say much but let Government realise that the Honourable Members of this House are the only class of persons in the structure of this Government who are doing honorary work, and I take pride in saying so. There is not a single institution connected with the Government of India where any one is doing honorary work. It is only the Members of this House who spend thousands of rupees on their election campaign to do this honorary work, and it must be conceded that it is not an easy job to get sufficient votes in these days of keen competition; it is not an easy job to devote your time to this work when you could make money in some other avocations of life. There is at present panic ruling every where and our near and dear ones are on the borders of the eastern frontier and near the shores which are supposed to be in danger zones and we are told that the war is at our gates and still we are here to do our duty honorarily and sincerely. I therefore beg of Government to take us into their confidence, take our views for what they are worth. We may not be experts but we will tell you how it strikes us. Why do you treat us so curtly and why have not even the gentlemen on the Expanded Council taken us into their confidence? Let me assure them if they treat us well we are at their back. Sir, I was in Bombay for five days and when even people near and dear to me asked me about the position I was not able to say anything more than what they read in the newspapers. And I believe Sir Cowasji and Sir Chandavarkar will support me when I say that they also were not able to say anything to their friends and relatives, even to console them; this is the position of elected representatives of the people in this Assembly.

[At this stage, Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim) resumed the Chair.]

So far as the condition of Indians overseas is concerned, I cannot congratulate the Honourable the Leader of the House, which I so anxiously wish to do to one who has been for many years on these benches. I find

that our plight is as miserable as it has been. Even with the Expanded Council nothing could be done to show to the people that they are equal citizens of the great British Empire. In fact they have not even been told that their own countrymen are fighting for equal rights far away and for obtaining to the country the maintaining of democracy and equality of right. Only last year, after 2½ years of the war when the position of Great Britain was critical, the question of Burma came in. Where is that poor Burma? Even now we have not been told by the Honourable Member for Indians Overseas whether the Secretary of State for India has vetoed the whole Agreement or it has naturally disappeared.

Then, take the question of Ceylon. How is it that during this war the Colonial Office allowed the Ceylon Government to pass these rules and regulations? Was any explanation asked by the Government of India from the Imperial Government whether or not their Colonial branch were encouraging the Ceylonese to make discriminatory legislation against Indians even in October, 1941? Sir, one feels very sad to find that still there has been no change of mentality even now. As my friend, Maulana Zafar Ali, has just pointed out that in October, 1941, suddenly, His Excellency the Governor of Aden issues a communique passing laws prohibiting the entry of Indians into Aden. That communique had not, till December, been sent to the Government of India for information or may I say for being thrown into the waste paper basket. It was when the Honourable Member kindly visited the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay, that he was told that such an Ordinance had been passed; now, Sir, from 1939 to 1941, this Government was asked to send Indian troops to Aden to protect it against the Italian onslaught. But no courtesy was extended to this mighty Government of ours ruling 40 crores of people by even British Colonial or Secretary of State for India in the shape of a letter telling them that a discriminating Ordinance had been passed by His Excellency the Governor of Aden against the entry of Indians. Then the Honourable Member made inquiries and got a reply from Aden to say that this is a war measure and after war the Indians will be welcomed. But may I add that during war for the defence of Aden, Indian soldiers will be welcomed even during the war. To die Indian soldiers are welcomed but Indian businessmen, Indian civilians, Indian lawyers, cannot go there. We built up that barren island and made it into a fortress and an important port for Admiralty and commerce with 70 crores of revenue of this country in 110 years. What is the result? In 1921 an assurance was given in both these Houses by the Honourable Sir Muhammad Shaf that any attempt at discrimination there this Government will not tolerate, and later on in 1931 and 1935 similar assurances were given in both the Houses.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Sir, is the Honourable Member aware that in large parts of England, at present, even Englishmen are not allowed to go unless they are soldiers?

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee: Very well, I wanted some such interruption. Englishmen may not be allowed in parts of England but they are allowed at Aden as civilians, and only Indians are not allowed. What is the reply to that? Only Indians are not allowed but any other foreigner is allowed.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Is the Honourable Member able to vouch for that fact?

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee: Yes, Sir. The Ordinance is confined to men from India only. It is a fact and I am sorry Government Members do not know it.

The Honourable Mr. M. S. Aney: The Honourable Member will have my reply on that at the proper time. I do not want to interrupt him now.

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee: We will discuss it threadbare then and I will not go into details now. But the fact is that the people from India are not required though Indian troops are required here, there and everywhere and any foreigner is welcome. It is out of pain that we say all this.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I understand the Honourable Member has already spoken for one hour.

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee: Yes, Sir, unfortunately that is so.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): It being 4 o'clock, 4 P.M. the adjournment motion will now be taken up.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

SHORTAGE OF WHEAT AND WHEAT FLOUR IN DELHI.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman (Patna and Chota Nagpur *cum* Orissa : Muhammadan): Sir, I move :

"That the Assembly do now adjourn."

Sir, on this motion I want to discuss the failure of the Government of India to make necessary and adequate arrangements for the supply of wheat and wheat flour in the capital city of Delhi which is causing a serious situation.

The purpose of the motion is clear and does not require much of an elucidation. We know the situation which has been created in this city, particularly by reason of scarcity of wheat and wheat flour. Not only they are not available but in some cases where they are available they are being sold, with the permission of the Chief Commissioner of Delhi, in mixtures of all kinds, of powdered barley, grams and what not. I have got some specimens here and if the Honourable the Commerce Member would like to examine them I can make this present to him.

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar (Commerce Member): I have tasted them.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: A chemical examination of these samples only can reveal the ingredients of this mixture. Mere tasting is not of much use.

Now, Sir, we do not know how and why this position has been created. Judging from the circumstances of average production last year in areas where wheat is grown, there was no indication of failure of crop and as such no indication of a famine situation which has arisen at this time. The only reason we can assign is hoarding of heavy stock in bazar by the dealers and merchants. Heavy stocks are lying with big merchants and

stockists in the Khari Baoli, who want to earn big profits on their so hoarded stocks and as such they have removed them to some private godowns. I am told that about a lakh of bags or even more of flour and another lakh of wheat is still in Delhi and the Government representative, who I understand is one Sardar Mehtab Singh, has not been earnest in recovering those hoarded stocks. What he does is just to go in the shops in Khari Baoli without finding out what possibilities could there be for concealing stocks in Delhi by those merchants in some other private houses. This failure on his part combined with other conditions is probably responsible for the local critical situation which has arisen due to the scarcity of wheat and wheat flour.

Another important question which arises is this. Why should that temptation have come to the minds of those merchants for hoarding big stocks and earning good profits? I am told, Sir, that exports to Persia, Libya, Middle East and even London have been very heavy and the Government, when buying for their own use and for the purposes of exports, did not take any census of the consumption of wheat and the production of wheat in India which they should have done. The result is that we are faced with a situation where it appears that there is going to be a famine in a country which was producing more wheat than she required for the use of her own people. This I would call, Sir, a famine situation more artificial than real, because there was no failure of crop and the famine has resulted because of heavy export by the Government and, I am told—although I do not know with any amount of certainty—that in those countries where our wheat has been exported, through Government agency, sufficient quantity is lying as surplus. Instead of exporting only the surplus from India the Government have exported that part which was required for the population as their staple food and Government have thus robbed them of that food which was absolutely necessary for the mere existence of the people of this country. It is for this reason, Sir, that this situation has arisen not only in Delhi but also in other provinces like Bihar and Bengal, where it is being sold at four to five seers to a rupee. Within less than three years we have seen that prices have risen from about 12 to 15 seers to a rupee to about five seers per rupee. That means the rise in price is 300 per cent. That is the position which I want the Government to realize and what it is going to result thereby?

Sir, I am told that the Commerce Department has got a Wheat Commissioner with all his paraphernalia. I do not know if this is the result of the activities of that paraphernalia. I ask what for that Department exists if they cannot have any idea of what the requirements of the people are and if that Department of Wheat Commissioner cannot make a census of what would be the probable surplus? If they cannot do this, I do not know what they are worth and why we should spend any money on this Department.

What are the factors which have tempted the merchants to hoard large stocks of wheat and earn big profits? Is it because a new method has recently been adopted by the Government of measuring particular plots of wheat growing land in the Punjab and the United Provinces, and, it is said, that all the stocks will be purchased by the Government, and only a limited quantity will be made available to those Zamindars and landlords who are in possession of those plots. The result is that there is a panic in the minds of the people. They feel that the entire wheat crop will be monopolized for the Government. I do not know what is working in the minds of those responsible for advising the Government in this manner. If

[Mr. Muhammad Nauman.]

the Government propose to redistribute wheat through their selling depots, that may be a good proposition and that may be probably because the Government appreciate the true position and are trying to overcome the difficulty with foresight but if it is for the purpose of exporting Indian wheat to other countries leaving the people of India to starve, I will certainly say that this will create a situation which may go out of the control of the Government and become the cause of a revolution.

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: I do not like to interrupt the Honourable Member, but I would like to say that there is no justification in the statement which the Honourable Member has made more than once that the Government of India are exporting, without any consideration whatsoever, to various places, wheat from this country and are allowing the people of this country to starve. Stocks have been exported to other places, but I can say that an infinitesimal quantity of wheat or a very small quantity of wheat has been exported or allowed to be exported from India. I hope to give figures in support of this. As a matter of fact, from December there is an absolute embargo on the export of wheat put by the Government of India.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: Thank you so much, Sir. The Honourable the Commerce Member should thank me for allowing him an opportunity to clear the position of the Government in this matter. This is the general impression and as a representative of the people I think it was my duty to convey to the Government our feelings in the matter. Now that we hear from the Government that only an infinitesimal quantity of wheat has been exported from India, we will inform our people that the impression under which they are labouring is absolutely wrong. I think I will be quite satisfied after hearing the Honourable Member's reply. I would also like to know from him what other factors are responsible for creating this situation. I said in the earlier part of my speech that there was no indication whatsoever of a failure of production of wheat last year, then where has the wheat gone to? What has happened to the entire production of about ten million tons of wheat? Are Government in the know of any particular reason for that? Is it because people are hoarding it like gold and silver—may be that those who cannot get gold and silver to hoard they have started hoarding wheat. Why a situation like that has arisen not only in Delhi but, as I have said, also in other parts of India like Bengal and Bihar, where scarcity is being felt and prices are going up by leaps and bounds. It is now for the Government to tell this House and the country what exactly the situation is. Another point on which I would like to have the reply of the Government is whether there is any truth in the report that the Government have measured the lands which are having their standing crops this year, and if so whether the idea is that they will monopolise the entire crop of the season

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: Which Government?

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: The Punjab Government and the United Provinces Government, under instructions from the Government of India.

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: Certainly not under the instructions of the Government of India, even if that is a fact.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: That was my information; I may be wrong.

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudalliar: It is wrong.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: I stand corrected; and it is for this reason that there has been a temptation among the merchants that prices would go up three or four times their present level and they felt tempted to hoard the stocks of wheat.

I would also like to hear whether the particular situation that has arisen in Delhi has resulted because of the transport difficulties. I had a talk with some very responsible officer of the North Western Railway and I was told that they were always ready to give every possible facility. If that factor is eliminated, I do not know what other factors are responsible for this critical situation where everybody finds that he cannot get half or quarter of the wheat required for the very subsistence of life.

In conclusion, I would like to remind the Government that one of the very threatening features are showing signs, and efforts should be made to see that there is no feeling of dissatisfaction on this particular account in this country. If you look back to the histories of many revolutions of the world you will find that they mostly resulted in the failure of the Government to keep adequate supply of food. When you touch the very food on which the individual exists, you will understand that you will not be able to control the crime and revolution will be the only result. I would ask the Honourable Member of the Government to make a searching enquiry into the circumstances and relieve the situation from what it is here and in other parts of India. With these words, I move.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Motion moved :

“That the Assembly do now adjourn.”

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad (United Provinces Southern Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I gave notice of a similar adjournment motion covering the same subject. We have been previously discussing on the floor of the House just the reverse problem, about wheat: we have been saying that the production of wheat in India is about 10·7 million tons per annum and our consumption was only about 9·4 million tons and so we produce about one million tons more wheat than we consume, and we had been requesting the Government to provide a market for the export of our wheat. Now the situation has been reversed, not because we are wanting in wheat, but on account of certain action taken by the Government in the control of prices. We have been pressing that the prices of articles ought to be controlled. In the case of wheat, these dealers purchase wheat at the time of the crops at the rate of about Rs. 2-12-0 or Rs. 2-10-0 a maund; and now the Government has fixed about Rs. 4-6-0 a maund at Lyallpur and they have thus given a very wide margin of profit to the dealers who can have no complaint that they have not been fairly treated. But other steps which the Commerce Department should have taken were not taken at the same time. The Commerce Member could not foresee that all these people would corner the wheat, expecting that it would fetch double and treble the price; they refused to bring it to the open market and sell it to the public. This was not foreseen by the Government at the time they fixed the price

Sardar Sant Singh (West Punjab: Sikh): May I interrupt for a minute? As a matter of fact the rule has been made under the Defence of India Act that everybody who keeps more than eight bags has to submit a return to the District Magistrate. So the rule is there.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: I have been pressing this question from June onwards. I spoke to several Members of the Government of India, to the Viceroy and the Governor of the United Provinces that the time will come soon when the situation that has arisen today will arise, and I suggested at that time that they should follow the same practice as they did for stabilising the exchange. The Government ought to purchase large quantities of wheat at the different markets, store the wheat at convenient places and bring it out for sale if the dealers do not bring it on to the market at scheduled price. I said that in the long run the Government would make a profit; but even they lost a few thousand rupees or even fifty thousand rupees, it does not matter when larger stakes are being considered. Before fixing the prices the Government should have purchased the stocks themselves. Simply to say that it is criminal to keep so much wheat in stock and out of the market, is not sufficient. The Government should come forward and demand everybody to give up the wheat for the sake of the public at this particular rate that the Government has fixed, namely, Rs. 4-6-0. They ought to have purchased the entire quantity of wheat in the country and sold it under their own supervision and not leave it to the sweet will of the dealers. They should do now even if it was neglected in the past.

Honourable Members probably know that one particular class of people who always deal in this wheat and have been accustomed to this kind of storage for the last two thousand years or more, have got special places for storage, which only few people can reach; an ordinary man when he visits these places will not be able to find out where the wheat is stored—in what they call *khatis*. Unfortunately, in Delhi, the gentleman whom the Government employs, as referred to by my friend, Mr. Nauman, Sardar Mehtab Singh, is a person who would merely take some money and would let off everybody. He has not been able to discover much for obvious reasons. I think the Government should employ a person of strict honesty and who is wide awake who would be able to find out where the stocks of wheat are. I am given to understand by persons in the know that in Delhi there is sufficient stock of wheat to keep the whole of the town going, even if there is no further import of wheat for a year. But the wheat is held up in the expectation that they will get more price later on. Therefore, I say, that the Government of India failed in not purchasing compulsorily the quantity of wheat now available in the country. If they had done that and stored it in proper places under their own supervision or by means of co-operative stores as some districts have done, the present crisis would not have arisen.

The second cause of this difficulty is that Government has put a ban on export. Every District Magistrate has put a ban on the export of wheat from his district or town; and every Provincial Government has put a ban on the export of wheat from its particular province. I had special difficulties myself in finding wheat for the university; I approached the authorities at Lyallpur and Sargodha and they said they could supply any quantity of wheat provided I got an export license from the Punjab Government. And when I approached the Hapur authority they said: "Yes, we have the wheat, but they cannot get the wheat outside the Meerut district". So, when you have a ban in every district, when you have a

ban in every tahsil, when you have a ban in every province and when you have got a ban for the whole of India, it is absolutely impossible to have equal distribution of wheat all over the country. The ban should have followed after equal distribution.

Therefore, I feel that the Honourable the Commerce Member ought to have foreseen these difficulties earlier, he ought to have taken stock of the wheat available all over the country and satisfied for himself how much quantity was available in each district; and he should have taken the precaution to purchase the wheat before fixing the maximum price at Rs. 4-6-0. But instead of doing that, he put the cart before the horse and the horse was left behind—the result is the cart cannot move. Even now, I think it is very desirable that the Government should purchase the stocks of wheat available. What is the meaning of the Ordinance that everybody who has a stock of more than eight maunds of wheat should declare how much stock he has got. The Ordinance of declaration did not achieve the object. It was neither effective, nor it was carefully applied. You may now declare that if the wheat is not sold to the Government, it will be acquired without payment of any price and a heavy penalty to boot. Then and then alone you can get out fair quantity of wheat which is now stored underground. The whole thing looks all right on paper so far as the Ordinance is concerned. It would seem that the Government of India have done their duty, but it is not so. The people are dying of hunger; they are not getting their staple food on account of the unnecessary shortage of wheat with expectations of higher profits. Let the Government of India notify to all wheat sellers that if they do not sell their stocks of wheat within a certain time, the Government will compulsorily acquire all their wheat stocks and that a heavy penalty will be imposed on the holders of such stocks, and in addition no price will be paid. Then and then alone you will find that major portion of the stocks of wheat will be forthcoming. Let the Honourable the Commerce Member go through the figures for the last twenty years, and he will find that there is sufficient wheat in storage to keep the country going for one year or more even if there is a failure of the crops. But, Sir, we do require the wheat that is now secretly stored underground. It is not the export of wheat to Iran and other places that has caused this wheat famine. We had already exported small quantities of wheat to those places for the use of our troops. The real problem is that these people have stored stocks of wheat with a view to sell at high prices, to the disadvantage of the poor people. I think it is high time that Government came forward and compelled these holders of wheat stocks to bring out their wheat and sell them to the Government at certain prices which may be fixed by the Government. Government should also notify that those who fail to bring out their stocks would be penalised and no price whatever would be paid for the stocks which will be confiscated. It is also very desirable to employ good and honest people to find out the stocks of wheat stored in a clandestine manner. If District Magistrates are wise, if the police officers are wise, then they can employ the right type of people to discover the hidden stocks of wheat. Once this is done, the task of Commerce Department will begin, and then they can distribute the wheat evenly among all the provinces, leaving every province to make its own rule in respect of any ban it may choose to impose. In fact, imposing a ban on the export of wheat from a neighbouring province is certainly an act which the Government of India alone could impose. I would point out to the Honourable the Commerce Member that he has a very grave responsibility on his shoulders. The life and death of the people depend upon his action. If he took a wise step, I assure him

[Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad.]

he will save the life of lakhs and lakhs of people, and a good deal of panic in the country will disappear. If any wrong action is taken at this juncture, it will lead to an infinite amount of panic, it will lead to much greater panic than could be possibly expected to arise as a result of the wild rumours in connection with the war. With these words, Sir, I support the motion.

Sardar Sant Singh: Sir, I intervene at this early stage of the debate in order to correct certain observations which have fallen from my friend, the Mover of this Resolution, and also from my friend, Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad. At the outset, I must say that I have full sympathy with the people who are suffering for lack of wheat, because it is their primary staple food, and I agree that all possible facilities should be given to get this necessity of life at reasonable rates. But I want to point out one thing, that although my friend, Dr. Sir Ziauddin, is an eminent economist, and while I cannot claim any knowledge of economics, he is not doing justice to that part of the country where the wheat is produced. Sir, in those days when the price of wheat went down to Rs. 1-4-0 a maund, we never discovered a Dr. Sir Ziauddin to come to the help of the agriculturists to raise the price of wheat

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: I did.

Sardar Sant Singh: He did not come forward to ask the Government to provide some relief for the agriculturist. However, it is a thing of the past. Now, the time has come when the agriculturists should have got higher prices for the wheat on account of the larger demand for the commodity and shorter supplies, we find that a huge hue and cry is raised

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: May I interrupt the Honourable Member? The prices have already gone up 300 times more, if you compare the prices prevailing three years ago. What more do you want?

Sardar Sant Singh: I may inform my friend, Mr. Nauman, that in the last war the price of wheat had gone as high as Rs. 11 per maund, and the Government today have fixed the price at Rs. 4-6-0.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: Are they selling it at Rs. 4-6-0?

Sardar Sant Singh: Yes, they are selling it at this price—there is no doubt about it. The real grievance is that some wheat has gone underground, and Government have not done anything to discover where the wheat is. I tried to inform my friend, Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad, that simultaneously with the control of prices, Government have framed a rule under the Defence of India Act calling for the returns of wheat over and above the quantity of eight bags held by each dealer or agriculturist, and everybody did make that return to the District Magistrate. There might have been some evasions, but that is no reason why emphasis should be laid on these few evasions at this stage.

Then, Sir, the second point which I did not like is the reference in the debate to the activities of Sardar Bahadur Mehtab Singh in Delhi. Sir, I know him personally. I know he is perfectly honest, and there is no reason to doubt his honesty

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: Is he a Sikh?

Sardar Sant Singh: Yes, he is a Sikh, and that is why it probably troubled you, otherwise there was no necessity to bring in the name of a public servant of the Crown and charge him with bribery and corruption without any substance behind the charge. Sir, I do not regard it as in good taste. If my friends wanted to criticise his actions, they could have done so without mentioning the name of the official.

Now, Sir, the real difficulty that has arisen is on account of the lack of co-ordination between the wheat producing centres and other parts of the country. When my friend, Mr. Nauman, said that inquiries showed that the Railways were possibly giving all possible facilities for export, he did not understand the meaning of the word "possibly". I may tell here that facilities for transporting wheat in producing centres are not so great as we are supposed to believe they are. I can assure my friends of that. I know it for a fact, because I know that Additional District Magistrates of various towns, particularly of Lyallpur and Sargodha, have been going round in each *Mandi* to find out the stocks of wheat held by the dealers. One A. D. M. travelled with me by Railway, and when I asked him whither he was going, he said that he was going to all the *Mandis* to find out the stocks of wheat, because they were needed by the Defence Department. So there cannot be any complaint, the Government have not taken adequate steps to find out the real position. The real difficulty that has arisen is on account of the bad distribution of these stocks in the various parts where the stocks are needed

An Honourable Member: When was that inquiry made?

Sardar Sant Singh: In the month of December, I think. Yes, it was in the month of December that I was travelling with him. It is not for me to say wherefrom and how arrangements should be made. I only want to say, and I am here to say, that people are starving for want of wheat and foodstuffs. If you do not supply them, I will censure you. If you do not take care, I will join hands with the Honourable the Mover and censure the Government. Why should I go into the question of why and wherefore of the situation? I only say this much, that Government should organise the position in such a way as to bring and distribute wheat to all the centres wherever it is necessary. This is the only question that confronts us. We can leave it to the Government to create the necessary organisation for the purpose. The Honourable the Commerce Member has told us that very small quantities of wheat have gone abroad or have been exported. I just want to put one question to him so that he may deal with it when he is making a reply. Are any statistics kept of the quantities of wheat that have been given to the defence forces outside India, and if those statistics are kept, has the exportable surplus been exceeded or not? With these remarks, I resume my seat.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan (East Central Punjab: Muhammadan): I just want to add a few sentences to this discussion. It will be possible for the Honourable the Commerce Member to find out when the next crop is harvested, what is the total quantity of wheat produced in the land, and, according to the simple rule of arithmetic it will be possible for him to distribute this quantity equally among the 40 crores of people living in this land. This can be easily done. So far as the wheat now in this

[Maulana Zafar Ali Khan.]

country which is being stored is concerned, and with the greed of baniyas behind it, I should like to say that I am one of those who do not like commerce to be governed by Ordinances. It should be free. There are causes which have led to this scarcity. One of those causes is that the connection formerly subsisting between Australia and India is cut. Australia is one of those countries which are wheat producing. Whenever we required wheat in this country, we used to import it from Australia. Then the connection between Burma and India is cut, and Burma is one of those countries which are producing rice, lakhs of tons used to be imported into Ceylon and India. But now there is very little chance of rice, which is the staple food of the Ceylonese and most of the Indians in Southern India, coming to this land. So, this must have some effect on the situation. So far as the export of wheat from India to other countries is concerned, although the Honourable the Commerce Member has assured us that the quantity was very little, we find from occasional statements that have come to our notice, that wheat was supplied not only for the requirements of Indian troops abroad who are entitled to get their food from India, but supplied to countries like Persia, Mesopotamia, Arabia and Turkey also. You have exported wheat to those countries. We have every sympathy with them, but when we are starving ourselves, it stands to reason that you should limit the quantity of surplus exported from the country. With these words I resume my seat and support the adjournment motion.

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: Mr. President, I am grateful to the Honourable Member, Mr. Nauman, for initiating this discussion on a very important issue, the proper and adequate supply of food to the people of this country. It gives me an opportunity also to contradict certain wild rumours that have been floating about regarding the exhaustion of the supplies in this country, irrespective of the needs of the people of this country and to satisfy the needs of other countries.

Let me put the statistical position first before the House so that in a true perspective we might examine the causes and the reasons which have tended to the most recent of these developments. The yield of wheat crop during the year 1940-41, that is, the crop with which we are dealing now, was ten million five thousand tons,—certainly over ten millions, which is roughly the figure that my Honourable friend, Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad, referred to. The total export of wheat and wheat flour during the ten months of the current year by sea to all countries is 178,000 tons of wheat, and 82,000 tons of wheat flour,—250,000 tons altogether out of a total crop of ten million tons. We have also to consider the fact that at least 100,000 tons used normally to be exported outside this country, and that in the previous year this amount was, in fact, exported.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra (Presidency Dn.: Non-Muhammadan Rural): What is the requirement of this country? What is the consumption?

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: About 9½ million tons.

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: It is impossible to estimate what is the actual consumption in this country. You can only arrive at it by deducting the exports from the total yield in this country.

Sir F. E. James (Madras: European): There being no imports.

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: There being very little imports. I might say, in passing, referring to the question of imports, Australian wheat used to come at about 50,000 tons to this country, but most of it went out in the form of re-exports. It came to the ports where there were mills to convert wheat into flour. It came, because a certain portion of local wheat was mixed with the Australian wheat to yield a better kind of flour or flour which was more readily consumed and in demand elsewhere, and most of the Australian wheat that came in went out in the form of re-exported wheat flour. So that I personally think that, except for the purpose of affecting the price factor, the Australian wheat did not enter into the consumption of this country.

Now, there have been exaggerated rumours about military purchases. For the same period, the total amount of military purchases is about 220,000 tons. And it must be remembered that it is not for somebody outside this country, but for the defence forces in the country that those purchases have been made, and if those purchases had not been made, they still would have required this wheat to eat, probably in a smaller quantity. There has also been a certain quantity exported across the land frontiers. This is the background against which the position which has arisen has to be considered.

If these facts and statistics are correct, it follows that there is no reason whatsoever why the Government should have anticipated a serious shortage in the wheat position. What did the Government do? The problem that faced us in September, October and November was not a problem of shortage of wheat but a problem of prices. The prices were going up and pressure was brought to bear upon us from various quarters that it was time we intervened and controlled the prices. Organisations which were loud in their demand, at an earlier stage, that Government interference in the rising course particularly of primary commodities and foodstuffs should not be necessary and should not be used suddenly, made a *volte face* and one fine morning woke up to the necessity of price control and rigorous price control by Government. We had a Price Control Conference with the representatives of Provincial and State Governments. In all these matters, Honourable Members will realise, how necessary it is for us to act as far as possible—I do not say we are completely bound to do so—with the advice and with the co-operation of Provincial and State Governments. We had a Price Control Conference in October at which this question was discussed. We asked for the advice of various Provincial Government representatives as to the need for controlling the price of various foodstuffs. It emerged as a result of that discussion that the only product with reference to which immediate steps should be taken was wheat. There was no agreement about the level at which the control should be exercised, one wheat producing province suggesting one figure and another wheat producing province suggesting a higher figure. The Government of India had then to take the responsibility on itself of fixing what it considered a fair price and a reasonable price after taking all factors into consideration. They had to take into

[Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar.]

consideration the fact that this agricultural produce was in a depressed condition before the war as indeed most of your agricultural products were. They also took into consideration the fact that there were ancillary products which were needed by the agriculturist whose price was mounting up. After taking all these facts into consideration the Government of India came to the conclusion that whereas the price in the pre-war period of wheat was Rs. 2-2-0 per maund, a price of Rs. 4-6-0 at the wholesale markets was not altogether unreasonable. We also took this fact into consideration which is amply and clearly established by the statistics which we had on the subject that when the crop was moving into the markets in the months of June, July and August, the price with which the agriculturist parted with his crop was about Rs. 3 to Rs. 3-8-0 at the most, so that the margin which was left to these people who were to sell this product at Rs. 4-6-0 was in itself a justifiable and ample margin.

Now, my Honourable friend, Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad, made very valuable suggestions to which I shall refer in a moment, but I do not think I can accept the charge that has been levelled at me, that the Commerce Department merely fixed the price and went to sleep and that the huge paraphernalia that has been built up in the Commerce Department, as another Honourable Member described it, of a Wheat Commissioner and Superintendents—and the Honourable Member got himself lost in the detailed names of the staff which are ordinarily employed for such purposes—and other staff are doing nothing at all. Immediately after the price was actually fixed, the first step that the Government should take in case the Government wanted to buy any stock of wheat for the very purpose that my Honourable friend had in view, is the step of finding out where the stocks are and to what extent those stocks are available. And that is the Notification to which my Honourable friend, Sardar Sant Singh, referred. We immediately asked for disclosure of the quantities that are available above a certain minimum limit from various merchants and other conservers of wheat supplies. We said that if anybody had more than 20 maunds in his possession, he should declare. That declaration is necessary and that declaration has to be made under threat otherwise of a penalty. If it is false or if it is not made, the person who declares or omits to declare will be liable to certain punishment. That declaration is essential before any question of requisitioning the stocks can be taken. How are we to get hold of the stock before we know where it is?

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: Is it not a fact that that punishment is only in the form of a fine of a few rupees?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: I am referring to the punishment provided by law and it is a fairly heavy punishment involving imprisonment. That is the second step that we took. Naturally, we had to invoke the assistance of the Provincial Governments mainly concerned to put that Notification into effect. We had to get through the Deputy Commissioners and Commissioners of various districts and divisions the returns which are required about the requisitioning of the stock.

Now, the statistical position being what I have explained at the present moment, I am faced with this fact that the declaration of the known stocks, the visible stocks is a very small figure indeed from the

main producing province, Punjab. Most of the Deputy Commissioners have returned small stocks in their areas. Lyallpur, which is considered the granary of the Punjab, wherefrom the largest amount of wheat has been available in the past, has declared a very small, a ridiculously small amount of wheat.

Sir Syed Raza Ali (Cities of the United Provinces Muhammadan Urban): How much is that?

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: The total quantity of wheat in the whole of the Punjab that has been revealed as about 600,000 maunds. That is to say, about 20 to 22 thousand tons as against an yield in the Punjab itself of nearly four million tons. Now, that must give Honourable Members some idea of the real problem that faces us.

I do not want to make any charges without having any facts in front of me and, therefore, I cannot follow Honourable Members who say that stocks have gone underground and are invisible. I am unable to say yes or no to that question. Naturally, we depend upon the Provincial Governments and the agency of the Provincial Governments to find out these facts.

Now, the immediate problem that has concerned us is the problem of finding some supplies for some of these areas, notably Delhi which has been referred to. We knew that there were some stocks hypothecated to banks. It was easy for us to get that information by direct correspondence and by a direct notice on the banks concerned. It was easy for us to get to know what stocks there were. Roughly, there was about 300,000 maunds of stock with banks, hypothecated against advances by some merchants. The Government of India have requisitioned that stock. The Government of India propose to distribute some portion of that stock to Delhi and other areas which are most seriously concerned.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: How many tons of wheat you have got in Delhi alone?

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: About 300,000 maunds in all the banks in the Punjab. We have requisitioned that stock and we propose to distribute a certain portion of it immediately. In fact, within the next few days it will be in Delhi and it will be in various other centres. We have tried to find out some stocks in Indian States similarly and with the good help of the Administrations of these States we hope to distribute those stocks also. We have found a certain stock in Sind at the Karachi port, which we hope to send over to Bombay immediately. But these things merely touch the fringe of the problem. Till it is ascertained whether there are hoarded stocks which have gone underground and which must somehow or other be unearthed, the problem takes a different complexion. We have to supply whatever foodstuffs are possible and whatever substitute foodstuffs are possible till that problem is settled. It is no use our saying that these are the visible stocks and we can only supply these stocks and we can do no more. We do feel that we have a responsibility in this matter and we do feel that in pursuance of that responsibility and in fulfillment of our obligations, we may have to take a wider view than has so far been taken or has been possible and to over-ride certain considerations which may be advanced by various authorities and to take on ourselves the responsibility of distributing on an all-India scale which the Honourable Member referred to.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: If it is not considered an interruption, may I ask, in the first place, when were these returns made, namely the survey of the existing stocks. Secondly, what was the result of the survey and according to this survey, how much stocks we have throughout the country on any particular date?

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: There is no particular date on which this survey has been made or stocks have been calculated.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: But surely the returns were made about a certain time, say in January or November or December. That will be the crucial date.

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: I was suggesting that unlike a census, there is no particular date on which the survey has been made. The survey has been made on various dates by various Deputy Commissioners and the results have come in within the last week to the Government of India.

Sir F. E. James: Are there heavy penalties for concealment of stocks?

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: There are. I know there is heavy penalty. I think it involves imprisonment for one year or so, but I am not sure.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: Is there any case where a man has been punished for selling beyond the control prices or for not revealing the stock?

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: May I continue, Sir? I am informed that the total sentence of imprisonment which a man who makes himself liable to by any false declaration or by evading price control, is three years.

Sir F. E. James: Has any case been actually instituted?

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: I am not aware of any case.

Sardar Sant Singh: I may inform the House that a big merchant in Hapur was put in jail.

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: Was it for selling at a higher price?

Sardar Sant Singh: I do not know for what purpose.

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: As regards evasion of price control, perhaps he was punished. I do not know, Sir, whether there has been any evasion of requisition order or an order to disclose stocks. The immediate problem that faces us is that some food stuffs or other should be rushed to those centres where there has

been scarcity. I have now under consideration proposals to send rice instead of wheat; where it has not been possible to send wheat at least to send rice, because the crop is now in hand and in some areas there is a surplus of rice. I know this is a bad substitute for those who are accustomed to wheat, but as it is, when in these days the necessities are overwhelming, I do not think we can afford to do very much more.

Next, Sir, there was a reference to the transport problem. All I can say is that in these exceptional circumstance I do not myself think that there will be any difficulty about rushing foodstuffs to places, so far as the transport system is concerned. I have every reason to hope that that question will be solved, particularly when the Government are taking upon themselves the question of transporting foodstuffs from one area to another. My Honourable friend referred to the quantities that are in Delhi which are undisclosed. Well, Sir, I have no means of knowing whether it is a fact or not. I can say that the Commerce Secretary has been in close consultation with the Special Officer in Delhi who is in charge of this thing, and also with the Chief Commissioner and I should be very much surprised if any known stocks are not already requisitioned by the Deputy Commissioner. If the things have gone underground and if it has not been possible for the ordinary staff to unearth, then that is another proposition that applies not merely to Delhi but to all areas.

There is also a certain amount of history which has to be remembered in connection with this question. The difficulties with reference to trade and commerce in the Punjab during the last two months are well-known to all Honourable Members of this House, and, particularly, to those who come from the Punjab. It is not for me to enter into the merits of the controversy that has been raging in that Province. It is not for me to suggest that any particular agitation is justified or not justified. But it is impossible to ignore the reactions of all that has been happening in the Punjab on the main question that we have been considering. The hartal that has been prevailing for a long period in that province has had its inevitable consequences on the supplies of foodstuffs, these essential foodstuffs in particular in all areas in India right up to Calcutta.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: What did you do to stop that?

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: It is the ban of the Government that has ended in the hartal.

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: Now, Sir, I only point that out as one of the factors that has brought about this crisis. I should like to say again with a caveat that I do not want to enter into the merits of this controversy at all, I want to make this statement with a full sense of responsibility. We are living in dangerous times. It is obvious that food shortage is one of the most serious things that any Government will have to deal with. It is also obvious that any question of such serious food shortage would have repercussions not so much even on the administrative machinery as on the whole society and I venture to state and to add my voice to those which have been raised even in the Punjab by the more moderate elements that the days of strikes and hartals must be put aside for the time being.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: There was no hartal in the United Provinces, yet a ban was imposed there.

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: Everybody should see the dangers of a resort to such methods for the solution of grievances, however justified they may be. In normal and more spacious days and under conditions of more placidity we might afford, whether it is the administration and the traders on the one hand or the employers and others on the other hand, to have recourse to such methods. But I venture to state quite confidently and in the hope that my voice will carry some weight with those who are mainly affected and it will strengthen the hands of those moderate elements which see the dangers ahead, that these are not days when however real the grievances may be, methods like that can be lightly resorted to.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: What has that to do with the situation in the country? If the hartal by the *Beoparis* in the Punjab had anything to do with the scarcity of wheat, how is it that in the United Provinces, there has been no hartal, but still the ban is imposed. In Bengal there is no hartal, yet how can this react as far as Bengal and the United Provinces are concerned?

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: It is obvious that a free movement of the commodities, a free flow of the commodities will be seriously jeopardised by such agitations and such hartals. It is common ground that in the Punjab itself the free movement of goods has been seriously affected by these hartals.

Sardar Sant Singh: Will the Honourable Member address the same advice to the Administration and ask them not to raise controversial questions?

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: I said that I was not going to enter into the merits of this agitation at all. I am concerned for the time being to point out what effects it will have on the social situation altogether. My Honourable friend appealed to me to realise the gravity of the position and to see what will happen if areas are starved of foodstuffs and cannot receive the foodstuffs that they are entitled to receive. I pointed out the dangers of the situation and we are acutely aware of them and to the extent that our advice will go, our advice will be offered to all the parties concerned. There is no doubt about that.

I have tried to show that all measures that are possible are being taken, that we have tried to requisition the stocks wherever available, that we shall make a further attempt. I am not free to disclose all or what methods we will adopt at the present moment to bring out the hidden stocks, if, as has been alleged by various Honourable Members, such stocks have been hidden. We have tried to distribute whatever quantities of wheat we have been able to requisition from various areas. We are trying to see that substitute foodstuffs are sent to those areas so that the position may be eased to some extent, if not totally.

My Honourable friend has made the suggestion that with reference to the wheat crop for next year, from this time onwards, a planned programme may be adopted by the Government. We are considering what steps can be taken to avert a situation like the present so that during the next twelve months after the next crop begins to move into the

market, there will not be things such as have happened now or at any rate we may be in a better position to know why such things have happened.

I have tried also to show that this Government are anxious to see that supplies are conserved for this country as far as possible and that we are not freely and willingly allowing the export of goods abroad beyond what can be spared consistently with our own interest. These are the various methods by which we are trying to tackle a very difficult situation. I do not pretend to suggest that the method that we have adopted, that we are proposing, and that are in contemplation are altogether too adequate to meet the purpose; but we are trying to do the best we can under the circumstances, and I trust that Honourable Members will at least free me from the charge that I have shown any callousness or the Government of India have shown any callousness in this matter. In fact this question, of wheat particularly has been engaging our attention for some weeks and has caused more intense anxiety to the Commerce Department and every one of the superior officers connected with that Department than any other single question during the last 12 months.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: Sir, may I ask one question? The Honourable Member may please take this into consideration and find out a solution. I know of a case definitely of a number of persons who failed to reveal their stocks and now they do not bring them out. They conceal them because if they bring them out for sale they may be arrested. So, unless a search is made on a research principle or any other device is found out by the Commerce Department we cannot touch this hoarded stock.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Sir, I have very carefully listened to the speech of the Honourable the Commerce Member in reply to the motion made by my Honourable friend, Mr. Nauman. If ever there was a matter which justified the adjournment of the business of this House or in fact any business of the Indian world, it was this motion relating to shortage of foodstuffs in this country and particularly in the Imperial capital of Delhi. Sir, I belong to a province which is not pre-eminently a wheat eating province, but having been in Delhi I have had occasions recently to get into touch with the people with whom this is now the most vital problem. And for the last 15 days the common talk of the people of this city is the shortage of wheat and the shortage of foodstuffs. Every day we are subjected to interminable queries by people as to when and where they are going to get wheat. After having heard with close attention the speech of my Honourable friend, the Commerce Member, I frankly confess that I am disappointed. When people are threatened with shortage of food it is very cold comfort to them to be told that the next harvest will be due within the next few weeks, and that when grains begin to move in the market there will be a fair distribution and the shortage will be relieved. What strikes me as very surprising is that the Government of India with all their vast machinery could not discover the persons who played this vanishing trick by which nearly five million tons of wheat disappeared from the land. The statistics given to the House clearly show that of a total produce last year of nearly ten million tons of wheat, 2½ lakhs of tons have been taken away for supply outside and another 2½ lakhs which are normally consumed by the Defence Department, have also been purchased by it and not more.

[Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra.]

What has happened to the balance of the stock? If it has not been driven underground where is it? And ten months' consumption is all that may be accounted for. But even that how much? The difficulty is that Government do not maintain any statistics of anything. They cannot give any statistics of the annual outturn, province by province, of this principal crop, wheat. They do not know what is the normal consumption of the provinces of Delhi and the Punjab or of the other neighbouring provinces. We are left to the region of speculation to find that out. By a mathematical calculation we have come to deduce that barring the 2½ lakhs tons for the Military Department and 2½ lakhs tons for supply to outside, the rest must be presumed to be available for consumption in this land. Today the Honourable the Commerce Member assures us that he will exert his utmost to find out these hidden stocks if there are any; but if these stocks are not found out, what is the remedy he is going to offer to the people: Are we to tell them that they must find out a substitute foodstuff in the shape of *Jowar*? And is he in a position to tell us what is the stock of *Jowar* at the present moment? How long can the present supply of *Jowar* keep the provinces going before there is movement of fresh crops within the next few months?

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: I referred to rice principally. The crop is just coming in, and there is a surplus to go to those places as substitute food from certain areas.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: In any case I feel that an intensified effort should be made by the Government of India to find a solution for this. I do not charge Government with callousness, but I do charge Government with short-sightedness; they should have foreseen all these things beforehand, and shortage of food, at this juncture, will spell disaster for this country. You have been talking in season and out of season about keeping up the morale of the people when the war is knocking at our gates. But if in the imperial capital of Delhi with all the paraphernalia of the State, and with the entire machinery of Government functioning, if even here your people cannot buy foodstuffs for money, how can you go on preaching to people not to give way to defeatism or to develop the defeatist mentality? Is that kind of slogan going to tone up the morale of our people? And people say that coming events cast their shadows beforehand. I do not know if this is a shadow of things that are likely to happen. If there is bombing of Calcutta or Madras and communications are cut off, we can well foresee what is going to happen to our country. If at such times as now you cannot supply food to the people here and the only explanation you can give is that your officers have tried their very best to unravel the stocks and are still trying in all the provinces through the Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners but with no appreciable results, then of course it is a very damaging story to tell. Sir, I have nothing further to add.

I appear to the Honourable Member, in the interest of the Government, to see that this shortage is immediately relieved, and unless that is done I do not know what is going to happen. People will lose heart and get exasperated and all the efforts of Government to allay panic will prove abortive and all their arguments and explanations will fall flat on hungry people.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani (Tirhut Division: Muhammadan): Sir, since I am here I am being told about the shortage of flour. During the last few days I was also thinking of giving a similar notice for adjournment, but every day I was told that arrangement had been made for the supply of wheat flour by the Delhi Administration. Whenever I tried to make enquiries I failed. However, the matter has come up before us now. The people are being put to serious troubles. Sometimes the Municipality here made some arrangements in order to help the poor people in securing wheat flour but I learnt that most people returned disappointed, rather they received kicks of the Police. For the last few days wheat flour is being mixed with maize flour and millet flour and that too not in their pure condition but mixed with some husk and other uneatable stuff.

The Honourable Member has said that he has not been able to get information regarding Delhi. I say that is very easy and especially in those areas where *chungi* system is working.

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: What information is the Honourable Member referring to? I did not say I had no information about Delhi.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani: Information as to whether there is any storage of wheat in Delhi.

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: My information is that there is no storage.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani: There is storage. However, I may tell him that wherever there is a *chungi* system it is not difficult to know what quantities have been imported. *Chungiwalas* keep an account of the quantity of wheat or any other grain brought here, because they charge on that. After getting the necessary information from them, it is open to the local Administration to call the persons concerned to give an account of how they have disposed of their stocks.

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: I am very sorry to interrupt the Honourable Member, but I may say I forgot to mention in my speech that in the month of January Delhi got very much more of wheat into its province than usually it does—about twice the quantity. What has happened is that it has been dispersed. There was a rumour started some time ago which I myself heard that following the *hartal* in the Punjab there is going to be a *hartal* in Delhi for ten days. The middle classes and those who could afford to lay in stocks of wheat and wheat flour purchased it for a month or so fearing the *hartal* and much of the quantity that came in in appreciably larger amount has been thus dispersed.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani: That may be, but I was just suggesting a remedy in so far as Delhi is concerned, namely, if there is any storage of wheat or wheat flour in Delhi, it can easily be detected through the (*Chung*i department—Octroi Department. (Interruption.) I say that an effort should be made and if there is any storage of wheat in Delhi that can be easily detected. The merchants who have imported should be called upon to account for the disposal of the quantity they received. There is another thing to be watched. Sometimes fictitious sales are

[Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani.]

shown. One merchant shows a certain quantity as sold to another friend of his, and he in his turn shows that as sold to a third person. In this way sometimes these transactions go on. But in that case when they do not give a satisfactory account, I think it is the duty of the local police to watch and see whether there is any storage of wheat in Delhi. The rumour is afloat here that wheat is here but no proper action to detect wheat storage is taken by the local Administration and, therefore, these troubles are due to lack of control on the part of local Administration. Sir, I am not going to find fault with any particular individual but it is the duty of the local Administration. Some people went to see the Chief Commissioner, Delhi, and made some complaints regarding the scarcity of wheat flour. He said: "Find out the names of the persons who are storing wheat." The poor people do not like to incur the displeasure of big merchants here because they will be put to more difficulties by such merchants. So the Administration can very well take action and they can very easily find out. There are more than one ways if only the Administration really desire to investigate and go into the matter thoroughly.

Sir, with these words, I support the motion.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: Sir, I am grateful to my Honourable friend, the Commerce Member, for having tried to explain the position in clear terms. He has tried to put himself in the same position in which we are and said that he does not know of any visible stocks and that he has not been able to find out ways and means of how he can explore those stocks which may be lying hidden somewhere. He certainly feels that there must be a surplus, because looking to the average consumption which we have in this country and the average production and taking into account the amount of exports made and the amount of stock which was purchased by the Government for the use of Defence Department, still, there should be stocks left as surplus and, besides, even if there was no surplus left, there was no occasion for the shortage of wheat. That means if the production was 10.5 millions tons and our consumption was 9.5 millions we had still in hand something like one million ton of wheat. So, at best, there should not have been a shortage. Then, it is really surprising that the Government have not been able to find out how this situation has arisen. In Delhi even he has not been able to find out whether there is any truth in the rumours that two lakhs or one lakh of bags are lying underground or are lying in some secret places. I am not in a position to suggest how this could be done but I can say one thing that the main channel of import to this particular city is through Railways and if the figures are taken from the Railways as to what has been the import in this city for the last ten months or so, they can find out exactly what they have received here, and then they can compare that with the average figure of consumption in the city.

Of course, there are other means of import as well from markets like Meerut and the near stations: but the main channel as I said is the railways, and from the different Merchants' Associations they can find out what has been the consumption in this particular city till now: and if they explore fully the situation in one city, they can use the same means for other centres in India. The situation is very serious and the Honourable the Commerce Member himself confesses it, but he finds himself in a fix as he is not in a position to know or tell us what are the real

causes of the present situation. As my friend, Mr. Maitra, put it, it does not take us anywhere to hear that the Government themselves do not know where we stand. Today the situation has arisen with regard to a staple food like wheat; tomorrow it may arise in connection with rice and other staple food commodities; and if the Government of India do not take proper precautions, which the Honourable Member said he would try to take, I am afraid things will go from bad to worse and anything may happen. Although the Honourable the Commerce Member has explained that he is taking all possible steps to see that the present situation is averted and although I appreciate his explanation yet the fact remains that the trouble has not been averted in spite of the Government Member's earnest desire. I do not know what else we can do. We look to the Government as custodians of this country to look at this aspect more seriously than on any other aspect; and if efforts are made in this city of Delhi through the Chief Commissioner, it may be more easy to explore. I cannot suggest all the other means available but when the Honourable Member has given an assurance that he will try and explore all means, I do not think there is any reason for me to press this motion to a division. He has expressed his sympathy and also his inability in the matter much in the same way as we did. The only request we would make to him is that he should now take it more seriously in his mind, as he has promised, and relieve the situation as early as he can. Sir, I withdraw the motion.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Has the Honourable Member the leave of the House to withdraw his motion?

Several Honourable Members: Yes.

The motion was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Thursday, the 12th March, 1942.