

Thursday, 24th February, 1944

COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

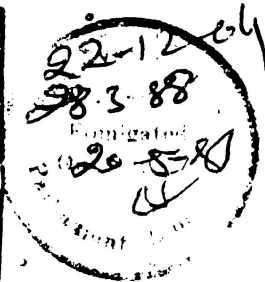
VOLUME I, 1944

(15th February to 6th April, 1944)

SIXTEENTH SESSION

OF THE

FOURTH COUNCIL OF STATE, 1944



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COUNCIL OF STATE

Thursday, 24th February, 1944.

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

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN COAL MINES.

86. **THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL:** Have the Government of India received any protest from the All-India Women's Association against the employment of women in coal mines?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. C. PRIOR: Yes. On 11th August, 1943, Government received a telegram from the Secretary of the All-India Women's Conference Association and on the 8th September, 1943 they received a letter from the Punjab branch of the All-India Women's Conference protesting against the notification permitting women to work underground in the Central Provinces.

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN COAL MINES.

87. **THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL:** Did Government take the decision to lift the ban, on employment of women in coal mines, after a representation was made by the mine-owners of Bengal?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. C. PRIOR: No.

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN COAL MINES.

88. **THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL:** Do Government think that by providing more wages and better facilities for the men labourers, sufficient number of labourers could not be recruited?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. C. PRIOR: Cash wages in the majority of collieries have recently been increased to 50 per cent. above pre-war cash wages. In addition food is provided at concessional rates for the miner and his family. Steps are being taken to increase the supply of consumer goods to the coalfields. The Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund has now been constituted. Welfare measures which will be provided under this fund include improvement of public health and sanitation, the provision of water supply and facilities for washing and the provision of educational facilities, etc. It is hoped that these and other measures will provide a sufficient number of male labourers. The fall in the output of coal caused by shortage of labour last year was however so serious that immediate steps had to be taken. It was the opinion of Government that no alternative measure to the employment of women underground was likely to produce such immediate results.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: What is the number of women workers that Government want?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. C. PRIOR: We have not fixed any particular number.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: What is the shortage of labour in the mines?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. C. PRIOR: The shortage of labour in October and November was probably about 30 to 40 per cent. of the normal labour.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: How many labourers were wanted?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. C. PRIOR: It is very difficult to give the number of workers employed in mines. I can give you approximate figures now. The average number in Bengal coalfields is 38,000. In the Bihar coalfields it is probably 78,000. The probable number now employed is about 20 per cent. above that because February is a good raising month and labour is fairly largely present.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Am I right in understanding that in all 88,000 more labourers were needed?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. C. PRIOR: No, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Then what was the number of labourers that was needed? I thought you said that about 38,000 more had to be employed.

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. C. PRIOR: If you were taking both Bengal and Bihar fields that may have been the shortage.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: Did an increase in the wages and other improvements offered bring about more labourers?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. C. PRIOR: There are more male labourers in the coalfields and we think that an improvement in wages has had some effect in bringing this about.

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN COAL MINES.

89. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: Will Government state the additional facilities provided for women labourers now employed in coalmines?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. C. PRIOR: Women labourers employed underground in coal mines are paid the same rates of wages and draw the same rations as men. Colliery owners have been instructed not to allow women to work underground unless they are medically fit. The Chief Inspector of Mines and his staff are taking steps to see that women are not employed on steep slopes. A Lady Welfare Officer is being appointed.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Have Government made any arrangements for looking after the children of the women who work underground?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. C. PRIOR: The matter is under consideration.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: How long has it been under consideration?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. C. PRIOR: Since women began to be employed underground.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: When are conclusions likely to be reached?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. C. PRIOR: I cannot, say, Sir.

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN COAL MINES.

90. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: Are Government aware of any instance in an occupied country of Europe where women labourers are employed simply for the reason that the coal out-put had gone down?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. C. PRIOR: Government have no information.

IMPORT OF CHEMICAL FERTILISERS.

91. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: Will Government state how many tons of chemical fertilisers have been imported for purposes of manuring of food crops during the last three months?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: The total quantity of Chemical fertilisers imported into the country during the last three months is about 1,090 tons.

IMPORT OF FERTILISING PLANTS.

92. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: Will Government state how many fertilising plants have been ordered out and priorities granted for them.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: No orders have yet been placed. Enquiries have, however, been made from America and the United Kingdom as to the possibility of obtaining plant to manufacture synthetic ammonia, and as to the size, cost, time of delivery, etc., of units which might be fabricated for India.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: When do Government expect to carry out the recommendation of the Foodgrains Policy Committee for the manufacture of ammonia sulphate in this country?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: As soon as we can get the plant which is not available in India.

THE HONOURABLE SIR GOPALASWAMI AYYANGAR: Have Government received applications for obtaining plant?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: Yes, I think, we have.

THE HONOURABLE SIR GOPALASWAMI AYYANGAR: Are they from Governments or Companies?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: I require notice of that question, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: How have Government dealt with the requests that they have received in this connection?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: The only way the Government could deal with these requests is to get into touch with the United States where the plant is available and that enquiry is being made.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Did any Companies say to the Government that if Government encouraged their enterprise they would be able to get the necessary plant?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: I am not aware of it, Sir.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FOODGRAINS POLICY COMMITTEE IN RESPECT OF MANURE.

93. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: Will Government state how many municipalities have been approached in pursuance of the Foodgrains Committee's Report in respect of manure?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: The conversion of town refuse into compost requires trained personnel. A scheme financed by the Government of India for training such personnel has been in operation since August, 1943 and has met with a ready response from Provinces and States. The trainees from all provinces have already returned to their provinces to train further personnel and to start compost-making. A statement showing the progress of the scheme is laid on the table.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Do Government propose to give any subsidy to the provinces for this purpose?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: No. The question of subsidy has not been considered.

Statement showing the progress of the scheme for training personnel for the conversion of town refuse into manure.

The Government of India have sanctioned a grant of Rs. 2,28,650 to the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research for the introduction of improved methods of converting town refuse into manure. The scheme is for two years, the first 18 months of which will necessarily be devoted primarily to the training of staff, though, in the process of training, the work of making compost will be, and has already been, taken up in a number of municipalities. Training under the scheme started on the 4th August 1943 and the first step, the training of Bio-chemists deputed by the Provinces and States, has been completed. They have returned to their respective provinces and States to organise centres for training Assistant Bio-chemists. After receiving their training, the Assistant Bio-chemists will in turn start training the sanitary inspectors deputed by the municipalities. The production of compost, should therefore be started in the several provinces according to the following schedule:—

Working from	No. of municipalities.
1-2-44	14
1-5-44	40
1-11-44	120
1-2-45	160
1-5-45	240

2. The Imperial Council of Agricultural Research has forwarded to the Provinces and States copies of a note on the method of preparing compost from town refuse. The Council is also publishing a popular bulletin (a priced publication) embodying practical instruction for composting. As soon as copies are available, the publication will be brought to the notice of provinces, States, the municipalities, etc., along with the recommendation of the Foodgrains Policy Committee. A film dealing with the technique of "composting" is also under preparation for exhibition at the Cinema houses situated in municipalities.

SALE OF PETROL IN THE BLACK MARKET.

94. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: (a) Are Government aware that petrol is being sold in the blackmarket ever since petrol rationing was adopted?

(b) Is the evil widespread?

(c) Will Government state at what rate has petrol been sold in the blackmarket in the last three months and if the rate is different at different places, will Government give some typical instances?

(d) Do Government possess any information as to the persons who sell petrol in the blackmarket ?

(e) What steps Government have taken to eradicate the evil?

(f) Do Government propose to take further measures ?

(g) How much petrol is being given to Military vehicles? Can supply of it be diverted to other car owners?

(h) Is it a fact that some part of the petrol given for military vehicles finds its way to the blackmarket? If so, what steps do Government propose to take to stop it?

THE HONOURABLE SIR LEONARD WILSON: (a) Yes, but it is believed to a diminishing extent.

(b) In the sense that it is not confined to any particular locality, it is widespread but less so than before.

(c) Government have no precise information on this point. The rate naturally varies from time to time and between places. Recent reports show that the black market price is as low as Rs. 5 per gallon in some places and as high as Rs. 9 in others.

(d) Black marketing in the past has been due to forgery of petrol coupons, and to the misuse and abuse of coupons and special receipts. Government have information as to the common sources of leakages, and when there is any proof pointing to any particular persons, prosecutions are launched.

(e) and (f). The provisions of the Motor Spirit Rationing Order, for the enforcement of which the Provincial Rationing Authority in each Province is primarily responsible provides the main measures for checking this evil, and those Authorities are constantly on the lookout for various criminal devices to defeat the provisions of the Order. Action is taken as and when such devices are discovered. For example, all coupons are now printed on distinctively coloured water-marked paper to prevent forgeries; and special police squads are employed in a number of provinces to detect offences of this nature. The evil has been checked to a great extent and Government do not at present consider that more elaborate measures which may cause harassment to *bona fide* users would be justified. The evil cannot of course be totally eradicated so long as there are people ready to pay high prices and put temptation in the way of drivers and others who are in a position to steal a few gallons here and there.

(g), (h) and (i). I regret I am not in a position to give the gross consumption in military vehicles. Petrol issued for military vehicles cannot lawfully be used for other vehicles. It may be that there is some leakage into the market of military petrol just as there is of civil petrol, but constant vigilance is exercised, and when there is definite proof of theft of military petrol, prosecutions are launched. The Honourable Member has doubtless seen reports in the press from time to time regarding convictions for such offences.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: How many prosecutions have been launched in connection with the sale of military petrol?

THE HONOURABLE SIR LEONARD WILSON: Twenty-five cases have been dealt with by the Special Police establishment working under the War Department, and there have been several cases dealt with by court-martial; and Provincial Police have also dealt with a number of cases, though I have no record of that number.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Is there any record of or any inquiry into the sale of petrol by military contractors?

THE HONOURABLE SIR LEONARD WILSON: I have no information on that point.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Have Government considered the fact that much of the petrol that is going to the black market comes from the military contractors? Do the Government propose to sell petrol under supplementary coupons at higher prices in order to check the black market?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member is putting hypothetical questions.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I asked with reference to (e)— what steps Government have taken to eradicate the evil?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: That is quite a different question.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I asked whether Government have considered the advisability of charging a fee for giving supplementary coupons in order to check the black market.

THE HONOURABLE SIR LEONARD WILSON: No, Sir.

AUTHORITY OF REPORT PUBLISHED IN BOMBAY CHRONICLE REGARDING TERMS ON WHICH MR. GANDHI WAS PREPARED TO RECOMMEND WITHDRAWAL OF THE AUGUST RESOLUTION.

95. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: Has the attention of Government been drawn to the report published in the *Bombay Chronicle*, dated the 12th January, 1944, from its Allahabad correspondent stating the terms on which Mahatma Gandhi was prepared to recommend the withdrawal of the August Resolution to the members of the Working Committee of the Congress? Has Government ascertained the source and authority for the report?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: Government have not ascertained the source of or authority for the report in the *Bombay Chronicle* referred to by the Honourable Member.

NUMBER OF DEATHS IN CALCUTTA DUE TO FAMINE.

96. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: Will Government state the total number of deaths that occurred in the town of Calcutta and in each district of Bengal, due to food crisis, and how many of them were men, women and children belonging to Hindu and Muslim communities?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: I regret the information is not available. Vital statistics for 1943 are now being collected by the Bengal Government, but I cannot guarantee that they will be in the form suggested by the Honourable Member in his question.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: How was it, then, that the Secretary of State stated that a million deaths had occurred in Bengal?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: I explained the other day in reply to another question that it was a purely speculative figure.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR: Was not the figure supplied to the Secretary of State for India by the Government of India?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: The figure was received from the Bengal Government, and it was stated that the figure was purely speculative. Actual investigation is going on at present to collect correct figures.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: From what source did the Government of India get this speculative figure?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: From various sources.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: What are those various sources?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: One of the sources is the Bengal Government. They were pressed to give us an estimate of deaths in Bengal, and they gave it; but they made it quite clear that it was a purely speculative figure.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: On what basis was that speculation made?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: From general observation, I believe.

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. Z. M. REZAI KARIM: Did the speculation tend towards decreasing the number or increasing it?

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Is the Honourable Member aware that the Secretary of State for India did not say that the figures were speculative?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: The Secretary of State said that the number of deaths would not exceed one million. That showed that it was purely speculative.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Is it a fact that he said that in the opinion of the Government of India the deaths did not exceed a certain number?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: Not so far as I remember.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: The Honourable Member does not read newspapers then!

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: So far as I remember, that was not the reply given.

THE HONOURABLE SIR GOPALASWAMI AYYANGAR: Have the Government of Bengal suspended the publication of vital statistics?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: No, they have not.

THE HONOURABLE SIR GOPALASWAMI AYYANGAR: Then they must have a figure. They should have published the figure in the return of vital statistics.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: As Honourable Members are aware, last year there was a good deal of disorganisation in Bengal, and therefore they found it impossible to get correct statistics. They are now collecting the statistics, and the figures will be available in a short time.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: How is it that the Secretary of State did not state that the figures were of a speculative nature?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: He was not pressed on that question; probably that is the reason why he did not say that.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: Is it the suggestion of the Honourable Member that the Secretary of State does not know the meanings of the word "speculative", or that he would give out to the public that deaths are in the neighbourhood of a million people until he had some basis to go upon?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: That is an argument.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR: Cannot the Government of India even now give the correct figures?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: The Bengal Government are trying to collect correct figures, and they have stated that these figures will be available in a short time.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: What is the machinery that the Bengal Government is employing for the collection of vital statistics?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: The normal machinery; that is, village chowkidars, sanitary inspectors, and district health officers.

IMPORT OF FOODGRAINS.

97. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: Will Government state:

(a) The total quantity of foodgrains imported from the first of January, 1943 to 31st January, 1944, their approximate cost and the names of the countries from which the imports were received?

(b) How much wheat and corn do Government propose to import during the next three months and also during every following quarter?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: (a) and (b). Altogether 3,86,368 tons of foodgrains have been imported into the country from overseas. We do not consider it in the public interest to state the other details asked for by the Honourable Member.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: With regard to (b), do Government propose to carry out the recommendation of the Foodgrains Policy Committee with regard to the importation of foodgrains?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: The Government of India are pressing the Secretary of State for 1½ million tons of foodgrains, as recommended by the Foodgrains Policy Committee. But the decision is in the hands of His Majesty's Government.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Have they drawn up any plans themselves in connection with the importation of definite quantities of foodgrains every quarter?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: The entire matter is in the hands of His Majesty's Government.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Have the Government of India informed them of their requirements in this country during each quarter?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: The Government of India have asked for

1½ million tons of foodgrains, and their idea if this quantity is made available, is that it should be made available in equated monthly quantities.

QUANTITY OF FOODGRAINS HELD BY RAILWAYS IN BENGAL.

98. **THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL:** Will Government state the total quantity of grain stock held by the Railway Authorities in Bengal for the purpose of providing the same to their employees?

THE HONOURABLE SIR LEONARD WILSON: The B. & A., B. N. and E. I. Railways had in stock on the 1st January, 1944, 107,000, 208,000 and 329,000 maunds of foodgrains over their whole system; the details of the stocks held in Bengal are not readily available.

REVENUE FROM TAXES ON INCOME, ETC.

99. **THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL:** Will Government place on the table statements of :

(a) Total revenue received during each of the last five years, prior to war, from taxes on income ;

(b) What part of it came each year from—

- (i) Sind,
- (ii) Punjab,
- (iii) N. W. F. P.,
- (iv) Baluchistan.

(c) Total revenue received during each of the last five years, prior to war, from import and export duties? What part of it was collected at Karachi in each year.

(d) Total revenue from salt during each of the last five years, prior to war, and the share of it received from Sind, Punjab, N. W. F. P. and Baluchistan in each year.

(e) Total revenue from central excise duties collected during each of the last five years, preceding the war and the contribution of Punjab, Sind, N. W. F. P. and Baluchistan to it.

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: Parts (a), (b), (d) and (e). I lay on the table statements showing the required information.

Part (c): The information required is being collected and will be laid on the table in due course.

Statement of Revenue from taxes on Income.

Years.	Total revenue.	Collection in—				
		Sind.	Punjab.	N. W. F. P.	Baluchistan.	
<i>I.—Corporation Tax.</i>						
1934-35 . . .	} Corporation tax as such is being levied from 1937-38. Prior to that year it was ordinary Supertax and has been included under II.					
1935-36 . . .						
1936-37 . . .						
1937-38 . . .		1,88,32,044	1,92,452	4,59,028	13,379	4,677
1938-39 . . .		2,03,72,177	2,75,897	3,09,958	7,059	14,871
<i>II.—Income-tax and Supertax.</i>						
1934-35 . . .	17,58,04,275*	(a)	91,40,585	11,00,499	2,46,027	
1935-36 . . .	17,09,95,721*	(a)	86,99,503	10,56,136	2,09,917	
1936-37 . . .	15,37,23,304*	25,25,763	77,44,625	9,28,233	1,42,822	
1937-38 . . .	13,94,72,525	26,21,059	86,77,716	12,16,447	87,759	
1938-39 . . .	15,24,43,250	29,77,445	81,26,021	11,54,549	1,48,391	
<i>III.—Total Income-tax Super-Tax, and Corporation Tax.</i>						
1934-35 . . .	17,58,04,275*	(a)	91,40,585	11,00,499	2,46,027	
1935-36 . . .	17,09,95,721*	(a)	86,99,503	10,56,136	2,09,917	
1936-37 . . .	15,37,23,304*	25,25,763	77,44,625	9,28,233	1,47,499	
1937-38 . . .	15,83,04,569	28,13,511	91,36,744	12,29,826	89,436	
1938-39 . . .	17,28,15,427	32,53,342	84,35,979	11,61,608	1,63,262	

* Inclusive of revenue from Burma.

(a) Separate figures not available being included in the accounts under Bombay.

Year.	Total Revenue.	Share received from—			
		Sind.	Punjab.	N. W. F. P.	Baluchistan.
1934-35 . .	8,03,70,810*	6,60,305	70,96,127	8,30,020	7
1935-36 . .	8,46,16,358*	6,63,819	66,26,854	8,08,196	40
1936-37 . .	8,83,35,657*	7,13,872	82,60,071	7,47,840	294
1937-38 . .	8,30,73,638	6,35,749	81,69,840	7,25,932	192
1938-39 . .	8,12,24,851	7,69,394	32,03,215	7,70,042	15

*Inclusive of revenue from Burma.

Statement of Revenue from Central Excise Duties

Year.	Total net revenue.	Share contributed by—			
		Punjab.	Sind.	N. W. F. P.	Baluchistan.
1934-35 . .	10,15,09,074*	11,88,618	Not shown separately.†	49	Not shown separately.
1935-36 . .	11,82,22,471*	12,83,783	Do.†	195	Do.
1936-37 . .	13,34,68,946*	15,43,413	50,840	..	Do.
1937-38 . .	7,66,35,711	22,76,019	15,08,197‡	111	Do.
1938-39 . .	8,65,72,623	40,56,760	81,712	61	Do.

* Inclusive of revenue from Burma.

† Was part of Bombay.

‡ This represents mainly excise duty on Motor Spirit and Kerosene produced in Burma.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DISTRIBUTION OF FOODGRAINS IN CALCUTTA.

100. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: Will Government state whether responsibility for control over supply of food to Calcutta remains now wholly with the Central Government? If not, in what respect it has been handed over to the provincial Government?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: No, Sir. The Central Government have undertaken to arrange for the supply to the Bengal Government from outside Bengal a quantity of foodgrains estimated as approximately equivalent to the amount required to feed Calcutta and its industrial suburbs for 13 months, including one month's reserve. The responsibility for distribution of food supplies in Calcutta remains that of the Bengal Government.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Have the Government of India taken any care to see that the foodgrains sent to Calcutta are not allowed to rot there?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: It is the responsibility of the Provincial Government to see to the storage of the foodgrains which cannot be immediately distributed.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Whose responsibility is it to transport it?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: Transport as such is the responsibility of the Central Government.

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. Z. M. REZAI KARIM: Is it not a fact that the Government of India have taken responsibility for supplying foodgrains to Calcutta and Greater Calcutta?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: The Government of India have taken the responsibility of supplying a quantity equivalent to 13 months' requirements of Greater Calcutta.

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. Z. M. REZAI KARIM: Has the Government of Bengal indicated to the Government of India already the requirements of Calcutta and Greater Calcutta?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: I have just stated that the Government of India have calculated and arranged to supply the quantity required.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Is it a fact that the Food Secretary to the Government of India has stated in the course of a Press interview that foodgrains are being sent from Calcutta to the districts of Bengal?

If so, did he take care to find out whether the foodgrains that were being sent were in good condition or not?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: It can be presumed that what is being sent for consumption is of good quality.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Has the Honourable Member seen himself or is he aware of the condition of the foodgrains lying in the Botanical Gardens?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: I have not seen myself but I am aware of the condition and I have ascertained from the Bengal Government that nothing is being distributed which is not fit for human consumption.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Is the Honourable Member aware of the complaints with regard to the quality of rice and even dhal in Calcutta?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: I am aware of the complaints but I am not convinced that all the complaints are justified.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Has the Honourable Member himself seen any samples of rice and dhal that looked like fossils and which were totally unfit for human consumption?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: I have seen some samples, Sir, but I am assured by the Bengal Government that nothing is being distributed which is not fit for human consumption.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: The Honourable Member has just stated that he had seen some samples. What was the impression that these samples created in his mind?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: Sir, one sample was of Sind rice. The defect, according to the people of Bengal, in that rice was that it was under-milled. Bengal people are not used to under-milled rice but under-milled rice is not really bad from the food point of view.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Is it not better from the nutrition point of view?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: That is the opinion of experts.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Is the Honourable Member aware that the real complaint in many places is that the rice that is being distributed is not fit for human beings?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: As I said, there is a complaint like that but I am assured by the Bengal Government that they are not distributing anything which they consider to be unfit for human consumption.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: What was your personal experience?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: I am not an expert; I cannot say.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Does the Honourable Member attach any value to the experience of eye witnesses in this matter?

(No answer.)

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: What is the proportion of such inferior food to the rest?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: I am unable to answer that, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. Z. M. REZAI KARIM: Is the Honourable Member aware that His Excellency the Governor of Bengal inspected all the foodgrains all over Calcutta and does he know what impressions have been created in the mind of His Excellency after his inspection?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: It is very difficult to say what impressions were created.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Have Government received His Excellency's report after inspection?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: No, Sir.

SHORTAGE OF FOODGRAINS IN THE EAST KHANDESH DISTRICT.

101. THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: Will Government state whether the food situation became acute and serious in Jamner? If so what steps have been

taken and are contemplated to be taken by the Government of Bombay for relief of shortage of food?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: No, Sir. There is shortage of food in East Khandesh District but it is not acute. The Government of Bombay have sent supplies to the district and will send more as the situation requires.

INCREASE IN PENSIONS OF RETIRED INDIAN CIVIL SERVANTS.

102. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Will Government state whether there is any proposal to increase the pensions of retired Indian Civil Servants residing in Britain? If so, why? What is the scale of increment, and what will be the total amount of the increased expenditure?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: Government know of no such proposal.

TELEGRAMS SENT TO UP-COUNTRY DEALERS FROM CALCUTTA ADVISING THEM NOT TO BUY FOODGRAINS FOR BENGAL.

103. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (a) Is it a fact that about 2,000 telegrams passed through Calcutta Telegraph Office advising up-country dealers in foodgrains not to buy or sell at prices quoted for grain in surplus areas with a view to nullify the efforts of Government to relieve the famine by engineering a corner in grain?

(b) Have Government made any enquiry as to the above facts and also state why censorship regulations were not applied to prevent such telegrams being sent out?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: (a) The facts according to my information are that after Free Trade was introduced within the Eastern zone on the 18th of May, in order to ascertain the reactions of the trade to this step, certain telegrams were examined by the Bengal Government. These telegrams were, however, found addressed to agents operating outside the Eastern zone and therefore not directly concerned with the enquiries which the Bengal Government had in mind. The senders of these telegrams asked dealers not to buy foodgrains for Bengal as prices in Bengal were expected to fall with the introduction of Free Trade. The telegrams were accordingly released.

(b) There is no censorship of inland telegrams but section 5 of the Telegraph Act gives power to the Central as well as the Provincial Governments to intercept or detain messages relating to any particular subject on the occurrence of any public emergency or in the interest of public safety.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: Are not these telegrams confidential so that the nature of their contents cannot be communicated to others?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: Yes, telegrams are confidential but the Government have powers to detain or inspect any telegrams in the interests of public safety.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: What are the Provinces included in the Eastern zone?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam and the Eastern States.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: Does free trade obtain in these provinces without any embargo?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: Free trade was introduced on the 18th of May and it was withdrawn some time in the month of July.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MEHTA: Can Government state why it was withdrawn?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: That is a very big question which cannot be covered in a reply.

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. Z. M. REZAI KARIM: What were the approximate dates when these telegrams were sent—after the 18th May or before that?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: It was after free trade was introduced, i.e., after the 18th May.

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. Z. M. REZAI KARIM: Before the abrogation of free trade took place?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: That probably is the case.

TREATMENT OF PRISONERS OF WAR BY THE JAPANESE.

104. **THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH:** (a) Do Government propose to make any enquiry through the International Red Cross or the Protecting Power into the "Grave news" disclosed by Mr. Anthony Eden, Foreign Secretary, in the House of Commons, on or about the 28th January, last, that to quote in his own words "There are many thousands of prisoners from the British Commonwealth, including India, who are being compelled by the Japanese military to live under tropical jungle conditions, without adequate shelter, clothing, food or medical attention. These men are forced to work on building railways, and making roads. Our information is that their health is rapidly deteriorating and a high percentage are seriously ill, and that there have been some thousands of deaths. The prisoners were skin and bone, unshaven, and with long matted hair. They were half naked"?

(b) What is the approximate number of Indian prisoners in Japanese hands thus dealt with and what attempts are being made for their relief?

THE HONOURABLE SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON: (a) Enquiries regarding the treatment by the Japanese of prisoners of war from the British Commonwealth have repeatedly been made and will continue to be made through the International Red Cross and the Protecting Power. With regard to those believed to be subject to the worst conditions the British Government have made the strongest possible representations to the Japanese Government through the Swiss Government. Such replies as have been received have been evasive, cynical and unsatisfactory.

(b) The number of Indian prisoners of war subject to the conditions described by the Foreign Secretary is believed to be approximately 12,000, but the Japanese authorities have not sent any list of names or numbers in prisoners of war camps in spite of frequent requests from the British Government.

Medical stores and food have been despatched by the ship repatriating Japanese internees, and it is hoped that some may have reached these prisoners. In addition large sums of money have been placed at the disposal of the Swiss Consul at Bangkok for the local purchase of relief supplies.

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. Z. M. REZAI KARIM: In view of the statement of the Honourable Member, are Government trying to take any reciprocal steps?

THE HONOURABLE SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON: I am afraid retaliation in this case will not pay.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: With regard to part (b) of the question, did the Honourable Member suggest that the total number of Indian war prisoners in the hands of the Japanese was only 12,000?

THE HONOURABLE SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON: No. What I have said in the answer is that the number referred to by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in his speech was 12,000. But, as I pointed out, our numbers in their hands are much larger than that and we cannot get the exact figures. The Japanese refuse to give this information. It may be that our people are being treated so badly and dying off in such large numbers that the Japanese are afraid of letting us know the truth so that after the war we may not confront them with the figures admitted by them. If we knew the exact numbers of prisoners in their hands, after the war we could ask them, what had happened to such of our countrymen as were unaccounted for. It is for this reason, *i.e.*, the evil intention of treating our men against all laws that the Japanese are hiding the truth from us now.

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. Z. M. REZAI KARIM: What is the number of Japanese prisoners in our hands now?

THE HONOURABLE SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON: I cannot give you the number.

NUMBER OF EVACUEES.

105. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Will Government give the figures separately of the census of Indian Burman, and other Asiatic British evacuees at present in India ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. R. N. BANERJEE : The results of the Census of Asiatic British evacuees in India held in November and December, 1943 are being tabulated and final figures for the number of evacuees in India will be available by the end of March, 1944.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO THE PROFITS MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL OUT OF WHEAT PURCHASES.

106. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Will Government state whether the Committee of Enquiry, consisting of the Honourable Mr. Justice H. B. L. Braund and Mr. A. L. Cook, have given their Report regarding the profits made by the Government of Bengal out of the purchase of wheat ? If so, when will the Report be available ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : On the assumption that the Honourable Member refers to the Committee of Enquiry appointed by the Government of India's resolution dated the 3rd of November, 1943, the Committee has made its report to the Government of India. The terms of reference will be found in the resolution, a copy of which is laid on the table, but were not as indicated by the Honourable Member in his question. The Report is now under consideration by the Government of India in consultation with the Government of Bengal. No decision has been reached regarding the publication of the Report.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : Is it clear that it will not be treated as a confidential document ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : I am unable to answer that question, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I may remind the House that there are six Resolutions today before the House and at this rate it would be difficult to make any progress.

RESOLUTION.

No. F. 10 (1)-Secy./43. New Delhi, the 3rd November, 1943.

The Government of India have had under consideration measures for ensuring that the retail cost of wheat and wheat-products sold to the public in Bengal is reasonable and that no undue element of profit is included in those prices. It has been recently announced publicly that the Government of Bengal have reduced their selling price of wheat to the millers by Rs. 1-4-0, and the Government of India are satisfied that the reduced selling price fixed by the Bengal Government of Rs. 12-12-0 per maund of wheat sold to the flour Mills in Calcutta is reasonable.

2. In order to satisfy themselves that there is no excessive element of profit in the prices charged for wheat-products at subsequent stages, the Government of India have decided to appoint a Committee of Inquiry, consisting of (1) Honourable Mr. Justice H. B. L. Braund, Bar-at-Law, Regional Commissioner (Food), Eastern Region, and (2) Mr. A. L. Cooke, Chief Cost Accounts Officer, Supply Finance Department.

3. The terms of reference to the Committee are as follows :—

(I) To enquire—

(a) whether the profit accruing to the flour mills from the production and sale at the mill statutory prices of wheat products made from wheat purchased from the Government of Bengal is reasonable, having regard to such variations in output and other conditions as may from time to time arise and, if not, what adjustment ought to be made so as to secure a reasonable rate of profit in the interest of the public and all parties concerned.

(b) whether the profit accruing to retailers in the sale at the statutory retail prices of wheat products purchased from the mills is reasonable.

(II) To make recommendations as to the proportions in which atta, flour and bran should be produced by the mills in Calcutta out of wheat bought from Government, and the respective prices at which they should be sold to the public.

TRIAL OF MR. GANDHI AND OTHER CONGRESS LEADERS.

107. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Have Government come to any decision regarding the trial of Mr. Gandhi and other Congress leaders, before a duly constituted impartial tribunal ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: I have nothing to add to the reply given on the 24th March, 1943 to the Honourable Member's question No. 128 on this subject.

SLAUGHTER OF CATTLE.

108. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Is it a fact as pointed out at the annual general meeting of the All-India Cow Conference Association recently held in Calcutta that about ten million cattle are slaughtered every year in India? What steps have Government taken or propose to take in this connection in the interest of agriculture, and the country's economic development?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: (a) Although no exact figures of cattle slaughtered in India from year to year are available, Government are satisfied that the figure of 10 millions mentioned at the Annual General meeting of the All-India Cow Conference in Calcutta is much exaggerated. According to the Marketing Department's Report on the marketing of hides the annual slaughter of cattle in India is about 5½ millions.

(b) Provincial Governments have both the responsibility and the power to take such action as they deem necessary for the protection of their cattle. The Government of India, however, commended to Provincial Governments the adoption of the restrictions recommended by the Central Food Advisory Committee in August, 1942 for the protection of prime cattle and cows. Four* Provincial Governments have already issued notifications under the Defence of India Rules prohibiting the slaughter of certain categories of cattle for civilian or army consumption. The military authorities have also issued orders to the various commands prescribing the categories of cattle which may not be purchased for slaughter.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Will the Honourable Member lay on the table the notification to which he refers?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: Notification had been issued by the Provincial Governments and they can be found in the Gazette.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Is the Honourable Member aware that the Bengal Legislative Assembly recently passed a Resolution with the support of the Bengal Government protesting against the excessive slaughter of cattle in Bengal?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: It is within the producing power to afford protection. The Government of India have already given instructions. The Army have also issued instructions.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Are Government aware that it was said in the Assembly—and I think it was also the view of the Government—that excessive slaughter was due to the requirements of the Defence Forces?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: The Honourable Member is aware that His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief mentioned in answer to a question that the army requirements were only about 28 million cattle.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Have the Government of India received any communication on this subject from the Government of Bengal since the Resolution to which I have referred was passed?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: I have not seen any reference from the Government of Bengal.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Will the Honourable Member give us some idea of the cattle population of India?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: Yes. At the time of the Royal Commission the figure was 150 millions and this very likely included Burma. Figures of births are not available. But the cattle population of India, omitting the United Provinces and Orissa and a number of States which did not hold a census, at the 1940 census was about 170 millions.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: What would be the annual death rate of the cattle?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: The report on the marketing of hides shows that 14.7 million cattle die annually.

THE HONOURABLE MR. A. Z. M. REZAI KARIM: How is it that the Honourable Member has got such correct statistics of cattle and not of human beings?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Please do not argue.

POSTS FILLED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIES AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND NUMBER OF MUSLIMS APPOINTED THEREIN.

109. THE HONOURABLE MR. ABDOOL RAZAK HAJEE ABDOOL SUTTAR: (a) Will Government state the number of appointments made in the Industries and Civil Supplies Department, since January 1943 and how many of them went to Muslims?

(b) Will Government lay on the table of the House a statement mentioning:—

- (i) the dates of various appointments made,
- (ii) the designation of the posts,
- (iii) salaries,
- (iv) whether the posts are temporary or permanent?

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. S. A. HYDARI: (a) The Department of Industries and Civil Supplies was constituted on the 22nd April, 1943. Since then 286 appointments have been made in all in the Department. Of these, 83 have been given to Muslims.

(b) (i) to (iii). I lay on the table a statement showing the information asked for by the Honourable Member.

(iv) All posts in the Department are temporary.

Statement showing the Posts in the Department of Industries and Civil Supplies, the Pay attached thereto and the dates from which they were filled.

Serial No.	Designation of posts.	Salaries. Rs.	Date of appointments.
1.	Secretary (Muslim).	4,000	22-4-43.
2.	Joint Secretary (Unreserved).	3,000	31-1-44.
3.	2 Deputy Secretaries (1 Muslim & 1 European)	1,750 1,900	22-9-43. 22-4-43.
4.	5 Under Secretaries (1 Muslim, two Europeans and two unreserved).	950 to 1,050	22-4-43 to 9-8-43.
5.	2 Assistant Secretaries (1 Muslim & 1 unreserved).	1,000	22-4-43. 12-8-43.
6.	Statistical Officer (unreserved)	600	26-4-43.
<i>Liaison Section.</i>			
7.	Officer-in-charge (unreserved)	970	31-5-43.
8.	Assistant Directors 2 (1 Muslim & 1 unreserved)	500	25-7-43. 14-7-43.
	Asst. Director (Cotton & Tentage). (unreserved)	500	15-5-43.
<i>Secretariat.</i>			
9.	Radio Controller (unreserved)	1,000	20-9-43.
10.	8 Superintendants (2 Muslims and 6 unreserved)	400 to 720	22-4-43 to 31-7-43.
<i>Non-gazetted staff.</i>			
11.	Assistants-in-charge = 7 (2 Muslims and 5 others)	180 to 270	22-4-43 to 3-11-43.
12.	Assistants = 71 (18 Muslims and 53 others)	100 to 320	22-4-43 to 10-2-44.
13.	Technical Assistant = 1 (unreserved)	150	19-11-43.
14.	Clerks, II Division = 12 (4 Muslims and 8 others).	80	15-5-43 to 11-2-44.
15.	Clerks, III Division = 70 (19 Muslims and 51 others).	60 to 120	22-4-43 to 3-2-44.
16.	Stenographers = 13 (3 Muslims and 10 others).	125 to 525	22-4-43 to 10-2-44.
17.	Stenotypist = 1 (unreserved)	90	12-2-44.
18.	Inferior Staff (30 Muslims & 56 others) = 86.	14 to 25	22-4-43 to 2-2-44.

NUMBER OF OFFICERS EMPLOYED IN THE SUPPLY DEPARTMENT IN DELHI AREA, ETC., AND NUMBER OF MUSLIM OFFICERS THEREIN.

110. THE HONOURABLE MR. ABDOOL RAZAK HAJEE ABDOOL SUTTAR :
(a) Will Government state the number of Officers in the different cadres of the Supply Department in the Bengal, Bombay and Delhi Areas and the numbers of Muslim Officers therein ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON, (on behalf of Supply Department): I place on the table a statement giving necessary information.

Statement showing the number of officers employed in the different cadres of the Supply Department in the Bengal, Bombay and Delhi areas and the number of Muslim Officers therein.

S. No.	Name of the Area.	Number of officers.	Number of Muslims therein.
1	2	3	4
1	Bengal	584	33
2	Bombay	154	9
3	Delhi	264	52
	Total	1,002	94

NUMBER OF MUSLIMS ON THE DINAPORE CANTONMENT EXECUTIVE BOARD.

111. THE HONOURABLE MR. ABDOOL RAZAK HAJEE ABDOOL SUTTAR :
(a) Will Government state the composition of Dinapur Cantonment Executive Board and the number of seats obtained by Muslims ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON: Dinapore is a class II cantonment, and in accordance with section 13 (4) of the Cantonments Act the Cantonment Board is constituted as follows:—

President—

Officer Commanding the Station.

12 members of whom there are—

3 *ex-officio* members—

1. first-class magistrate nominated by the District Magistrate.
2. The Health Officer.
3. The Executive Engineer.

3 *nominated* members—who are military officers as prescribed by section 13 (4) (e), and six elected members.

No seat is at present held by a Muslim.

NUMBER OF MUSLIMS, ETC., APPOINTED ON STATE RAILWAYS.

112. THE HONOURABLE MR. ABDOOL RAZAK HAJEE ABDOOL SUTTAR :
(a) Will Government state the number of Muslims, Hindus and members of other castes appointed in the different cadres of the services of State Railways, giving separate lists for each Railway ?

(b) Whether the Government Notification in regard to the representation of Muslims in the services is applicable to State Railways ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR LEONARD WILSON: (a) The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to Appendix CV in Vol. II of the Report by the Railway Board on Indian Railways for 1942-43, a copy of which is in the Library of the House.

(b) Yes.

BILLS PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY LAID ON THE TABLE.

SECRETARY OF THE COUNCIL: Sir, in pursuance of rule 25 of the Indian Legislative Rules, I lay on the table copies of the following Bills which were passed by the Legislative Assembly at its meeting held on the 23rd February, 1944, namely:—

A Bill further to amend the Coal Mines Safety (Stowing) Act, 1939;

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

A Bill further to amend the Indian Aircraft Act, 1934;

- A Bill further to amend the Transfer of Property Act, 1882;
 A Bill further to amend the Insurance Act, 1938; and
 A Bill further to amend the Cantonments Act, 1924.

CENTRAL ADVISORY BOARD OF EDUCATION.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Honourable Members, with reference to the announcement made by me on the 21st February, 1944, in regard to the nomination to the Central Advisory Board of Education, I have to announce that the Honourable Sir Ramunni Menon has been nominated for election to that Committee. There is one candidate for one seat and I declare him duly elected.

STANDING COMMITTEE FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION
AND BROADCASTING.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: With reference to the announcement made by me on the 21st February, 1944, regarding nominations to the Standing Committee to advise on subject in the Department of Information and Broadcasting, I have to announce that the following Honourable Members have been nominated for election to that Committee:—

1. The Honourable Rai Bahadur Sri Narain Mahtha.
2. The Honourable Sir Ramunni Menon.
3. The Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam.

There are three candidates for two seats and an election will be necessary. The date of election will be announced later.

RESOLUTION RE PRICE CONTROL AND SUPPLY OF REQUIREMENTS
OF AGRICULTURISTS—*contd.*

***THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM** (Bihar and Orissa: Muhammadan): Sir, the other day I moved my Resolution which was as follows:—

“This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that price control and adequate supply of the requirements of the agriculturists be taken in hand.”

This Resolution, Sir, is a very simple and non-controversial one. I do not want the Government to take any action which they have not taken.

(At this stage the Honourable the President vacated the Chair which was taken by the Honourable Sir David Devadoss.)

What I wish is that a special bias be given to their policy. The need for adequate supply will be admitted on all sides, both from the point of view of increasing the food production as well as from the point of view of reducing the prices. A perusal of the statistics of the production of India would convince us that India used to have a surplus not because of over-production but due to the fact of under-consumption. India's population is so great that our production would scarcely satisfy the needs of the country itself had it not been for the abject poverty of the people who live in this country. Now that things have looked up and the agriculturists are getting a better deal than they did during the last 12 years it is natural that they have started consuming more foodstuffs and a little hoarding. That is due to the fact that they have lost all confidence in the currency because of its inflationary tendencies of higher cost of prices coming after each other. It is therefore necessary that the agriculturist should be offered things which he is willing and anxious to get if you want him to part with his production. It is, therefore, Sir, that I have brought forward this Resolution so that his needs and requirements should receive especial consideration at the hands of the Government. At the present moment, Sir, there is a great deal of scarcity and high prices for some of his most essential requirements. I refer first of all, Sir, to our power, that is the cattle which we use. Their prices have soared very high due to the fact that adequate

*Not corrected by the Honourable Member.

supplies are not available. This position has been created, Sir, partly by the fault of the War Transport Département which is not bringing cattle from the surplus to the deficit areas. Partly it is due, Sir, also to the restrictions placed by the Provincial Governments against cattle being moved from one place to another. This is, Sir, our most important mill store. Then, Sir, kerosene is not to be had in rural areas. Go to any village and you will find that people have started taking their meals in the evenings because they cannot get kerosene oil. The Government has taken some steps for better distribution of kerosene in the towns and urban areas but the rural areas are in great deficit of kerosene oil. Iron was a thing which is most essential for our ploughs, for our bullock carts and other implements that we want and extremely high prices which are today prevailing for agricultural implements make it prohibitive for us to buy these things, except at a great loss and these being our capital goods it is natural that the prices soar up.

Then, Sir, the next item in our requirement is brick and cement. Whenever any agriculturist gets a little money his first care is to build up a good house and a good feeding trough for his cattle. Now this brick cannot be made without coal and coal cannot be had because of the War Transport Département's wagons. I would not mention other items like corrugated iron sheets which used to be in great demand whenever agricultural prosperity existed. I can understand, Sir, that iron and steel are not available but there is no excuse for not making available to us cement and bricks. I would remind, Sir, that in every industry which we have controlled we find that the Government take steps to make the supply of raw materials and essentials in hand. For instance, look at the sugar industry. The Government has regulated the price of sugar cane. Look at the textile industry which Mr. Hydari has been running with such credit. There, Sir, they started with the control of mill stores. Before Mr. Hydari came in, during the time of the Commerce Département there was the Mill Stores Committee which used to examine the requirements and supply all the requirements of those mills which were carrying on the war orders, but now that has become a general benefit for all the industries because all the mills are now making standard cloth and Supply Département's requirements. You went in and made mill stores available.

Then, Sir, last year during the Budget discussion we had a thunderbolt from the Finance Département for the cotton-growers and Sir Jeremy Raisman did a very right thing in insisting that the prices of cotton should not go up beyond a certain limit. So we see, Sir, that by the Textile Control the Government took steps to make available mill stores at a control price and also the raw material, the cotton, in abundance at the control rate. The scheme of textile control, Sir, has met with a large amount of success although its success has not yet been such as to satisfy us. We wish a little more; the prices to come down a little more. Then they started with the drug control. That has not been such a great success as the textile control because of the fact that the Commerce Département is not importing enough drugs to flood the markets with new supplies. It is only when a sufficient supply of goods is obtainable that you can have a control price. The result of the control has been, Sir, in most of the cases that the supplies have gone underground. I was saying, Sir, that in order to have a steady control price of a commodity it is necessary that preliminary steps for supplying the requirements of that industry should also be taken in hand. In our case, the Government is always trying to have a control on the food price but it never occurs to them to make available to us our requirements at a control price. I do not wish to lay down any hard and fast rule, but I want to draw the attention of the Education, Health and Lands Département to the fact, which was brought out today in answer to questions, that manures are not available to us in sufficient quantities. I was mentioning the requirements of the small agriculturists. I would be failing in my duty if I did not mention the other requirements of the big agriculturists—tractors, power ploughs, harrows, willowing machines and power alcohol for working some of the machinery. These are not available to us in sufficient numbers and quantities. We

[Mr. Hossain Imam.]

know, Sir, that supplies of things from the United States can be made, and have been made, provided they are satisfied that these supplies are necessary for the defence of America. We have to supply the American forces with their foodstuffs. Therefore we can justifiably claim that the production of more food is essential for the defence of America. I do not mind if they import their own foodstuffs. Let them take off our shoulders the burden of feeding the American and American-trained Chinese soldiers. I know something of this, because my province was the centre where most of the Chinese army was being trained, and the huge amount of rice which used to go to them is well known to me. You can, by certification to the United States Government that things are required for the defence of America, get supplies under lend-lease. Tractors and other machinery for agricultural purposes can be obtained. This has been urgently demanded by the planters—most of them Europeans—of my province, and they told me that they could not get any supplies.

I would therefore suggest that an inter-Governmental committee should be constituted, in which the Departments of Education, Health and Lands, Industries and Civil Supplies and Commerce might be represented, to draw up a list of things which they have to import in order to make abundant food crop grow in India. In addition, they might try other methods of making available to us simple things which we require for agriculture in the rural areas. The position is that the things which agriculturists want are not available in the rural areas. Take the case of coal, to which I referred yesterday. If the coal requirements of the western coast were taken off the Bihar and Bengal coal-fields, these fields would be able to supply the requirements of the agriculturists. If we can get coal, we would be able to use cowdung, which is a good manure if it is not burnt. We have to burn it because we cannot get either coal or firewood through the Government because of war transport.

In short, I do not wish any new line to be taken by the Government except in so far as they should also consider that the requirements of the agriculturists are of some importance and deserve some priority. They may not be given the same priority as war demands, but they should be given better priority than the urban requirements. If Government do take some concrete action, they will reap a rich harvest in a very short time because of the fact that agriculturists are anxious to spend money in order to increase their productivity, because the better yield will give them a better return. They are therefore anxious to grow more food. It is not propaganda which is making them do it; it is sheer economic forces which are acting. But the agriculturists are prevented from doing what they want to do because supplies are not to be had. For instance, I will mention pumping sets. We cannot get them. What is required is that the Government should take it in right earnest and make the provinces realise that the requirements of the agriculturists are really the requirements of India because they have been producing food which is so essential for the life not only of the Indian people but of the army as well. I therefore ask that Government should take this matter in hand in right earnest and give all the help they can.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA (Bihar : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam has put forward the requirements of the agriculturists in a very modest and reasonable manner, and I give his Resolution my wholehearted support. He referred in the course of his speech to the Bihar Planters' Association. I have been a member of the Bihar Planters' Association for a long time, and I can, with full knowledge of the troubles that the planters and the agriculturists are experiencing in Bihar, which is principally an agricultural province, testify to all that the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam has said. Of course among the requirements of the agriculturists I would certainly put the need for good cattle first. I can tell this House from my own experience that a pair of bullocks, good for agricultural purposes,

which formerly I could buy at the rate of about Rs. 84 or Rs. 85 a pair, I could buy last season at Rs. 386 a pair—and I could not buy all the number I needed. It has really become very difficult to carry on agriculture in the present conditions. The second point is that agriculturists who have got to transport their agricultural produce—for instance, sugarcane—to the mills have got to do it on bullock carts, and they certainly do need iron rims for the wheels which they cannot find at all at present. This is affecting a very large number of agriculturists who cultivate sugarcane, and it is telling upon the production of the sugar mills as well.

I can well understand that during a period of stress and strain and preoccupation, at a time when there is such a big war going on, it may not be possible for Government to launch very big irrigation schemes. But what I would like to impress upon Government is that there are many small schemes, which I would call drainage schemes, which can be taken up at present. I could give the Government, if they cared to ask about it, quite a long list of these small schemes in the province of Bihar, and the adjoining province of Orissa as well—schemes that have already been examined and approved of and whose utility has been testified to by all those people who have gone and seen the place and the benefits that would accrue to the agriculturist if the schemes were put into effect. There were small schemes about which I moved the Government myself.

12 NOON I can send the Department here reports about those schemes if they so desire. These schemes cost about Rs. 25,000 or so of which Government were asked to pay half and the people were willing to pay half. In fact, at a certain stage, it was even suggested that the whole cost should be recovered from the people who were going to benefit by it by spreading the recovery over a number of years. These projects can individually bring back to very healthy agricultural use about 250 acres of land in each case. These are the schemes which Government must take immediately in hand. If they did so, they would be doing real lasting benefit to the country. Government have relied too much on their "Grow More Food" campaign. This is a campaign the philosophy or logic of which it is very difficult to understand. The Honourable Member for Agriculture may, as I see, smile superciliously, but he will soon realise if he exercises his independent imagination a little that if an agriculturist has an extra acre of land, if he has an extra pair of bullocks, if he has the necessary seeds, manure and the agricultural implements, would he think that he is going to wait for his propaganda leaflet to reach him in order to induce him to cultivate the uncultivated acre of land with such high prices in the country? He is certainly not going to do that. What this Resolution wants is that Government should enquire into the needs of the agriculturist, to see what he wants and to find his implements and his pair of bullocks. These are the needs to which this Resolution tries to draw the attention of Government and I give my whole-hearted support to this Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR (Central Provinces : General) : Sir, I give my whole-hearted support to the Resolution so ably moved by my Honourable friend Mr. Hossain Imam. We know that in various Provinces, the Provincial Governments have been trying to control the prices of foodgrains. There ought to be some control in the interests of the poor. I am myself a producer of foodgrains and I know the difficulties when we have to follow the orders of the Provincial Government in the matter of control of prices. Our difficulty is that we do not get our necessary requirements at the price at which foodgrains are controlled by the Government. If you reduce the price of foodgrains, you should also see that the agriculturist has not to pay more for his ordinary requirements. I fully agree with the statement made by my Honourable friend Sri Narain Mahtha just now that the prices of cattle have gone up very high. The agriculturists are finding it very difficult to cultivate their land for want of cattle because the prices of cattle have shot up. So it is the duty not only of the Provincial Government but also of the Central Government who issue instructions to the Provincial Government to see that the agriculturists get their requirements at a reasonable price. For instance, take the case of agricultural

[Mr. V. V. Kalikar.]

implements. They are not available at a reasonable price. Their prices have shot up to such an extent that the poor agriculturist finds it very difficult to get them at a reasonable price. I am afraid that if the Government of India and the Provincial Governments do not move in this matter, then all the land that is to be cultivated for growing more foodgrains will lie fallow. Though this matter is primarily the concern of the Provincial Government, the Central Government have also to take up the matter seriously and issue instructions to the Provincial Government to bring down the prices of the requirements of the agriculturists to a reasonable level. The small agriculturists are thinking of allowing their land to lie fallow rather than go in for their requirements at such high prices. By simply having propaganda and lectures on "Grow More Food" campaign you will not be able to achieve your purpose. My Honourable friend Mr. Hossain Imam has rightly brought to the notice of the Government the difficulties of the agriculturists in getting their requirements at a reasonable price. I appeal to the Central Government to take this matter seriously into consideration and issue instructions to the Provincial Governments to see that the needs of the agriculturists are met at a reasonable price.

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I do not know what the Supply Department has got to do with agriculture, or whether the Agriculture and Supply Departments are joining hands together in answering this question. The Agricultural Department has got the power to get all implements and necessary materials in support of the agriculturist. The ryot depends on proper instruments of agriculture. Now, every one wants to see that more food is raised and more supplies are given to the towns and village. Look at the economic condition of the ryot. It is helpless one. You see high prices and you say the ryot is in a prosperous condition. But examine the condition of the ryot thoroughly and closely as I have done. The condition of the ryot in Southern India, where he is said to be very prosperous, is such that ultimately he is not able to make both ends meet. The demands on him are very much, not only land revenue but debts, a high price for necessary articles. He is in a chronic state of debt. The debt amounts to Rs. 11 or Rs. 12 crores in the presidency.

THE HONOURABLE SIR N. GOPALASWAMI AYYANGAR: Very much more.

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO: My friend says it is very much more. The question therefore is not so much that the ryot is not frugal, that the ryot is incapable of managing his affairs; but the real thing is that the demands on him in various directions are such that he cannot possibly manage even with the prevailing high prices. You ask him to produce more food. He is unable to do so. Demonstration Farms in various places give out the results of their experiments. They cannot help the ryot to introduce those methods in practice. If the ryot is to raise those valuable crops on his land, he requires first of all manure, second cattle wealth and thirdly communications, marketing facilities, etc. All these facilities are wanting for the ryot. Government are not able to assist him in any way, whether it is the Supply Department or the Agricultural Department. Governments are not serious. Only they are ready at the time of the *kist*. He must pay *kist* in 3 instalments promptly. If he does not pay within 15 days of the demand, then comes distress. That is the fear which the ryot has got before him and on account of this fear he sells his produce even at a lower price. If he keeps the produce for some time the price may rise and he may have a profitable bargain. But he is not able to keep his produce for a long time and he is not therefore able to get adequate price. The middleman comes and clutches at the produce and therefore year after year the ryot is in a chronic state of indebtedness. Implements at present are very costly. Iron has gone up very high; he is not even able to replace a ploughshare. Unless he pays a very high price in the black market it is impossible in some places. For everything he has to use his cart and he is not able to use it because tyres are not available; and he is not able to get new *mamooty* which is essential. The ryot is the backbone of the country. If the ryot is prosperous then the

wealth of the country increases. So long as you treat him in this way that he is not an asset in the wealth of the country, you cannot have any prosperity of the country. You may ask for political reforms. But who is the man that bears all the burdens? It is the ryot and to him you accord very bad treatment. The real man who is at the bottom is neglected. How can you have economic progress in the country, economic development after the war. You are going to plan economic development. If the ryot is not able to bear his responsibility, what is the meaning of this economic development? They are very good phrases, economic planning, economic development. You find the instrument which has to carry these into effect is very weak. Therefore the first and foremost necessity of any Government is to see that the condition of the ryot is improved. They say that if the ryot is prosperous he spends away. But the ryot has got his own common sense. The common sense of the ryot is keeping up the Government, not the officials' "efficiency". If you go today to the countryside and ask the villager what he wants, as the Viceroy has done, he will tell you "We want our tank to be full, our cattle to be strong and we want the land to yield. This is all we want." If the ryot is contented and if he is prosperous you can build your political fabric with that basis. But so long as he is discontented, so long as you do not satisfy his needs, there can be no great improvement in any direction. Therefore please place before him all that he needs, all that is desirable, in the interests of the agricultural progress of the country. Therefore I would appeal to whichever may be the Department to help the ryot properly, adequately and economically.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU (United Provinces Southern: Non-Muhammadan): Mr. President, I desire to lend my support to the Resolution which the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam has moved. The Honourable Sir Jogendra Singh has often said that he would like an agricultural bias to be developed in this House. The Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam by his Resolution has tried to induce this House to take into consideration the agricultural question. There is no doubt that the condition of the agriculturist is not what it should be. It needs to be considerably improved. The Government have accepted the principle of statutory price control of foodstuffs. They are controlling the cloth market also. Now, if you are controlling the prices of foodstuffs it follows that you must also control the things necessary for the production of food. In other words, you must enable the agriculturist to get the implements that he needs for producing his food and the other articles that he needs in order that the "Grow More Food" campaign might be a success at fairly reasonable prices. It is notorious that in agricultural areas kerosene is not to be seen today. It is very difficult for the agriculturist to get matches in villages and the price that he has to pay for matches, assuming that he is enabled to get matches at all, is so far as he is concerned almost prohibitive. It is very difficult for him to get the cattle, which represents his wealth, at reasonable prices. At one time it was possible to get a pair of cattle for about Rs. 80; today you have got to pay about Rs. 384 per pair of cattle, if you can get it. In some parts of our Province, and in Bihar, the price per pair is in the neighbourhood of Rs. 380 or Rs. 384 per pair. The Honourable Sir Shantidas Askuran reminds me that in Bombay it is Rs. 500. I am almost sure that Sir A. P. Patro will say that in Madras it is Rs. 600. Anyway, the broad fact that stands out is, that the price of cattle is very high and Mr. Hossain Imam has told us why and how it is that the price of cattle has gone up. Now, I think if your "Grow More Food" campaign is to be the success that you want it to be it is necessary that you should have some control over the price of cattle and it may be necessary for you to take steps—I am not speaking from a religious point of view; I am only speaking from an economic point of view—it may be necessary for you for this purpose to prevent the indiscriminate slaughter of economic cattle. Then, if you want, or, if the agriculturist wants to build houses, he cannot get bricks, cannot get corrugated iron, he cannot get even scrap iron and you have got to bring these things which are necessary for his healthy existence within his reach. You cannot bring them within his

[Mr. P. N. Saprū.]

reach, unless you make these articles available to him by providing him with great transport facilities also, and unless you try to lower their prices for him.

Another requirement of the agriculturist is, that he should have his drugs, and medicines which he needs as a human being, at a reasonable price. Unfortunately in many rural areas medical supplies are very inadequate. You cannot ignore the human factor in production. Inefficient men, unhealthy men cannot produce what healthy men can produce, and people in the villages die without any medical aid being administered to them; and the price of drugs, or the price of medicines has gone up very, very much. In the first place, medicines are not available even in urban areas and, in the second place, even when they are available the price is prohibitive. I will give you a concrete instance. We talk of the black market. The other day we needed a particular medicine in an urban town, the largest town in the United Provinces. The case was very serious and it was important that the patient should have that medicine. We were told that the price of the medicine in ordinary times was Rs. 3. We had to go to the black market. We had to pay, because human life had to be saved and we paid Rs. 22 for what we used to get at Rs. 3. Now this is the kind of control that you have at the present moment.

THE HONOURABLE SIR SHANTIDAS ASKURAN: Did you bring the name of the dealer who sold you the medicine at a higher price to the notice of the proper authority to take some action?

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: Well, if we had done anything of the kind we would have never got the medicine and we might as well have allowed a near relation to die, and surely, that is not what any normal human being would do, when he is dealing with a life and death affair.

Well, anyway that is the kind of control that you have today and if things are bad in urban areas they are much worse in rural areas. The big agriculturists need fertilizers; they need other machines and in their case they cannot undertake any improvement in their agricultural farms unless these machines and tractors are made available to them. The Provincial Government are controlling the prices of foodstuffs. They should also control the price of agricultural implements, the price of agricultural cattle and the bare necessities of the life of the agriculturist.

Sir, in the United States agricultural implements receive a high priority from the United States Government. In Italy, hundreds of thousands of acres of land have been reclaimed by drainage schemes and production has been very much increased. Indeed, Sir, the production per acre in Italy of rice is the highest, I believe, in the world.

Now, why is it not possible for Government, assuming that it is not possible for them to undertake big irrigation schemes during the period of the war, why is it not possible for us to undertake some drainage schemes in these village areas? You cannot induce people to be enthusiastic about the "Grow More Food" campaign by speeches, broadcast talks, propaganda, films or demonstration farms. You need something more than all this to make the agriculturist feel that you are taking a real interest in his welfare. If you help him along these lines, if you make his seed available to him at a reasonable price, if you make available to him the implements that he needs at reasonable prices, if you make available to him the manure that he needs at a reasonable price, you will not need propaganda to induce him to grow more food. He will see that growing more food is a profitable proposition, and if he finds that growing more food is more profitable, he will try and bring under cultivation as many acres as possible. Therefore, it is the primary duty, of any Government to do what it can, to improve the condition of the masses. So far as the British Government is concerned, it is interested neither in the condition of the masses nor in that of the classes; it is only interested in the maintenance of its privileged position in this country. But since we are in this House, we have to talk; and Mr. Hossain Imam has provided us with an opportunity to talk. I am getting fed up myself with all the talking. With all the talking that we

do, we do no good either to ourselves or to the Government. Some of the members talked a great deal about railway fares. We know that in spite of all the protests that they made, railway fares are going to be increased. In spite of all that we may say today about the necessity of increasing amenities for the villagers, though we shall get some profuse expressions of sympathy from the wise, patriotic and eminent Indians who adorn the Executive Council of the Viceroy, nothing concrete will be done. Therefore, knowing full well that nothing is going to come out of the Resolution of my Honourable friend Mr. Hossain Imam, I give my support to it.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY (East Bengal: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I rise to support this Resolution. Coming from Bengal, where agricultural holdings are small, my point of view is very modest. I do not want tractors, steam ploughs and sulphate of ammonia to be imported from outside. I want small implements which can be made in India. I want manures such as green compost and other things which can be had at a very low price and can be used by the cultivators, poor as they are. I do not know how many poor cultivators in India use ammonium sulphate—except, of course, the rich planters of Bihar, and rich people like my Honourable friends Mr. Hossain Imam and Rai Bahadur Mahtha. I want green manures. I want cowdung, which is easily available. I want cattle at a very low price. Therefore, I would ask the Government to give more attention to "grow more food" and also to "grow more fodder". In our parts of the country there is hardly any grazing land available; all the agricultural lands are occupied by food production. There is hardly any land left for pasture for grazing cattle. There has been general inflation in the country and prices are soaring in all respects, and they will rise much higher as regards manufactured goods than as regards raw materials. The cultivator has therefore to suffer from high prices. He cannot help it. The Government should see that prices of goods required for his consumption do not rise very high. They should be within proper limits. And more attention should be given to the manufacture of articles in India than to importing them from outside.

With these words, Sir, I support the Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI (Commerce Secretary): Sir, if I intervene in this debate, it is because I should like to correct a grievous mistake which, if I may say so, marred the otherwise able speech of my Honourable friend Mr. Hossain Imam. Mr. Hossain Imam made the statement—the astonishing statement—that the success of the drug control scheme was being jeopardized by the failure or inability of the Commerce Department—

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Not failure, but inability.

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI: —to arrange for adequate imports of drugs and medicines from abroad. Nothing, Sir, can be further from the truth. For the shipping period July-December, 1943, the Government of India estimated India's requirements in drugs and medicines on a generous scale, or rather on as generous a scale as circumstances permitted; and I am happy to be able to say that actual arrivals during this period represented a little more than 85 per cent. of the estimated requirements, which, in these days of acute shipping shortage, is I consider, a notable achievement. This result, I should like to add, has been made possible by the perfect understanding and close co-operation between the Commerce and Industries and Civil Supplies Departments.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL (Bombay: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I rise to give my general support to the Resolution moved by my Honourable friend Mr. Hossain Imam. The Resolution is one of the shortest that have been tabled in this House. It runs into two lines—to be more exact, into two words of the third line. But the significance of the Resolution is very great. It affects the lives and the affairs of more than 80 per cent. of the population of this country, indeed, the backbone of this country. The

[Mr. G. S. Motilal.]

agriculturist is the backbone of the country, and if his interests are well looked after, the country would be happier. That is a general and universally accepted truth. Resolutions relating to his welfare have been few. We have talked a great deal about his happiness and welfare, but a direct Resolution of this nature is the first which I see in this House for a long time. The Resolution as it reads is very wide. Indeed, it will cover anything and everything under the sun. What the Resolution seeks is that there should be price-control and also adequate supply of the requirements of the agriculturist, and that steps towards this end should be taken up in hand by Government. I should very much have liked that the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam had given some specific instances of the articles which he would desire to be controlled and supplied to the agriculturists. As far as I can imagine, the requirements of the agriculturists are agricultural implements which are made of wood and steel and iron. The price of steel has gone up beyond all proportion, because steel is required in great quantities for purposes of war. The price of wood has also gone up because the prices of other articles have gone up, and the agriculturist is unable to get steel or wood at prices at which he could get them before. But that is not a proper comparison. When the general level of prices rises the prices of his requirements also rise. Another requirement of his is manure and fertilizers. The question of manufacture of fertilizers has been discussed. There have been long academic discussions about the value and quality and quantity of manures required and their use. They have got to make use of what they get from their own cattle and then comes chemical fertilisers. I do think that some of them do use chemical fertilisers, though in a very small quantity. It is only the rich zemindars who would use these chemical fertilisers.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: No, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: I will be glad if I am contradicted and if Mr Hossain Imam will say that the small cultivator also uses these chemical fertilisers.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Sugarcane and potato cultivators.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: It may be so that potato and sugarcane cultivators use them, but if other people require them, I do not see why they should not be supplied. Cattle has been a common ground. It has been referred to already and therefore I shall not refer to it again. But cattle shortage is a question which is affecting the position seriously. Even the Foodgrains Committee has examined this question and has devoted one or two paragraphs to it and made strong recommendations. We have yet to know how far Government have accepted and implemented those recommendations, and I hope that something definite will be told to us today as to what steps have been taken by Government to implement those recommendations.

The next thing that the agriculturist requires is cloth. Control of the price of cloth has been instituted though I must say it is not working satisfactorily. But that is not the fault of the Government: It has been initiated only very recently and if they seriously continue their efforts and take strong measures, I am sure that there will be some relief. Already it has produced some relief to the extent that prices have not gone higher but they have remained where they were. (*An Honourable Member*: "A little below".) I am not quite sure. My information is that there is a very wide black market in it. I must deplore it. I have no sympathy for those who take advantage of the serious difficulties of the poorer classes in order to make money and I should certainly like stronger measures to be taken. Other articles required by him are leather and other materials of life, even modest as their requirements are, such as housing materials, bricks and tin and other things. Of course, control of these articles would be such a tremendous proposition that one would shudder to think how far you would be able to work it successfully in the villages. But the problem has got to be considered. We have ignored the

problem of the agriculturist for a long time. A beginning should be made and I think Government should appoint a Committee, not a Committee to shelve the question but a Committee to put up a plan so that Government may make a beginning somewhere or other. In this spirit, Sir, I support this Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE MR. SUSIL KUMAR ROY CHOWDHURY (West Bengal: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I want to sound a note of warning to the Honourable Member who is doing so much for the "Grow More Food" campaign. It is this. If foodgrains are requisitioned by the Civil Supplies Department from the agriculturist and if rationing is introduced in the rural areas, I would suggest that the agriculturists should be allowed to keep sufficient foodgrains for their seed, for their families and for their labourers. Otherwise, the "Grow More Food" campaign is bound to fail. My grievance is that some of these *subjantas* think that the amount of foodgrains consumed by a man in the urban area is sufficient for an agriculturist or his labourer to keep his body and soul fit. I know it for a fact that in Bengal, the District Magistrate of 24 Parganas allowed last year only $\frac{1}{2}$ a lb. of rice a day for each of the adult members of a family of an agriculturist and nothing for the children. Sir, you cannot expect an agriculturist to plough the land with an empty or half-empty stomach and help you in your "Grow More Food" campaign. Sir, I support this Resolution.

*THE HONOURABLE SIR SHANTIDAS ASKURAN (Bombay: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I will only take 2 minutes. There is only one point I should like to stress. This Resolution has got my sympathy and support. It is most proper that it has been brought forward. The control and supply of instruments has been advised by various Members. I only want to bring one point to the notice of the House and it is this. When our Governor of Bombay, His Excellency Sir John Colville, came here, this question was very acute. He took this as the first thing for consideration, and what did he do? He went to every district himself personally—he is still going—and what did he find? Instruments and other things will be provided and priority will be asked for them. But where is the means of agriculture? That is cattle. He found shortage of cattle and he straightaway ordered and passed a rule that no animal less than 10 years old, either milch or plough cattle, should be slaughtered. He has appointed Inspectors in every district to see that the orders are properly observed. If we want to solve the shortage of food even during war time, this is the first step that every Province should take and the Government of India should take the matter in hand and instruct all the Provinces to follow the example of Bombay. That will be the end of this difficulty and the solution of this problem.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH (Education, Health and Lands Member): Sir, I had no desire to take part in this debate, but I am glad to find that the Honourable Sir A. P. Patro and other colleagues recognise, that agriculture is the back-bone of Indian economics. I was also happy to know that this House has now acquired an agricultural bias, which means that agriculture will receive the attention which it deserves. There is, of course, one important point to which I should like to draw the attention of Honourable Members of the House and that is, to consider the agricultural problem in its proper perspective. Agriculture cannot be isolated from the general economics of the country and needs serious consideration in all its aspects. As you know, it is the object of the Government to raise the living standard of the agriculturists. It is only by raising the living standard of the agriculturist that a rise in the living standard of the other people will take place. How is this living standard to be raised? Does not it depend to some extent on improvement in agricultural wage and does not improvement in agricultural wage depend on the price of the produce which the labour of a man gives him? That is an important consideration which I should like to place before the House

*Not corrected by the Honourable Member.

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO: What he has to pay for his living.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: If you always consider that food should be cheap it means this. An Urdu poet has said:—

سب گھٹنا دیتے ہیں مفلس کے مگر پال کا مول

The poor man's goods everyone covets to acquire at the cheapest possible price. What is required is the recognition, that the prices of agricultural produce should be stabilised at a level which would give him a fair wage. This House and all those who are interested in the prosperity of the country should concentrate their attention in securing for the agriculturist a living wage which will give him a fair margin to meet his normal needs. Attention has been called to the shortage of bullock power in India. You would be surprised to know that whereas in India we have 22 bullocks to 100 acres, Egypt does with three. I do not understand how they do it. In India, so far as I know, I can say there is not any shortage of bullock power in numbers. There is shortage however of well fed and well bred bullocks. Bullocks are as under-nourished as ourmen are. We have got to provide nourishing food both for our man-power and for our bullock power. This is our problem. This problem can not be met by debates and discussions but by a concentrated policy which aims at tackling the problem in all its aspects. We must admit that land is not capable of supporting its growing population. A friend of mine, on whose calculations I can depend, calculates that in another 40 years the population of India may increase by 240 millions at the present birth rate. We have not only to provide food for our existing population but for this increase which it is not possible to control.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: Birth control.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: Start it, I have no objection.

The problem therefore before us is to provide industrial employment for at least 30 per cent. of our population. I think at least 100 million people should be given other paying occupations. If we can do this then there can be some improvement in the living standard and with it will grow a new demand for goods, leading to increased employment and increased wealth.

We are now engaged in tackling this problem in all its aspects. His Excellency the Viceroy in his notable speech at the Legislature declared for a bold agricultural policy and you will now have a bold agricultural policy. The agricultural Committee will plan for providing good seed for the land that is under cultivation; it will also arrange for the production of manures to increase yields from land. It will also consider the problem of producing better livestock—not the livestock which is under-nourished and does not give you even half a seer of milk. In some Western countries where the diet is so varied, consumption of milk is 56 ounces per head of the population; we with our poor diet have not even seven ounces per head of population. We have to provide not only cattle for ploughing but for milk. This is however a digression.

The important problem is—and some people have drawn pointed attention to this—that the price of the bullocks has increased so much that it must be brought under control. I would only mention this, that in mixed farming bullocks are also a production of agriculture, if any money an agriculturist makes by the sale of bullocks it does not go to any outside pockets but it remains in the pocket of an agriculturist himself.

THE HONOURABLE SIR SHANTIDAS ASKURAN: This is only if the bullocks are used for agriculture and the agriculturist buys. Then one agriculturist buys and another sells.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: This is largely so. The Honourable Member from Bombay pointed out the action which the Government of Bombay has taken. Perhaps he is aware that this action was taken at the instance of the Government of India which I mentioned in this House at its last session—that the Government was issuing these instructions which some provinces have notified—

THE HONOURABLE SIR SHANTIDAS ASKURAN: How many provinces have followed that?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: Four provinces have so far notified.

THE HONOURABLE SIR SHANTIDAS ASKURAN: Why not others?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: The provinces are autonomous and they will take action in due time.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: What are the four provinces?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: I cannot give you the names at present.

The main thing is that in the matter of agricultural production and prices we must give serious and careful consideration in all its aspects before we jump into conclusions. It is not possible to consider economic problem from one end only. It must be considered from all ends. I can assure you that Government is engaged at present in its post-war planning in tackling the problem in all its aspects. When our plans are ready it will be given to the country to carry out the plans which are now under preparation. I fully sympathise with the mover of the Resolution that the needs of the agriculturists should be met, but their needs should be met in relation to the prices which the agriculturists are realising for their produce and for the goods which also are made out of the raw produce supplied by the agriculturists. The relation is so close that it is so difficult to divide into various compartments and touch it from one end. For instance price of cotton cloth depends on the price of cotton; of sugar on that of sugar cane. The greater the attention this House gives to the economic problems the better it would be for the prosperity of this country. I am glad that these problems are receiving more and more attention. A little more attention is needed to the science of money which can play a great part in these days in assuring prosperity.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN (Nominated Official): Sir, when I accepted the responsibility for replying to this debate I must confess that I understood the Resolution in a much more limited sense than the debate in the House has shown. The debate covered almost the entire field of agricultural improvement in the country. I had understood the Resolution to refer to the essential articles which are in short supply in the country at present and which Government alone can make available in the conditions arising out of the war. In my reply I propose to confine myself to that aspect of the Resolution.

Honourable Members of the House are aware that the subject of the supply of consumer goods to the agriculturists was brought under close examination by the Foodgrains Policy Committee presided over by Dr. Gregory. In their Report they say that they received a considerable volume of evidence to show that shortage of consumption goods has had a deterrent effect, if not upon production, at any rate upon the cultivators' willingness to sell. They further discuss the question in reference to the problem of procurement and they express the view that they consider it in every respect preferable that the "Grow More Food" campaign should be buttressed by an increase in the supply of consumer goods rather than that Government should stick to a wholesale requisitioning of produce of the agriculturists.

Sir, as I made it clear during the last session the Government have accepted this recommendation of the Gregory Committee. The Committee referred to items which in their opinion should be made available to the agriculturists in larger quantities and under controlled prices. These articles were iron and steel, building materials, cement, agricultural implements, leather goods, metal utensils, etc. The Government of India in the various Departments have taken up the supply of consumer goods in right earnest and I am in a position to state the progress that they have made in respect of some of these items.

Arrangements have been made for the distribution of iron and steel (defectives and cuttings) for the manufacture of agricultural implements and

[Mr. B. R. Sen.]
other rural requirements through the Regional Deputy Iron and Steel
Controllers.

The Indian Copper Corporation, under instructions from the Government of India, will shortly be releasing 400 tons of brass sheets per month for conversion into domestic utensils by manufacturers.

Under arrangements with the Government of India about 6 million canvas shoes with reclaimed rubber soles and 1 million reclaimed rubber soled shoes with leather uppers are going to be manufactured in the next 12 months by Messrs. Bata Shoe Co., and distributed at controlled prices through their branches all over India. The price of canvas shoes will range from Rs. 1-18-0 to Rs. 2-2-0 per pair.

Roughly 50 per cent. of the pre-war capacity of woollen mills in India will shortly be available for manufacturing woollen material for the civilian market. It has been decided by the Central Government to purchase the entire output, and to place it thereafter on the market through dealers. Each province will be allotted a certain quantity of each bit of material produced based on its population, a slight weightage being given to North Indian Provinces. It is expected that the woollen material will become available to the public under the arrangements by the end of February, 1944.

Government are considering the question of securing the release of additional manufacturing capacity for meeting the requirements of the civilian consumer of cement, matches, paper, cutlery crockery, plywood, enamel ware, electric fans and lamps and other electric goods, domestic holloware, steel for bazar sales etc. Details are, however, still under discussion and will take some time to finalise.

The possibility of increasing the present available supplies of kerosene is also being actively pursued. If our proposals materialize, we may hope to get in the not distant future kerosene supplies equal to 60 per cent. of the 1941. consumption as against the 50 per cent. now being supplied.

Action is at the same time being taken to import from the United Kingdom and U.S.A. larger quantities of consumer goods of the type required generally in urban areas, and it is hoped that by the end of June, 1944, a large quantity of these goods will have arrived in India.

This is an account of the progress which has been made and the programme which the Government of India have in view.

It is realised that there is a scarcity of consumer goods, both artificial as well as natural, in India at present. Artificial scarcity is due to hoarding and profiteering. The House is aware of the Hoarding and Profiteering Prevention Ordinance of 1943, which has already achieved considerable success. Under this Ordinance the charging of more than 20 per cent. profits on cost of production or landed cost in case of imported articles has been made an offence. Prices of various articles like leather, cigarettes, fountain pens, cycles, polishes, photographic goods, razor blades, sports goods, etc., have been statutorily fixed.

Sir, as the House will see the Government of India have taken up this question of increased supply of consumer goods to the agriculturists very seriously. The Resolution is a very wide one. The wording is "the requirements of the agriculturists" which might, as my Honourable friend Mr. Motilal has said, mean anything. But so far as these essential articles are concerned I can assure the Honourable the mover of the Resolution that the Government of India will do whatever they can in the matter.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I am glad, Sir, that this Resolution of mine has met with general support from all sides and my task has been very much lightened by the support and the statement which has been made by the Food Department. Their bible has already laid down that it is necessary that supplies for the agriculturists should be made and they have proceeded to take action under that, but my only complaint when I moved this Resolution was that we came in the picture as the general consumer, not in the special interest in which I want our points to be considered. I admit that with reference to the

*Not corrected by the Honourable Member.

iron scraps and steel scraps perhaps you have done something especial for us but for all the rest we come in the picture merely by the backdoor. Mr. Sen mentioned cement as one of the things which the Policy Committee has recommended to be supplied but he kept conveniently silent on the efforts which they have made. I think, Sir, he had to carry somebody else's baby!

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. S. A. HYDARI: I can give you the figures.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Sir, a reference was made by my Honourable friend Rai Bahadur Sri Narain Mahtha to the drainage in Bihar. That matter, Sir, is being held up for a very minor reason by my Government. As I come from a section 93 Province I know all the vagaries of it. Sir, it is only the difficulty of getting a Controlling Officer which is preventing my Government from embarking on this scheme which they have already approved. The scheme is approved; the fund is available, but they cannot find men to carry it out. Well, Sir, this is the story of British Government's connection with India. 150 years of British rule has created this situation and perhaps it will take double that time, 300 years, to partially cure the situation created by the British connection.

Sir, a reference was made by the Honourable Member-in-charge of Education, Health and Lands to the cattle question that it is also an agricultural product. I do not deny that, Sir, but when any question is being considered we have to consider that where the interests of a few clash with the interests of the many the interests of the many will prevail. Cattle producers are no doubt agriculturists but few of the agriculturists produce cattle and it would not be a wise policy that we should allow this undue rise in the cattle prices. It is just like undue prices of machinery. If you import machinery on unduly high prices the result will be that your cost of production will increase permanently. I therefore claim, Sir, that the question of the cattle should receive special consideration from the Government. The Honourable Member referred to the very sad fact that India, in spite of a vast cattle population of 22 bullocks to every 100 acres, was unable to produce as much as other countries are producing. He instanced the case of Egypt, which has only three cattle to every 100 acres. That deserves some consideration. It is not indiscriminate slaughter which is responsible for our trouble; it is the indiscriminate slaughter of *prime* cattle which is responsible for our trouble.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: The slaughter of *prime* cattle has been stopped.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Sir, ten years is not the age of *prime* cattle. I would mention that there are many cattle which are unfit for our purposes even though they might be four years old. The restriction should be that all those cattle which are fit for purposes of agriculture should not be slaughtered. That is the restriction which we want. In order to have complete unanimity, I might suggest that religious sacrifices may be exempted from this restriction, so that both may jointly make an effort to have a policy as regards cattle slaughter about which there would be no difference.

I do not want to enter into other matters which I had noted because of the satisfactory reply which I have received. But I was grieved to listen to my Honourable friend Mr. N. R. Pillai's defence of himself, when it was not called for. What I mentioned is a truism which can be verified any day in the market. Many of the medicines in the regular line which are household requirements—such as Kepler's Malt or Halibut Oil—are not available in the Delhi market. I could not get any thermometers in the Delhi market. It is not the high prices which I complained about. I say that the policy of control will only be successful when you have an abundant supply. It is not any fault of the Commerce Department that the amount which they had thought to be sufficient was not sufficient. The country had been starved of these things for such a long time that as soon as they were imported they were taken up at once. Those things may not have gone into the black market. It is possible that the country having been starved of them for such a long time, the supplies did not remain in the market. I only

[Mr. Hossain Imam.]

draw attention to the fact that it is necessary that drugs should be imported in larger and larger quantities if this scheme is to be a success.

I hope, Sir, that with the goodwill of the House the Government will accept this Resolution.

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

“This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that price control and adequate supply of the requirements of the agriculturists be taken in hand.”

The Motion was adopted.

The Council adjourned for Lunch till a Quarter to Three of the Clock.

The Council reassembled after Lunch at a Quarter to Three of the Clock, the Honourable the Chairman (the Honourable Sir David Devadoss) in the Chair.

RESOLUTION RE REHABILITATION OF THE ECONOMIC STRUCTURE.

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

“This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to appoint a Consultative Committee composed of non-official representatives of the Central Legislature and representatives from Indian financial and commercial interests to advise Government to rehabilitate the economic structure of the country.”

Mr. Chairman, while demanding the constitution of a Committee I have to trace and dwell on the circumstances which has required me to do so. I would, therefore, pray, Sir, that you will bear with me in my exposition of the statistics and the present financial and economic position during the war. The expansion in the volume of currency since the beginning of the war has been enormous. The repercussions, effects and after effects of this mammoth inflation have been widespread in all the spheres of our economic and financial activities. Enormous rise in public expenditure, steep increases in taxation, soaring prices unrelated to the purchasing power of the people, and upheavals in the economic life of the majority of our people are the more important features of the day consequent on the war inflation. It is true, Sir, the subject has been discussed, written about and talked about but it still bears analysis, for, the remedies taken so far have either proved futile or they have been inadequate. The note circulation in the country in September, 1939, stood at 172 crores. In two more years' time, *i.e.*, by December, 1941, the note circulation totalled 325 crores. On 6th November, 1942, the note circulation trebled and amounted to 527 crores. On January 29, 1943, the note circulation stood at 598 crores. On January 28 of the current year it had reached the enormous figure of 854 crores. In other words, the circulation has risen by nearly 5 times since the beginning of the war. All these, of course, are in addition to the expansion in currency and small coinage. Now, Sir, what is the backing against this currency? On January 28, 1944, the sterling securities of the Reserve Bank formed as much as 745 crores as a backing for the 854 crores notes in circulation. It would have been quite a welcome sign if these sterling assets were used for the economic improvement of the country now or for the future. Unfortunately, just now, with every accumulation of the sterling assets, there is a corresponding increase in the note circulation. In this connection, Sir, it is worth while comparing the inflation in India with the expansion of currency in Great Britain. On November 18, 1942, the note circulation in England rose to £865 million. In other words, it increased by 57 per cent. since the beginning of the war, whereas in India, during the same period, the note circulation has trebled. On November 17, 1943, the note circulation in England stood at about double of what it was at the commencement of the war. On November 9, 1943, the note circulation in India was 361 per cent. of the pre-war level. We in this industrially backward country are expected to swallow an expansion of currency of 500 per cent. without any safeguard or an adequate increase in services. It has already been said, Sir—there is a vague rumour—that the upper limit of expansion has not been reached and the Finance Member

will put his foot down when it reaches the limit of, say, about 1,000 crores. We only hope, Sir, that the Finance Member will take this action much before this and curb the increased circulation at this limit only. Public expenditure in this country has been something terrific. It is granted that governmental war efforts should not and ought not to be impeded for lack of funds in war time. But a certain amount of caution is necessary and it is not known whether that caution has been adequately exercised. We have been told, Sir, the other day by the Honourable the Finance Secretary in this House that the amount of services rendered in India's defence has been to the extent of 800 crores from 1939—1944 and those rendered to His Majesty's Government has been 940 crores.

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: (Finance Secretary): It is *expected* to be, by the end of this year.

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL: Of course, but that is excluding the services rendered to the Allied Governments. It is no wonder, Sir, therefore, that our tax system has been steep, so steep as to make the financial structure insecure.

But, Sir, the most tragic part of all this is the opinion expressed by certain economists in England. For instance, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in making his Budget speech last April in England, has said:—

"The greater part of the additional cost of India's outer defences of her frontiers fell upon Great Britain which meant that a financial situation of some difficulty was being created for Great Britain in the future."

It is a vicious circle. We in this country are worried about our sterling assets and so is His Majesty's Government. We are worried about the same but from different angles. But, Sir, there is no justification whatsoever on the part of the authorities in England to say that we have been lightly let off. For instance, the net defence expenditure of this country has risen from 46 crores in the pre-war period to 190 crores in 1942-43 (revised Budget), and 183 crores (Budget figures for 1943-44). The net defence expenditure has risen by 300 per cent. It is also worth while to note that expenditure headed as "War Emergency Measure" 1939 has shown a very steep increase from 3.61 crores in 1939-40 to 143 crores in 1943-44, or about 40 times the 1939 figures. Not only the expenditure on Defence has increased but every other item of the Government of India has also shown a great rise very largely on account of war activities. The total increase in the taxation is as much as 119 per cent. and still it has been said that we have been lightly let off. It is no wonder therefore, Sir, that the steep rise in prices has occurred causing severe dislocation in the lives of millions of our people contributing in no small measure to the holocaust in Bengal, Assam and certain other provinces of this country. The index number of wholesale prices in Calcutta stood at 100 in August, 1939, but reached a figure of 349 for all commodities in 1943. I am not taking the later figures, which show a fall because Government at the moment are not compiling those index figures from the market quotations, but from the controlled prices of such commodities as rice, etc.

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: If the Honourable Member does not want to give the figures of the last eight or nine months, I am quite prepared to give them in my reply, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL: When controlled figures are given, it is not possible for us to find out to what extent the figures have risen. From the *Economist* we find that prices have risen by about 50 per cent. during the four years of war in England, while in India they have risen by 250 per cent. From the *Economist* we find that the index number of all food has risen by 20 per cent. in the United Kingdom during the four years of the war. Some months back, Sir, Mrs. Churchill in making a speech herself said that rationing in England has been very successful, in fact so successful that she has herself gained weight. Can it be seriously denied or contended that the heavy rise in prices consequent on the great increase in the currency of the country has contributed to the present miseries of the millions of our people?

[Mr. M. N. Dalal.]

The remedies that have been suggested have been varied and many and have been put forward before this Honourable House in a Resolution about two sessions back. They have been, for instance, the importation of machinery and durable goods, transfer of British ships to the Indian Register, the transfer of British investments and last but not the least the importation of gold into this country. In England the *Financial News* remarked some time in October last that "the inadequacy of supplies of gold and silver available in India to satisfy the hoarding demand has been the major cause of famine". A Bombay business man in concert with several other industrialists has suggested that a quantity of 30 million ounces of gold, the value of which would be 1,050 million dollars, would be sufficient to meet the requirements of this country during the war to keep prices at a reasonable level. Other remedies suggested are consumers' subsidies, to check inflation, the fixation of a ceiling on the sterling assets which would check to a certain extent the present unpleasant activity of the Reserve Bank in increasing the currency more or less *pro rata* to the increase of the sterling. All these suggestions deserve careful attention and proper consideration. It is only after the merits and demerits of all these have been considered that a comprehensive policy could be adopted to rehabilitate the economic structure of the country. I have therefore so worded the Resolution that Government in their own interests should appoint a Consultative Committee consisting of members of both the Houses of the Central Legislature with a certain amount of non-official representation from commercial and financial interests as soon as possible to advise them to formulate an effective policy to rehabilitate the economic structure of the country.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA (Bihar: Non-Muhammadan): Mr. Chairman, the speech made by the Honourable the mover of the Resolution induces me just to put one or two questions to Government which might be answered in the course of the reply which may be given. I am not economic expert and I do not understand much finance either. But, from what I have heard I felt like asking just one or two questions. Before the war, India was a debtor country. Today India is a creditor country but all our credit is being shown in the shape of sterling in England. Now, the mover of the Resolution talked about security of this credit. But we are a creditor and England is a debtor of such a kind that England can dictate terms of repayment and not we who are the creditor. India is being credited in the shape of sterling in England for her supplies and for her services. In fact the supplies and services are rendered to some extent for the benefit of India, for the benefit of England and for the benefit of many of the United Nations. Why should India be credited only in the shape of sterling? There are many services that we are rendering to the United States of America. Why should not we have credit in the shape of dollars as well, so that after the war is over, India can have more than one market open to her to get back the services and to get back the goods that she is now parting with. If we are credited merely in the shape of sterling, we shall be bound down to one market. I thought I might put this question which arises in my mind, so that the Finance Secretary may consider this question and give us a reply, because I am afraid that the mind of all of us is rather inquisitive on this point.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM (Bihar and Orissa: Muhammadan): Mr. President, the Resolution which my friend Mr. Dalal has moved is a very important and a necessary Resolution if we wish to proceed with the work in hand. The fact of the matter is that rehabilitation is so important a part of the present day life that a responsible Legislature cannot evade it. The present Government is to say the least unrepresentative, unresponsive, and if I may be excused for saying so, unable to handle things on the grand scale which is necessary to rehabilitate the devastations of this war.

The first item which strikes one and to which my friend has also referred is the expansion of the currency which has brought about a state of affairs in

which we are faced with a situation, a very well-known situation, of heads we win and tails you lose. While we were debtors we had to be subservient because of the fact that England was the creditor country. Now that we have become as if by a magic wand a creditor country, we are told that we must wait for the pleasure of His Majesty's Government to get back our money or whatever it represents. There is, Sir, a genuine doubt in our mind whether we will get a square deal from His Majesty's Government or not. So far our

3-5 P. M. experiences have been rather disappointing. His Majesty's Government has always failed to give us a square deal. Even in the distribution of the Defence costs we have not been fairly treated. The bad agreement which we had with them His Majesty's Government was not content with that even. They wanted to have even a worse agreement to which even Sir Jeremy Raisman revolted and he would not have a revision of the terms which His Majesty's Government wanted. That shows, Sir, why we feel that His Majesty's Government is not giving us a good and a square deal. This Resolution wants a Committee to consist of members of the Central Legislature and representatives of the Indian financial and commercial interests to advise Government to rehabilitate—

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: To develop?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: If development is taken up it is a much bigger question. We are at the moment anxious first of all to have a rehabilitation and when we have come to where we should be we will look forward to development. No, Sir, what we wish is that our money which not only represents at the moment the notes in circulation but even the backing for a large part of deposits with the Reserve Bank is of sterling. The amount of the sterling is in excess of notes in circulation; so any of these commercial papers will tell you how large is the portfolio of sterling held by us. I have attacked before this House the policy of the Reserve Bank which buys sterling at the market rate and not at the statutory rate. If they were to buy at the statutory rate we would have a saving of something like Rs. 4 crores now. There is no necessity for us to buy any sterlings; we can do without sterling. If any one has to sell sterling he may sell it at the statutory price and that also is a help given to the Britishers who convert their sterling at an advantageous term whenever they like.

I was saying, Sir, that we have some Reconstruction Committees which are dealing with subjects which may be said to be covered by this Resolution, but there is this distinguishing feature that your Reconstruction Committees deal with particular items. The General Policy Committee is a residuary Committee; its functions and prerogatives have not been defined. It can dabble in any question which may be referred to it by the Government for its opinion. It has no rights of its own: that such and such subject will form part and parcel of its portfolio. I therefore think, Sir, that it would not be a sort of fifth wheel to the chariot if we had another Committee with defined and well marked out spheres of investigation and examination. For instance, I will just mention one thing. All the schemes of international currency, Unitas, Banhoure or the other French schemes, none of them contemplate the liquidation of war accumulation of foreign assets. They only deal with day-to-day transactions of the future years and you have those two different schemes of Unitas and Banhoure, in one you have a Bank with a fixed capital and in the other a sort of unilateral exchange agreements between one country and the other. Well, this subject of how we will get back our accumulated sterling assets, in what terms and in how many years and what will be the value of the sterling, its purchasing power, these are the questions, Sir, to which neither the international settlement Banks nor, so far as we know, has the General Policy Committee been charged with examination. This is the backing of our currency and if there is any fault with this basic thing the result will be that we may be thrown into the woods. We might have Sir, a repetition of the debacle of the mars or of revolt, I hope not, but if His Majesty's Government should desire that India should make a contribution of, say, 500 million after the war, as they

[Mr. Hossain Imam.]

had to of 100 million after the first Great War, and thus our sterling is attached, then we will have *ad hoc* rupee security of the Government to replace it which will mean the devaluation of the rupee. All these questions, Sir, are very important and worth considering not after the close of the war but I may say during the war period so that we may have a complete settlement and agreements on essential subjects and we may not after the war find that instead of winning the war we have lost the peace.

Sir, I support the Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU (United Provinces Southern: Non-Muhammadan): When I read Mr. Dalal's Resolution I confess that I had some difficulty in understanding the language of it. I was not clear in my mind as to whether by "economic rehabilitation" he had in mind the future, or the immediate present. If he has the future in mind—and it is clear that he has got the future in mind—then the obvious answer is that you have a number of Reconstruction Committees at work at the moment. You have the Reconstruction Committee of the Executive Council and you have, I think, three or four other Committees working in co-operation with the General Policy Committee of the Reconstruction Committee.

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL: May I interrupt the Honourable Member for a moment? The terms of my Resolution are quite clear. I am asking for a Committee now, in this war time, to rehabilitate the economic structure of this country.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: If my Honourable friend will have a little patience with me he will see that I am going to support him in my speech. I was merely pointing out that the wording of the Resolution was not clear to me. It may be that my knowledge of the language is deficient. I do not claim to be an expert in the English language—which is a difficult language as my Honourable friend Mr. Mahtha reminds me—but I want to say that I had a doubt as to whether the Resolution had related to the future or to the immediate present. I find from what the Honourable Mr. Dalal says that his Resolution has reference to the immediate present. Now, so far as the immediate present is concerned, there is no doubt that the economic situation in the country is a grave one. We have had a very, very serious expansion of the currency. First it was denied that there was any inflation at all. Then, when there was a debate in the House of Commons, Mr. Amery admitted that one of the contributory causes of the famine in Bengal was the inflationary rise in prices. In other words, the fact of inflation, which had been strenuously denied by the Finance Member and which had not been admitted by the Secretary of State, was admitted by the Secretary of State when we had a crisis in Bengal.

The Honourable Mr. Dalal, who is a financier, has given us the figures in regard to this inflation. He has told us how when the war started our note circulation was in the neighbourhood of 172 crores and how now it is in the neighbourhood of 854 crores; that is to say, the note circulation in this country is about five times as large as it was when the war started. This note circulation is not backed up by any metallic reserves. I do not say that the theory that the note circulation should be backed up by metallic reserves is necessarily a right theory; I merely state the fact that it is not backed up by metallic reserves. The ordinary villager has a rupee note or a two-rupee note. Do you wonder that in a period of speculative rise in prices he shows at times an inclination to hold back his goods? He says:

"What shall I get in return for my commodity?—I shall get, not silver, not gold, not any assurance that this note that I am getting is backed up by any silver or gold, but simply this note which I may lose, which may be burnt, which may be eaten by worms, which may be washed away, which I shall not be able even to keep in my house with safety and feel that I have something which I can fall back upon in time of necessity." You have, therefore, by this method destroyed to a certain extent public confidence. And when you destroy public confidence, it follows that you will have the consequences of this destruction of public confidence.

Then, Sir, when we come to consider the price situation, we find that the price of almost every commodity in this country has gone up tremendously. If you were to institute a comparison of the price position in India with the price position in other countries, you would find that the price position in this country is relatively speaking worse than the price position in other countries of the United Nations, barring perhaps China, where of course there is very serious inflation, about which Mr. Wendell Willkie in his world-famous book "One World" writes. The price of almost every commodity has gone up. The prices of foodstuffs have gone up. The price of cloth has gone up. Kerosene oil cannot be had. The price of matches has gone up. The price of cigarettes has gone up. The price of every commodity in daily-use has gone up. And, what is more, there is an acute shortage of consumer goods. Why is there an acute shortage of consumer goods? I think I would be right in saying that this acute shortage of consumer goods is partly due to the past policy of Government, which did not want to encourage industries in this country, and partly due to the fact that the machinery of taxation has been so used as deliberately to restrict civilian consumption. Military requirements take absolute precedence over civilian requirements. I do not say that in war time military requirements should not take precedence over civilian requirements. But here the thing has been carried to extreme lines. Therefore, while you have a very large amount of money in circulation, you have not got a correspondingly large amount of commodities in circulation. The commodities required for civilian consumption have gone down in quantity, with the result that the price level stands today very high.

What is the remedy that the Government has for this phenomenon that we are witnessing? Taxation; more taxation; heavier taxation, which will fall both on the rich and on the poor. And taxation for what purpose? Taxation for keeping the people of India enslaved for ever. That is the aim of His Majesty's Government today as disclosed by recent speeches. Little wonder, Sir, that there is supreme dissatisfaction with every aspect of the economic, political and financial policy of this Government, which is thoroughly bankrupt in everything that we associate with the word "statesmanship". The people of India are a patient people. They have been patient for ages. But they are getting fed up with things as they are. They also want some of the good things of life. They do not think that it is the monopoly of the white races to have the good things of life. The question that they ask is: Can the democracies be counted as friends of freedom all the world over? Mr. Churchill says:

"I won't allow the British Empire to be converted into a Commonwealth of Nations. I am not presiding over the liquidation of the British Empire or its conversion into a Commonwealth of Nations. I agree with the empire principle. I stick to the empire principle."

Well, Sir, in those circumstances, naturally the thought which is uppermost in our minds is whether the sacrifices that we are called upon to make—and we would make those sacrifices cheerfully—whether the sacrifices that we are called upon to make will lead this country to a higher stage in her national evolution, whether those sacrifices will lead the Indian people to independence or anything approximating to independence.

Well, Sir, I confess that I feel extremely sad, extremely despondent. I do not think that the remedies which Government has devised so far have been adequate to tackle with this very difficult problem. The real difficulty is that in tackling with the economic problems—high prices, inflation, sterling accumulations, industrial development—in tackling with all these problems Government has not the effective co-operation of the people behind it. That is the naked reality today. Do not quarrel about the Congress. I leave out the Congress for the movement. But you have not got the Muslim League with you; you have not got with you the Liberal Federation; you have not got with you the Hindu Mahasabha. I do not know whether you have got with you even the depressed classes. You have got with you 10 patriotic and eminent Indians. They do not expand. They continue to be 10 and 10 only. That being the position, I wonder whether any useful purpose will be served by

[Mr. P. N. Saprū.]

any consultative committee such as the Honourable Mr. Dalal suggests. You have got a number of committees today. They will submit their reports and their reports will probably not even see the light of day. We had asked a question today about the report which has been presented on the Bengal famine by Mr. Justice Braund. Government were unable to tell us whether that report will ever be published or not. This will be only a consultative committee. It means that it will be open to the Government to consult it when it thinks that some question may be referred to it for consultation. Consultation may not be very serious. The matter referred to it may not be of a very important nature. It will, however, enable some Members of the Legislature to feel that they are serving on this consultative committee. I do not know whether this consultative committee will serve any useful purpose. I do not say that I do not believe in committees. I know that no less an authority than Lord Simon described the Executive Councillors as Advisers. Their position, according to the constitutional position in India, is no higher than that of Advisers which you find in section 93 Provinces. You have section 93 regime in another way in the Government at the centre. I do not know whether this consultative committee will be of much use. We have a number of committees working today. We have got a Labour Investigation Committee; we have got a Health Committee; we have got these Post-War Reconstruction Committees; we have got any number of Boards and Councils working at this moment. But the net result is that the lot of the common man is no better than it was yesterday or the day before yesterday. Whether it will be better tomorrow is a very doubtful matter. It will certainly mean that we shall be able to draw some allowance when we come to Delhi for this consultative committee. It will certainly mean that we shall be able to draw our railway allowance at a higher rate because the railway fares have gone up. It will also incidentally mean that the more parsimonious of us will be able to save a little out of the allowance that we get. But, so far as the actual work is concerned, I doubt whether anything will come out of this committee. But since we have so many committees, since we have got to make a show of being a democratically inclined people, since we do not want to make it appear that we accept the Fascist ideology in its entirety, since we want to make some distinction between ourselves and the enemies whom we are fighting, since we all want to do that, we must keep up appearances and therefore, with all those mental reservations in my mind, I would give my support to the Resolution of the Honourable Mr. Dalal.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY (East Bengal: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I rise to give my half-hearted support to this Resolution, because I am a whole-hogger. I want representation in this House itself to be based on economic principles. I want that this House and the other House should not be filled up by mere politicians. Economic questions have become very much important nowadays. The Atlantic Charter and President Roosevelt in his four freedoms spoke mostly of the economic freedom and not of political freedom. I therefore submit that this Legislature should be based on economic principles so as to be able to deal with economic questions and not leave them to committees with mere advisory powers, whose opinions we may accept or reject, as has been the case in almost all cases of committees elected or with advisory powers. It has become well known that committees are meant to shelve a question. I therefore submit that a half house is better than no full house.

THE HONOURABLE MR. R. H. PARKER (Bombay Chamber of Commerce): Sir, I would like to offer one or two observations, partly on what the Honourable Mr. Saprū has just said. I am sorry he has gone out. He may have seen I was going to stand up. He has just told us that the Government had no backing in this country and that they had only the backing of 15 eminent gentlemen. As a matter of fact, they have the backing of at least two million

*Not corrected by the Honourable Member.

men, to our certain knowledge, in the army and the services. That is at least some backing. He also said that Advisory Committees have no power and he cast a certain amount of scorn on them. But I say that the best known committee in the world that I have ever heard of is the Privy Council. It is a Committee that has a great deal of respect from all nations and certainly from all over the British Empire and from the British Commonwealth, and they are purely an advisory committee and their advice is accepted. He also seemed rather annoyed that some distinction was made between the British Empire and the British Commonwealth of Nations. The British Commonwealth of Nations in fact only consists of the Dominions and India. That is the distinction.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Is India included in it?

THE HONOURABLE MR. R. H. PARKER: Yes. It is one of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Has Mr. Churchill authorised you to make that statement?

THE HONOURABLE MR. R. H. PARKER: I make that statement. I am not relying on Mr. Churchill for it. The British Empire includes all the Colonies which have not necessarily, as you know, anything to do with the British Commonwealth of Nations.

The Honourable Mr. Sapru also said that the taxation in this country was very high. That is true. But in what country in the world, which is a warring nation, is the taxation not high? He also referred to the fact that payment had been made by His Majesty's Government for services rendered and goods supplied in sterling. I ask him and the Honourable mover of this Resolution, "What else could His Majesty's Government have paid in?" Let us assume they might have paid in dollars. What could you do with those dollars now? They are as much frozen as the sterling balances are. They are of no more use at the moment than the sterling balances. One day no doubt all these things will be ironed out. I say that the practical alternative to the course pursued by the Government of India and His Majesty's Government in this connection was for India to make no contribution to the war effort at all of any material consequence and consequently the war would have been lost and the Japanese would have been here.

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES (Finance Secretary): Mr. Chairman, my difficulty in thinking out what my line should be towards this Resolution was the same as that experienced by the Honourable Mr. Sapru. I could not foresee in what way its terms would be interpreted. Rehabilitation is primarily and essentially a matter for the post-war period. For the period of the war, and probably for some time thereafter, the feature of world economy will be shortage of goods, both consumer goods and capital goods; acute shortage, cumulative shortage; and any measure of practical rehabilitation during the war seems to me largely ruled out. The problem for the present is to hold the position arising out of war conditions. Naturally after the war things will begin to get a little more normal, in that imports will re-open, productive capacity can be diverted from war materials and so on. I gather that the Honourable the mover is of the opinion that the appointment of a Consultative Committee to advise Government in this sphere, the sphere of holding the position while the war lasts, would be of value. I am, however, somewhat mystified because the measure of support which the Honourable the mover has received from different parts of the House seems to be based on entirely different ideas. It seems pretty obvious that the functions which the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam, would devolve on this Committee would be entirely different from those which the Honourable mover would assign to the Committee. Questions like the day-to-day allocation of Defence expenditure and the post-war liquidation of abnormal balances, these are the questions which the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam in supporting this Resolution would seem

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to contemplate for this Committee. Similarly the Honourable Mr. Sapru's support for the Committee and the Honourable Mr. Chaudhury's seem to be based on entirely different reasons from those contemplated by the Honourable the mover.

Proceeding on the basis that my interpretation of what the Honourable Mr. Dalal intends is correct, the first point I would like to make is this, that we already know by and large what the present position is, and what the causes of our war-time difficulties are. The broad features are well understood, and I have no wish to contest the Honourable mover's figures and statistics which, broadly, are correct. But I would like to emphasise the one point that he omitted. In the last eight or nine months the wholesale price index, whether you take the Calcutta index or the Economic Adviser's index, has been practically stable. That, Sir, I think is an achievement, and I think it is a happy augury for the future. What is the broad problem with which we are faced, Sir? There is a large outpouring of money in connection with India's war effort. That must go on unless the war effort is to stop. I think the Honourable Mr. Dalal will agree that, Committee or no Committee, there would inevitably have been a substantial rise in the note circulation in this country unless our borrowing policy, spreading right down to the small savings of the millions of small earners in this country, had been far more successful than it has been. I very much doubt whether the appointment of a Committee could have brought that about. We have then the problem created by a large outpouring of money necessary to mobilize goods and services for the purposes required for the war, and a growing shortage of consumer goods. That is the broad problem that faces not only every country at war at the present time, but also practically every country that is not at war. It is a problem that every country has to grapple with.

As regards the broad lines of tackling this problem, I think too there is general agreement. First of all, we have to re-absorb as much of that money as we can. That is the first and obvious step; and in the meanwhile, while you are doing that, you have to secure as great a mitigating effect as you can by price control, by rationing and by other economic controls, as well as by increasing the supply of consumer goods, either by production or by import. These are the broad lines which must be adopted by any country which is faced with this problem. That being so, Sir,—the broad nature of the problem being realised and the general line of attack to solve the difficulties of that problem being understood—there only remains the field of administration, the giving effect to such remedial measures as the Government may find necessary from time to time. And here the Finance Department is under the limitation that, where a control requires administration it is not administered by the Finance Department, which concerns itself very little with administrative functions, but by the administrative Department of Government which operates in that particular sphere. It is a fact that whereas a number of Departments of the Government of India—10 I think—have Consultative Committees attached to them, the Finance Department is one of the few that have not. But the Finance Department, as I have mentioned, very seldom directly handles administrative problems, and it is mainly in respect of administrative problems that these Consultative Committees are appointed. Let us consider the various functions or the various duties that arise in respect of the handling of the present situation. The Honourable Mr. Dalal raised the question of increasing public expenditure. That, Sir, is a very important aspect. In inflationary conditions public expenditure might make a vast deal of difference, either for good or ill. But it is impossible for any Committee to be associated with the day-to-day financial control over expenditure. That Committee could only be associated with the larger proposals for Government expenditure, and that function is already fulfilled by the Standing Finance Committee. We have our first Advisory Committee there. Then there are questions of financial policy, including our borrowing policy (which is of the utmost importance for maximising the off-take

of surplus purchasing power), currency matters, our bullion policy and so on. Here again the Finance Department has an expert and a willing advisory body in the Reserve Bank. We act in very close liaison, in very close consultation, with the Reserve Bank of India, which, as Honourable Members will appreciate, is entirely a non-official organisation. Then, when specific issues do arise, if they are of sufficient importance, besides consulting the Reserve Bank, we can at any time associate with ourselves an *ad hoc* Committee so constituted as to be in the best position to advise on that particular subject. I would instance the very problem that the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam raised, that of the post-war monetary plans. This matter is now under the consideration of the Government of India and is now before the public, and it is bound to be of the utmost interest and importance to India in the future. In the process of formulating our views on this subject we have not only consulted Chambers of Commerce, the Reserve Bank and other such bodies, but we placed the whole matter before, first, the Consultative Committee of Economists attached to the reconstruction organisation and, secondly, before the General Policy Committee of the Reconstruction Committee, which is a high level Committee specially constituted to advise on these broad issues.

There remains the questions of the increased production or import of consumer goods and of economic controls, both of which fall within the functions of the administrative Departments concerned. Thus, as regards the production or import of consumer goods, the Departments directly concerned are the Food Department, the Industries and Civil Supplies Department, Supply Department and Commerce Department, and these Departments all work in close association in their respective spheres with various Committees, official and non-official. Perhaps of the greatest importance are the direct economic controls because, in respect of the interim period when there is potential instability of the economy, these direct controls are of the greatest assistance in helping to maintain stability. The Department most intimately concerned with these controls is the Industries and Civil Supplies Department, and in the majority of cases that Department works with the advice and assistance of advisory Committees. For instance, in respect of the cotton and cloth control there is the Cotton Textile Board, in respect of the drugs control there is the Drugs Advisory Committee, in respect of the news-print control there is the News-print Advisory Committee, and in respect of the films control there is the Film Advisory Committee. In the case of other important controls, such as woollens, leather and radio sets, whenever there are proposals for control over price or control over distribution the industry concerned is invariably taken into confidence in advance and the proposals are worked out in consultation with the industry. In the matter of that over-all measure of control, the Anti-profiteering Ordinance, the Controller General has been instructed by the Department of Industries and Civil Supplies to submit any proposals that he has to put to Government for price fixation under the Ordinance only after consulting the commercial interests concerned. Apart from these, Sir, the only remaining spheres of possible action at the present time would fall under the broad headings of direct monetary regulations and the elimination of speculative influences from the various markets. In these spheres action has to be taken as and when opportunity offers, and as and when necessity arises, but in such matters the Government of India in the Finance Department act only in the closest co-operation and consultation with the Reserve Bank of India. The point I would like to make, Sir, is that in this present temporary phase—we all hope it is only temporary—of inherent potential instability, when our main concern is to hold the economic position until after the war, where remedial action is called for, the essence of effective action is speed. Even at the Government level we find that there is invariably a time lag between the need for action and the time when action can be taken. I have in mind particularly the case of the Ordinance for provisional assessments of excess profits tax which was issued at a critically psychological time nearly a year ago and did so much to improve a situation which was then rapidly worsening;

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and I am all too conscious of the unavidable lag there was then between the time when it was decided that something had to be done and the time when we could eventually put out our Ordinance in its final form. But, if, before we could take any action, we had had to call in a consultative Committee, which presumably would be representative of different parts of India and of different interests in India, and to put our proposals before them to debate the merits and pros and cons, I am afraid that the situation would have grievously deteriorated before anything could have been done. It has to be remembered that in every individual measure that is taken for anti-inflationary purposes, there is a strong clash of opposing interests. We only have to recall in this connection the reception that our various measures have been accorded from time to time. Every individual one of them has been the subject of attack from some section, from some interest. Even the cotton and cloth control, which was the biggest single measure that we have taken in the interests of the poor people, was made the subject of attack by the very section of the Press which professes to stand for the interests of the masses. There is this perpetual clash of interests, and all these various interests would have to be represented on the Consultative Committee; so that at a time when the most urgent and imperative action had to be taken we should instead be sitting round a conference table, debating what we should do and how to reconcile the conflicting interests of various sections affected by the proposals which cannot be other than controversial in the extreme. I am afraid, Sir, that such delay would probably prove fatal to the effectiveness of any measure that could be taken. I think even the most ardent supporter of democracy will admit that democratic machinery, whatever its merits—and they are great; I do not deny it—democratic machinery works slowly; but when you are dealing with a potential inflationary position, which is liable to burst out at any time on account of some failure of public confidence or upsurge of speculation—may be on no more than a rumour—the essence of effective action is action with reasonable promptitude whenever and as soon as the situation requires it.

For these reasons, Sir, the Government feel that, although they understand and appreciate, that there is something to be said for increasing association with the non-official element—I think that has been shown by the instances I have mentioned of the administrative Departments' increasing reliance on non-official advisory Committees—in this particular sphere the suggestion is not calculated to secure the best results in the difficult conditions of the present time; and it is for these reasons that they would rather the Honourable mover did not press his Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL: Mr. Chairman, so far as committees are concerned, I must say that I am a firm believer in consultative committees. Whether action is taken or not by Government is a matter for them, but there always must be consultations, where the non-official side can put forward its views before Government. Talking about purely financial committees, I am aware that there is a Public Accounts Committee, consisting only of members of the Legislative Assembly, whose business it is merely to make a *post mortem* examination of the accounts of the Government of India after they are already completed. I am aware that there is a Standing Finance Committee limited only to the members of the Central Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Chairman, the Council of State is the highest constitutional body in this country representative of all shades of political, economic and financial opinion.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: Not labour.

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL. You can represent labour. You can talk in terms of labour.

THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY: I wanted half the seats to go to labour.

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL: Question! Mr. Chairman, members of the Council of State may well be presumed, though not as expert financiers, to have that intimate knowledge of India's conditions which the cleverest of academicians, the best expert imported from England and the most trusted of Government official cannot command. Even though, as my Honourable friend Mr. Kumarsankar Ray Chaudhury says, members of the Council of State are not experts in finance, I think their advice should be taken, if not as experts, at least as labourers to build the edifice they have to live in.

I am also aware that there is a Post-war General Policy Committee which might deal to a certain extent with certain financial problems. But, again, its scope is restricted to post-war problems which, for all we know—I would not like to say so—might be a mere blue-print programme, to be given effect to some years after the war. I had therefore so worded the Resolution that a committee of members of both the Houses of the Legislature and certain non-official representatives—only such representatives as have a real stake in the welfare of this country—should be constituted to give Government advice on financial problems. However, I find that there is no unanimity of opinion amongst elected members in this House on the appointment of such a committee. The Honourable the Finance Secretary, though his speech has been very conciliatory and sympathetic and its tone very moderate, says it is not possible in war-time to appoint such a committee. I am prepared therefore, to withdraw the Resolution, but I hope Government will associate more and more non-official opinion especially so far as financial and economic problems are concerned.

With these words, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my Resolution. The Resolution was, by leave of the Council, withdrawn.

(The next Resolution on the List of Business, which stood in the name of the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam, was not taken up as the Honourable Member was not present.)

RESOLUTION RE MANUFACTURE OF BROAD GAUGE LOCOMOTIVES.

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

"This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to take steps to manufacture broad gauge locomotives in India."

Sir, everyone who has to use the railways these days realise to his cost how difficult it is for him to get the service that he needs. Whether a man has to travel or to dispatch goods, he has to suffer no little inconvenience and delay before he can either reach his destination or book his goods too. The difficulties that confront us should cause no surprise to anyone. Our experience during the Great War should have prepared us for the present situation.

May I ask, Sir, whether there is any representative of the War Transport Department in this House?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH (Education, Health and Lands Member): He is coming. I have sent for him.

THE HONOURABLE SIR RAMUNNI MENON (Nominated Non-Official): Your Resolution came a little too early.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: It is four o'clock now. It cannot therefore be said that it came a little too early.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: I am taking notes for him. The Honourable Member may proceed.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Sir, our experience of the difficulties that arose during the Great War should have prepared us for the situation that has arisen now. Then, as now, owing to the needs of the war branch lines were dismantled and engines, wagons and rails were sent out of the country. Yet, notwithstanding the existence of a Railway Board, we find that we are today practically where we were during the Great War.

[Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru.]

We are as unprepared today to meet the requirements of the war and at the same time to provide adequately or fairly adequately for civil needs and Government are trying to import wagons and locomotives from the United States of America in order to satisfy urgent needs which can no longer be ignored.

It appears, Sir, that in 1921 the Government, learning a lesson from the Great War, accepted the policy of manufacturing locomotives in the country. A company for the construction of locomotives came into existence soon after the Government announced in September, 1921, that in a short time the demand for locomotives would rise to about 400 a year. But a few months later that company ceased to work. I need not go into the reasons which led to the winding up of the company. If I have referred to this matter it is not in order to go into details regarding past history, but only in order to point out that the lesson which the communique issued in September, 1921, by the Central Government with regard to the manufacture of locomotives in this country seems to show that they had learnt was soon forgotten. This question came up for discussion from time to time both in the Legislative Assembly and this House. Yet the proposals made for the construction of locomotives in the country were resisted on the ground that the establishment of a workshop for the manufacture of locomotives would not be economical owing to the small number of locomotives required annually by the Indian railways. Sir, the subject was debated at considerable length in the other House in 1935, 1937 and 1938. Government put forward the same plea again. In 1937, Sir Muhammad Zafrulla, who was Railway Member, in opposing the demand for the manufacture of locomotives in the country, said:—

"I shall not weary the House with these details (those mentioned in 1935) again but the result was that unless there was a demand on the average of at least 200 locomotives every year a completely equipped factory could not be put up and Government would continue to lose heavily on it if the minimum demand could not be guaranteed. An experiment could be started on the basis of a demand of from 50 to 60 locomotives a year the scope of which could subsequently be expanded if the demand increased. But even that limited demand could not be guaranteed by the railways".

When the question was raised again next year, Sir Thomas Stewart, who was Railway Member at that time, also resisted the demand for the manufacture of locomotives in this country. I should like the House to listen carefully to the statement that was made by him:—

"I have done a certain amount of looking forward, and looking forward as far as 1955, our estimates of boilers in those years are 22 broad gauge and 29 metre gauge. 4-5 P. M. It is a very risky thing making estimates as far ahead as that but with long lived machinery like engines one can make a pretty fair estimate of what is going to happen a considerable time ahead and there you have the estimates of the engineers who are concerned with the construction and utilisation of boilers. Their estimate is 22 broad gauge and 29 metre gauge".

Yet, Sir, the next year, a Committee appointed by the Railway Board to consider whether the construction of locomotives in India was economically feasible reported not merely that locomotives could be built in this country but that their price would be less than that of imported locomotives and that their manufacture had become an urgent necessity. Referring to the recommendations of certain committees which led to the better utilisation of locomotives and consequently reduced the annual demand for new locomotives, the Committee has pointed out that the very factors which contributed to a more economical use of the locomotives necessarily tended to increase their age. Yet, this point, which I think should have struck the youngest engineer under the Railway Board, did not strike the experts whom the Board consulted. The Committee said:—

"A natural result of the average age of the existing equipment being increased is the concentration of its renewals within a comparatively shorter period of time—a factor which in turn serves to increase the average annual requirements of replacement even if calculated over a greater number of years than those in which replacements fall due. And we are of the opinion that the stage has now been reached when the average annual requirements of railways in regard to steam locomotives and boilers during the next quarter of a century would be more than the output of a single workshop of economic size".

Sir, I have asked several times in this House whether Government could give

any adequate reasons for having ignored this obvious fact to which the Locomotive Construction Committee has drawn attention. Is it possible that the railway experts could have failed to see so elementary a point? I confess, Sir, that it is hard for me to believe that it was merely an oversight which led them to ask Government to oppose the demand for the construction of locomotives in this country. By adopting the recommendations of the Committees appointed from time to time, they may have succeeded in bringing about a better utilisation of the tractive power already available, yet they must have seen that the time would soon come when the replacement of locomotives in pretty large numbers would be an urgent necessity. I can understand, Sir, the opposition to the manufacture of locomotives in 1921. But it passes my comprehension that the experts should have put forward the same view in 1937 as they did 16 years earlier. I feel, Sir, that it was not the failure to realise the fact that the better utilisation of locomotives tended to increase their age and to bring nearer the day when heavy renewals would be necessary, but the desire to stave off the evil day when locomotives would begin to be manufactured in this country.

Sir, the Committee to whose report I have already referred pointed out that during the 16 years from 1940-41 to 1955-56, 2,592 broad gauge locomotives will be needed. In other words, the average annual requirements during this period would amount to 162 broad gauge locomotives. Every locomotive would require a boiler and both locomotives and boilers would require spare parts. They calculated that in view of this, it would be possible to start more than one workshop of economic size for the construction of locomotives. Even if the requirements in respect of engines were spread out over 35 years which is the life cycle of a locomotive, the Committee pointed out that 74 broad gauge locomotives would be needed annually and that taking into consideration the need for boilers and spare parts, as much work would have to be done as would be required for the production of 108 locomotives. The Committee reported when the war had broken out. Yet it recommended that the Government should stick to the idea of starting the manufacture of locomotives in this country.

"The present war", the Committee said, "had served to emphasise the opportunity that has arisen for the expansion of the locomotive industry in India. * * The claims of this industry for priority of attention are perhaps stronger than those of most others that could have come up to the notice of the Economic Resources Board".

Again to give point to this recommendation, the Committee said:—

"The demands of Indian railways for locomotives, during the first ten years of the locomotive cycle between 1940 and 1960, are likely to be so large that railway transportation in India will be thrown out of gear if these requirements were not met promptly. There should be no greater difficulty in importing the machine-tools that would be required for the new workshop than in obtaining the requisite number of locomotives themselves".

This is an important point which the House should bear in mind. I shall point out its significance a little later. I should first like to point out that the calculations of the Committee showed that the locomotives manufactured in this country would be 20 per cent. cheaper than those obtained abroad. When the Report of the Committee was published, Sir Andrew Clow, who was Railway Member, then told us that it would be circulated to the Railway Administrations and that if its recommendations were approved, measures would be taken in hand for the construction of locomotives. In 1941, however, he told us in his Budget speech that the plans for the establishment of a workshop for manufacturing locomotives had to be given up owing to the difficulty of obtaining the necessary machinery because of the war. But in order to convince us that the Government would still try to meet some of the requirements of Indian railways in respect of broad gauge locomotives in the country, he informed us that 25 light broad gauge locomotives would be built in the B., B. & C. I. workshops in Ajmer. Next year my Honourable friend the Chief Commissioner for Railways told us that not one of these 25 light broad gauge locomotives had been constructed owing to the impossibility or difficulty of obtaining the component parts. These things rested till the time came for the presentation of the Railway Budget for the year 1943-44. Referring to the public interest

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in the establishment of a locomotive industry in this country the Railway Member said:—

"The House will be interested to know that plans are already actively being prepared to set up a locomotive construction shop in India during the war if physically possible, although this is unlikely owing to the difficulty of securing the plant and raw material, and, if not, as part of the immediate post-war reconstruction plan".

The speeches both of the Transport Member and the Chief Commissioner for Railways in the current year are absolutely silent on that point. But I understand that the Railway Member winding up the Railway Budget debate in the Legislative Assembly told the House that Government were still examining the plans that had been formulated for the manufacture of locomotives in this country and that they had sent their proposals to their Consulting Engineers. They expected that the final plans would soon be ready. But he added that even if the plans were ready—

"the construction of the locomotives at these shops during the war is unfortunately still not a probability and it is almost certainly impossible to spare these workshops from the very important munitions which they are still making and the locomotive repair work on the B. & A. R., which of course has increased with the additional number of locomotives which are coming on to that line".

There is no doubt, Sir, that the railways have been greatly handicapped by the turning over of a number of railway workshops to the production of war material. The war rendered this step necessary but in view of the importance of the question that we are discussing, I venture to think that it should have been possible for the Government, notwithstanding the war, to reserve one workshop for the manufacture of locomotives. I do not think, Sir, that even in 1940, or 1941, Government looked upon the construction of locomotives in this country as an urgent war requirement. They gave precedence to other things. Had they thought that this matter was as important as certain other matters which in their opinion were closely connected with the war, I feel that we would have been very near the time when locomotive construction could have been commenced in this country. Sir, my Honourable friend the Chief Commissioner for Railways has told us in his speech that in order to provide increased facilities for the repair of broad gauge locomotives the B., B. & C. I. R. shops at Dohad, which had been employed on the manufacture of munitions, were relieved of this work in September, 1943, and had since then been re-employed on the repair of locomotives. Now, I am sure, Sir, that the Railway Board took back one shop which was engaged in the manufacture of munitions because they thought that the repair of locomotives was as necessary in the interests of the war as the work in which the workshops were engaged. Had they taken the same view of the importance of locomotive manufacture, I have no doubt that they would have been able to keep back one shop where locomotives could be made. I stress this point, Sir, for two reasons. The Railway Board must realise—I am not here referring to my Honourable friend Sir Leonard Wilson: I am speaking of the Board as an administrative organisation set up by the Government—I say that the Board must realise their responsibility for this sorry plight in which we find ourselves. Had they discharged their duties with that efficiency which the public expects of them, we would have been making locomotives today. Apart from this, Sir, the difficulty with which the travelling public is confronted today shows that the manufacture of locomotives has become an imperative necessity. If the Government press on His Majesty's Government the need for giving priority to the things required for the manufacture of locomotives I for one feel that, supported as they are by public opinion in this country, they will soon be able to persuade His Majesty's Government to take steps to meet their demands, but I am not satisfied, Sir, that the Government are in earnest even now in regard to the immediate manufacture of locomotives. I have already informed the House that the Railway Member stated in the Legislative Assembly that it would be almost impossible to secure the material required for manufacturing locomotives either now or immediately after the war. Now, Sir, we do not

know how long the war will last, nor can we understand what is the period signified by the words "immediately after the war". If the present state of things continues, Sir, we may be unable to take steps to build locomotives for our own needs in our own workshops for six or seven years, but the requirements of the railways which are urgent must be immediately satisfied. According to the rolling stock programme laid down by Government for the year 1944-45, about 572 locomotives are to be imported at a cost of about Rs. 15½ crores. 284 of these are broad gauge locomotives. Now, if we continue to import locomotives at this rate for six or seven years, is there any guarantee that when the question comes of manufacturing them here to be re-examined the Railway Board will not again put forward the plea that as a large number of locomotives had been obtained it would not be economical to undertake their manufacture in this country.

THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY (East Bengal: Non-Muhammadan): It is perhaps with that object that they are doing this.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Whatever the Railway Board may have done in the past—and their responsibility is undoubtedly a very heavy one—I am not prepared to believe that my Honourable friend Sir Leonard Wilson is really trying to exaggerate the difficulties or is trying in any way to prevent the construction of locomotives in this country. He has, I am glad to say, since he assumed charge of his office, generally speaking, followed a progressive policy in many matters and I feel certain that in this matter his sympathies are entirely with us and that he is prepared to do his best to secure the materials required for commencing operations, but my complaint is against the Government of the day. The Government must make up its mind with regard to the relative importance of the starting of a locomotive industry in this country. If they are prepared to give it a high degree of priority and then press their proposals on the attention of His Majesty's Government it is exceedingly unlikely that their demand would be turned down. After the outbreak of the war, Sir the construction of a number of factories was regarded as essential and the machinery required for them was obtained notwithstanding the shipping difficulties. If we are not making locomotives today I can only ascribe it to the fact that the Government themselves have not been convinced so far that the manufacture of locomotives in this country has been rendered necessary owing to the war. They are counting on the inexhaustible patience of the Indian public. Had they had to deal with a more vigorous public opinion than unfortunately we have now, had they had to deal with a more vocal people, I am sure that they would have taken steps long ago to press the need for the manufacture of locomotives in India on His Majesty's Government with all the strength at their command.

Sir, my object in raising a discussion today and dwelling on the responsibility of the Government for the present situation is to show that there is still time for the authorities to make amends for the past and to speed up the measures required to commence the manufacture of locomotives in this country. If while assuring us that their plans were going forward and that the policy of manufacturing locomotives here had been accepted by Government they fail to take the vigorous steps required to persuade His Majesty's Government to send us the material that we need, their assurances would not be of the slightest value. Shipping space is being provided for the import of locomotives and wagons. Why is it, then, that steps cannot be taken to send out the component parts or other materials that we need? In view of the urgency of the situation, I think it would not be too much to ask that a workshop may be transferred to India. But, as I have repeatedly said, I feel that the Government are not yet so serious about the production of locomotives in the country as we are. It is for this reason that I have brought forward this proposition. I shall be very glad if my Honourable friend Sir Leonard Wilson is able to assure us that the Government will take more vigorous steps to secure

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the material that we want than they have done hitherto. But if he is unable to do so, and merely repeats what the Transport Member said both here and in the Legislative Assembly, he must be prepared for the charge that our inability to build up locomotives in this country is due to the absence of a whole-hearted desire on the part of the Government of India not to allow the least avoidable delay to occur in the construction of locomotives here.

Sir, I move.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL (Bombay: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I rise to give my wholehearted support to the Resolution moved by my Honourable friend Pandit Kunzru. As the House knows, I regard him as an encyclopædia, and whenever I want to refer to any subject, I prefer to refer to his speech, so that if not cent. per cent. material, at least 75 per cent. of it could be obtained. He has spoken and given a large number of facts in support of his Resolution, I would refer to some. The question has been before the country, and it has been discussed with the members of the Government in charge of Railways in this House as well as outside by the commercial bodies. I remember when Sir Guthrie Russell happened to occupy the post which Sir Leonard Wilson occupies today, and when he came for an interview in the Indian Merchants' Chamber in Bombay this question of the manufacture of locomotives was discussed there. He looked up his papers and tried to find out what the difficulties were. One of the difficulties which he discovered then was that broad gauge engines could not be manufactured in India because of some technical difficulties. He said that the factory which they had was situated in Ajmer, and Ajmer had not got a broad gauge railway; they could not manufacture broad gauge engines. Sir, it was not very difficult for us to understand his difficulty and to solve it. I asked him to solve my difficulty, which was this. In England, as far as I know, there is no broad gauge railway—nothing comparable to the broad gauge here. How, then, were they manufacturing broad gauge engines there, and how were we unable to manufacture them here? He promised to look into the question. He said it was a good point and they would consider it. I remember that in the Simla session in 1938-39, my Honourable friend Mr. Kalikar moved a Resolution in the Council of State for the manufacture of broad gauge engines. Then Sir Guthrie Russell said they were going to appoint a committee. I am glad they appointed a committee. Of course I think that instead of appointing a committee they should have gone ahead with the proposition itself. However, they appointed a committee, and its report must have opened the eyes of Government at any rate, if not of others. That is the general impression in the country. The manufacture of broad gauge engines is something of a new industry. We had never made any broad gauge engines. But the real fact is, it is not a question of starting a new industry, but of reviving an old industry. At that time my Honourable friend Sir Buta Singh supported Mr. Kalikar's Resolution and said that by delaying the manufacture of broad gauge engines in India Government was delaying the preparations for the effective communications required for the defence of the country. The Honourable Member will probably remember those words. It was a very short speech, but it was a very fine speech which he made that day. An assurance was given to my Honourable friend Mr. Kalikar that the question was going to be taken up seriously and a committee would be appointed. As usual, we imported an expert from the British Isles, although we had enough experts in this country, both among Indians and Europeans. But it has become the wont of the Government of India to import experts. And the expert came and produced an excellent report—excellent in many respects. It is not one of those reports which are filled with verbosity. It is a business-like, precise and concise report. The very first paragraph of that Report is worth reading to the House. This is what the Humphreys-Srinivasan Report says:—

'Manufacture of locomotives in railway workshops.—Steam locomotives complete with boilers have been manufactured in Indian railway workshops from the earlier years of railway operation in India. It will be seen from the accompanying statement that the

East Indian Railways workshops at Jamalpur built as many as 214 broad gauge locomotives, 103 boilers and 99 tenders before the manufacture was given up in 1926 and that the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway workshops at Ajmer have manufactured, between 1896 and 1940, no less than 435 metre gauge locomotives. The latter shops have recently extended their manufacture to cover the requirements of other metre gauge railways."

This proves my point that the question before the House is one of reviving the building up of locomotives in this country.

The second paragraph of the Report is also worth reading to the House and I would, therefore, crave your indulgence, Sir, to allow me to read it. It runs:—

"It may, therefore, be taken as established that there are no difficulties of a mechanical or other technical character standing in the way of Indian railways manufacturing their own locomotives in India. In fact, the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway workshops at Ajmer design the locomotives they manufacture and turn out a finished product which compares quite favourably in regard to its service capacity and running, with the imported article. The work carried out at Ajmer does not merely consist of erecting the imported parts of locomotives manufactured elsewhere, but covers the whole gamut of manufacture from the raw materials consisting of steel and copper plates, pig iron and scrap, to the final locomotive of modern type and design".

This should convince the House that there is no difficulty of a mechanical or other technical nature. These locomotives have been built in India. We have got the material, we have got the men. Now, what stands in the way of our building up these locomotives? This Report was made in 1940. I wish the House to disabuse its mind of the fact that the war has come and whatever recommendations were made in the Report have been superseded by the war. They themselves made this Report bearing in mind the fact that the war has burst out and the war made it all the more necessary that locomotives should be built in India.

The Committee say:—

"The present war has practically put us back to the stage after the last war when Government issued their belated communique of 30th September, 1921, in response to the need felt during the war years for the self-sufficiency of Indian railways, and in our opinion the main objection to the manufacture of locomotives in India, viz., the uncertainty of an adequate and steady demand for steam locomotives during a sufficiently long period has ceased to exist, a point which we examine further in the next chapter".

So, they have said that the war does not stand in the way of your manufacturing locomotives in this country. They examined how many locomotives were required in this country and their findings were that during the first period of 11 years, 200 broad gauge and 71 metre gauge locomotives were required and the average for a total period of 16 years is considered as 162 broad gauge and 57 metre gauge locomotives. Then they went into the question how many engines were required at one time in India and they calculated that as many as 5,200 engines were required. Coming to replacements, even when most of the engines are worked to their best capacity, their estimate was that about 100 broad gauge engines and some 70 metre gauge engines would be required every year. I find on page 20 a resume in which they say:—

"The average annual requirements of State-owned railways in India are likely to be sufficiently large for a long period of years to justify the building of a separate workshop in India for the manufacture of locomotives with an optimum capacity of about 100 broad gauge locomotives of a tractive effort of about 48,000 lbs."

I assume, Sir, that there would be sufficient demand for engines from the railway authorities. But, even if there was not, there would be sufficient demand for keeping a workshop of that character busy and making it not only paying but also lucrative. A number of municipalities in this country and the P. W. Ds. of various provinces require steam rollers. If Government equip a factory of that character, such machines could be produced in this country if the factory had not sufficient work for locomotives. I cannot understand why Government have been so reluctant to manufacture locomotives in India? Today they are faced with great difficulty on this account and that they have to cut down railway traffic, because they have not got a sufficient number of locomotives. Every time I have travelled—although I have cut down my travel to a minimum—I find that the trains are late. When I came down to Delhi, I reached here at

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midnight. Why? because it was an old type of engine. When I went back to Bombay last time in November, the train was late by two hours. The difficulty was again an old locomotive. Now the Government member has stated in so many words, reading between the lines, the reason why they want to put up the railway fares. He says:—

“We have not got sufficient coal and we have not got a sufficient number of locomotives”. That is the real reason behind. Therefore, they have ordered out a number of locomotives now. It might be thought that the workshop that is required would have to be very large. But, after all, what is the additional machinery required? They examined that problem. If a new factory was put up they said it would require two crores. Just imagine. Is it a very formidable figure? Is there any company now being established for less than two crores? They suggested that if the factory at Kanchrapara is equipped the machinery that will be required will only cost Rs. 47 lakhs. Today you are ordering out locomotives to the value of 15 crores—8 crores last year and about 15 crores this year. They had worked out every bit of detail as a businessman would work out in his office. They found out that only at an expense of Rs. 47 lakhs this factory could be equipped and you will be having your locomotives. This question was discussed in the other House. A cut motion was moved by Sardar Sant Singh in the other House a year or two ago. I do not recollect if this House also discussed it. The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow pleaded a certain difficulty, these works had to be turned over to munitions and there were no technicians. Technicians do not drop from heaven. How many technicians were required? In a country like India which has double the population or more than that of the United States and seven times that of the United Kingdom, it should not be at all difficult with all the unemployment starting the land to find a handful of technicians. Only Government had to make an effort and train them in this country. But this sort of excuse is too lame to accept. We hope that Government would even now get this machinery, set up this factory and produce locomotives in India. They are required for the country; they are required for defence. You had locomotives and you were able to send them to other countries, to the Middle East. If you had not, what would you have done? If you had a factory like this, you could have given them greater assistance than you have been able to do. Though I have some other points, I would not take more time of the House.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM (Bihar and Orissa: Muhammadan): Sir, I suggest that further discussion of the Resolution may be carried over to the next non-official day.

THE HONOURABLE THE CHAIRMAN (The Honourable Sir DAVID DEVADOSS): Do many Honourable Members wish to speak?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Yes.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN (Leader of the House): Since other members want to speak, it is better to have this Resolution adjourned to the next non-official day.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU (United Provinces Southern: Non-Muhammadan): What will happen to the other Resolutions? I have no objection to the adjournment. On a previous occasion the Resolution was allowed to be moved in order to have priority.

THE HONOURABLE THE CHAIRMAN (The Honourable Sir DAVID DEVADOSS): This debate will be continued.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: There are two Resolutions below this Resolution. They may be moved so that they may have priority.

THE HONOURABLE MR. S. A. LAL (Nominated Official): How can two Resolutions hold the floor at the same time?

THE HONOURABLE THE CHAIRMAN (The Honourable Sir DAVID DEVADOSS): The debate on this Resolution will be continued on the next non-official day.

STATEMENT OF BUSINESS

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN (Leader of the House): Sir, I understand that Monday, the 28th, is not suitable to several members. The Food debate will not, therefore, take place on that day. The date fixed for it will be announced later.

I suggest that the following six Bills laid on the table this morning be taken up on Tuesday, the 29th February, 1944:—

1. A Bill further to amend the Coal Mines Safety (Stowing) Act, 1939;
2. A Bill further to amend the Indian Companies Act, 1913;
3. A Bill further to amend the Indian Aircraft Act, 1934;
4. A Bill further to amend the Transfer of Property Act, 1882;
5. A Bill further to amend the Insurance Act, 1938; and
6. A Bill further to amend the Cantonments Act, 1924.

We will meet at 11 A.M. on Tuesday, the 29th, for the official business and in the evening for the presentation of the Budget.

THE HONOURABLE THE CHAIRMAN (The Honourable Sir DAVID DEVADOSS): I will adjourn the House till 11 A.M. on Tuesday, the 29th February.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU (United Provinces Northern: Non-Muhammadan): May I express the hope that Government will soon let us know the date fixed for the Food debate?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: Yes.

The Council then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, the 29th February, 1944.