

23rd February 1946

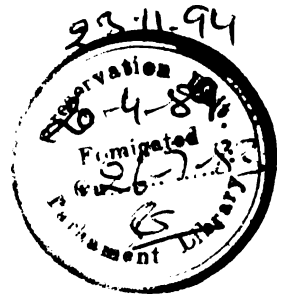
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

Official Report

Volume II, 1946

(12th February to 27th February, 1946)

FIRST SESSION
OF THE
SIXTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
1946



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Saturday, 23rd February, 1946

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber of the Council House at Three of the Clock, Mr. President (The Honourable Mr. G. V. Mavalankar) in the Chair.

SITUATION *RE* STRIKE AT BOMBAY AND KARACHI BY R. I. N. RATINGS

Mr. President (The Honourable Mr. G. V. Mavalankar): The Honourable the War Secretary will make his statement.

Mr. P. Mason (Government of India: Nominated Official): Sir, I am very glad to be able to say that the hopes which I expressed yesterday have been fulfilled and that the situation as regards the indiscipline in the R. I. N. has practically come to an end. I might speak first about Karachi.

In Karachi as appeared in the press, and as was mentioned in the House yesterday, the most disaffected of the ratings left the shore establishment at Manora and concentrated in H. M. I. S. "*Hindustan*" early on the night preceding. Early yesterday morning Commodore Curtis who is in command there and who had previously been to Manora Island and had spoken to all the ratings there where he was very well received, went to "*Hindustan*" but the ratings there would not listen to him or discuss any surrender. He therefore gave them an ultimatum and warned them that force would be used in one hour's time. Force was used and after twenty-five minutes they surrendered and fell in on the jetty alongside. There were eight men killed. There were six mentioned in the press this morning but two have died since then and 33 wounded. This morning the situation in Karachi is normal. The men on Manora Island have resumed their normal work and are going about their ordinary Saturday routine duties.

In Bombay late last night, or yesterday afternoon, the men in the ships were informed of the means by which they should surrender. They were to show a blue flag as soon as the ship was ready to surrender and it was explained to them again as it had been in the afternoon, as I mentioned yesterday, *i.e.*, the previous afternoon, that the surrender must be unconditional. At thirteen minutes past six this morning all ships and establishments had surrendered.

News during the morning is that the officers have been out to the ships and are back in their ships and I hope, though I am not yet quite certain, that work is being resumed everywhere there.

From the other ports, the situation is much the same as yesterday, *i.e.*, the report we got early this morning was that a number of ratings were demonstrating in sympathy with those in Bombay but they did not use violence of any kind and there seems to be no reason to suppose that on learning the news from Bombay they have not gone back to work.

I have one very small item of information, which although it is not a very serious matter, I think might be of interest to the House. It is a straw, but it is rather an interesting one. It provides the one lighter element I have seen in this very serious matter. In Delhi, as I explained yesterday, thirty-eight ratings refused to go on duty. One man who was asked whether he would join them was a cook and he said he would join them. He then asked, after saying he would join them, what were the reasons for the indiscipline. He heard that one of the reasons was bad food. "Bad food?" he said. "I refuse to be a party to any demonstration regarding bad food because, the food is very good". And he therefore went back and joined the party who remained on duty. That I say is a very small point but it indicates I think that many of these men did take part in this strike for reasons which were very insufficient and which I do not think ought to be taken very seriously.

That is all I want to say as regards the news and the facts. Of course I shall speak later on the implications of this in the course of the debate.

Shri D. P. Karmakar (Bombay Southern Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): May I ask the Honourable Member about the number of casualties in Bombay, Castle Barracks and outside? Regarding Karachi he has

Mr. P. Mason: I am afraid I have not yet got the figures of the casualties in Castle Barracks. I have the casualties on the side of the officers and the Army. One R. I. N. officer died of wounds. One R. I. N. V. R. officer was killed by a bullet—that is in the civil rioting. One R. I. N. and one Army officer wounded, and eight other ranks wounded. On the side of the R. I. N. ratings I have no information but I believe, Sir that the casualties were very small indeed and considerably smaller than in Karachi.

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar (Madras Ceded Districts and Chittoor: Non-Muhammadan Rural): May I know whether the attention of the Honourable Member has been drawn to a report in the "*Hindustan Times*" that 200 were killed in the siege on Thursday on Castle Barracks? Is that true?

Mr. P. Mason: I believe not.

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: What is the official estimate?

Mr. P. Mason: My estimate is that it is smaller than in Karachi.

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: May I know what it is—15 or 16?

Mr. P. Mason: I explained that in Karachi there were eight killed and thirty-three wounded and I think in Bombay there were considerably fewer casualties.

Mr. Manu Subedar (Indian Merchants' Chamber and Bureau: Indian Commerce): Who were the 200 reported as killed by the paper, if not ratings?

Mr. P. Mason: I am afraid I am not responsible for what is reported in the paper.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena (Lucknow Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): May I know if the broadcast as reported to have been given by Admiral Godfrey is correct?

Mr. P. Mason: Would he repeat the question?

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: I want to know if the text of the broadcast made by Admiral Godfrey is correct?

Mr. P. Mason: I think it is. I would like here to explain something of which I was not aware when I spoke yesterday and that is that Admiral Godfrey asked for permission to broadcast and he said what he intended to say: but the sense of what he intended to say was very different from the impression which that broadcast gave. I myself read the broadcast in the same way as Members on the other side of the House. It was only afterwards that I learnt that he had worded it quite differently when he asked for permission and his actual intention when he spoke of "the destruction of the Navy, of which we are all very proud," was not the physical destruction, but he meant the collapse of its prestige and all its achievements.

Seth Govind Das (Central Provinces Hindi Divisions: Non-Muhammadan): Has it been ascertained whether the abuses which Commander King is said to have uttered were actually uttered?

Mr. P. Mason: As I have explained yesterday that will be the subject of an enquiry and I think it would be a great pity to try to reach conclusions on that subject on the kind of data which we get by telephone and in the press.

Mr. Manu Subedar: Is it a fact that those boys were kept without food for a whole night?

Mr. P. Mason: Yes, Sir. While they were in a state of indiscipline and were promoting an armed insurrection, food was not supplied. It would have been fantastic, it would have been quixotic to a degree, which would surprise even this House to help them then.

Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon (Sind: Muhammadan Rural): May I know from the Honourable Member whether after these ratings had surrendered at Karachi

they were roughly handled by the authorities, they were locked up in a cell for the whole night and they were released this morning? Is it a fact that they were kept without food?

Mr. P. Mason: I am not quite sure which ratings the Honourable Member is referring to?

Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon: At Karachi. I am referring to the 'Hindustan'. Then these ratings surrendered after they were shelled, they were taken to Manora, where they were locked up and kept without food till this morning and were released this morning and only one cup of tea was given to them. Is this a fact or will the Honourable Member assure this House that he would make an enquiry into this matter and let us know?

Mr. P. Mason: All the 300 ratings from the 'Hindustan' were certainly placed under arrest and are still under arrest; but I do not know, I am afraid, about the quantity of tea they got or the details of their treatment: but I will make enquiries.

Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon: My question is whether they were handled roughly, beaten on the shore and kept without food.

Mr. P. Mason: As I have explained, I have no information on that point. I think it is very unlikely. My information yesterday was that they had fallen in quietly and I am quite sure that if they had been handled roughly, it would have been brought to our notice.

Mr. Manu Subedar: May I know if Government have given any instructions that after surrender these boys would not be ill-treated and that they shall be supplied with rations and every thing else as on the old basis till any enquiry which the Defence Consultative Committee will make?

Mr. P. Mason: Yes, Sir. Since they returned to duty they will of course receive normal rations and food and I hope

Mr. Manu Subedar: Have Government issued any instructions

Mr. P. Mason: Let me proceed, Sir. And I hope that in Bombay all are back to their normal duty and receiving their normal food and other amenities.

Mr. Manu Subedar: May I know whether Government have already given any instructions? If not, will my Honourable friend say that they will give such instructions from now, that not one of these men was to be ill-treated or otherwise deprived of any of the facilities normally given to them until the result of the enquiry by the Defence Consultative Committee is published.

Mr. P. Mason: I certainly could not give such an order. I should like to explain that in the whole of this matter a very considerable decentralisation is absolutely essential. It is impossible to control a situation of this nature from Delhi in every detail. It would be impossible to say exactly what is to be done in every individual case and in fact very wide powers have been given to the G. O. C., who has been placed in command of all forces sea, air and land. He has been given an intimation of the Government's policy, which is, as I was about to explain rather later in the day, that there should be no victimisation and no mass punishments of any kind. It will be quite unnecessary to give orders that food and water should be given to the men as soon as they returned to duty.

Mr. Manu Subedar: Am I to gather that this Government have no authority or power to give the kind of instruction which I am suggesting? Is it a fact that this Government have no power and such orders, if any, must come from the United Kingdom?

Mr. P. Mason: No, Sir. Of course we have the power to give those orders but it would be extremely silly to do so, because it would give no power and no discretion to the officer on the spot.

Mr. President: The Honourable Member wished yesterday to make a statement. He said that he would say whatever he has to say after which the

[Mr. President]

adjournment motion will be moved. Has he any particular objection to make the statement, so that there may be no questions and answers and the debate also will be guided by what he says otherwise the discussion may be in the air. If he makes a full statement, I think it would be better.

Mr. P. Mason: I should speak now as if I were speaking in the debate and make a complete statement of policy and then perhaps I will have the right to answer at the end of the debate?

Mr. President: Yesterday we had arranged that the Honourable Member will make a statement and after his statement is finished, we will take up the adjournment motion. If he now makes his full statement, whatever time he takes for it, then the adjournment motion will be moved and then certainly he will have an opportunity to reply.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir (Nominated: Non-official): Sir, the difficulty arises in regard to the timing. An adjournment motion is given two hours for discussion. Let it be clearly understood that the statement is outside the two hours.

Mr. President: That is what I said. That is what was arranged yesterday. The Honourable Member himself wanted about 20 minutes and I am prepared to give him more time if necessary. It seems that there is a lot of questions and answers and so instead of carrying on questions and answers, let him make the statement.

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan (Meerut Division: Muhammadan Rural): I thought that the statement which the Honourable Member was going to make was with reference to the latest position with regard to this particular question. And now do I understand that it is your desire that the Honourable Member should give out the whole policy of the Government with regard to this matter and is it understood that after that statement is made the adjournment motion may not be moved?

Mr. President: That is not my intention. Of course that does not mean that the Honourable Member will necessarily wish to move the adjournment motion. The statement to be made by the Honourable Member is a specific item on the agenda independently of the adjournment motion. The suggestion which I made was that if he makes a full statement, whatever he wishes to state as to facts or policy, that will help the discussion of the adjournment motion. If all the facts, including what happened at various places, and also the policy of the Government in this matter, are before the House, the adjournment motion can be discussed much better.

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan: In other words, it would mean that the Government are to move the adjournment motion and the House has to reply to it.

Mr. President: It would not mean that.

Mr. P. J. Griffiths (Assam: European): The object of an adjournment motion is to censure the Government. Surely Government is entitled to know what the charges are before they are expected to meet them.

Mr. President: My object is this. As I have said before it is no use discussing the motion in the air. Let us definitely know what the facts are, what the policy of the Government is and then the adjournment motion will be taken up.

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan: The Honourable Member who is going to move the adjournment motion is not going to waste the time of the House by talking in the air. He must have some facts to be placed before the House and therefore I think we would like to hear what is it that the Honourable Member who wants to move the adjournment motion desires the House to consider, and then the Government would lay down their policy. The object of that statement was only to state the facts with regard to the situation as it existed today, so that when we are speaking on the motion we know what the facts are. Without knowing what is the object of the adjournment motion and what is it that the Honourable Member wants this House to decide and on what particular

matter of policy or facts, I think—subject to whatever you decide and the Honourable Member in charge decides, it would be better if we know what is it that the Honourable Member wants to say about the adjournment motion.

Mr. President: Let me finish with the Honourable Member first. Perhaps the Honourable Member is speaking without the context of the proceedings of the House. When leave for the adjournment motion was asked for, the Honourable Mover or the intending mover, to speak more correctly, has said whatever he wanted to say. In the afternoon also, something was said and then it was stated by the Honourable the War Secretary that he would make a statement to the House about the facts. But he shortened his statement; he referred only to Karachi and then said that he would say whatever he wanted to say at the time of the adjournment motion. Thereafter I found that many Members were keen to have more information. It is therefore that I suggest that whatever information the War Secretary has, let him give it. The adjournment motion is already there. The wording is there. I believe Honourable Members have seen what has appeared in the press and heard what was spoken in the House yesterday and therefore it is better for the purposes of discussion that the full statement should be made first. When I said of talking in the air, it did not mean talking without any facts at all. But we certainly expect to be in a better position if we know all the facts—not only about the happenings but also about the policy. The Honourable Member will know further that a period of one hour was separately kept for this purpose. We have met at 3 just to enable the Honourable the War Secretary to make a full statement of everything, and it was settled that after he makes a statement the adjournment motion will be taken up as soon as he finishes. That is why I made that suggestion to him and still I have left it open to him to make such statement as he likes. I personally think that, instead of taking any more time because at 4 P.M. we must take up the adjournment motion, it will be better if the Honourable the War Secretary is allowed to make his statement

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan: The only point I want to place before you is this. In other words it would mean that the Government would lay down a pre-conceived policy and plan with regard to this matter without listening to the arguments on this side of the House and then it may be difficult for the Government, after having made a declaration of their policy and their plan with regard to this particular matter, to go back on it. All that I am saying is that the Government must know first what is the feeling of the House, what are the facts and what is it that the Members of the House want the Government to do. After that they should tell us how far they are ready and willing to meet the wishes of the Honourable Members of this House. That is why I was making this suggestion that the Government should know first as to what it is that we want them to do, and then let them consider, decide and make a statement to this House as to how far they are willing to accept the proposals, the suggestions and the recommendations of the Honourable Members of this House with regard to this matter. That is the reason why I said that if the Government make a declaration of their policy which necessarily must be pre-conceived because they do not know what is it that the Members of the House want, then it will be difficult for them to retrace their steps.

Mr. M. Asaf Ali (Delhi: General): I would like to invite the attention of Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan to the agenda which happens to be before him. If he will be only so good as to look at it he will find that the very first item on the agenda is:

“Mr. P. Mason to make a statement on the situation relating to Indian ratings in Bombay, Karachi and elsewhere.”

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan: Which has been done.

Mr. M. Asaf Ali: If Mr. Mason does not want to make any further statement then it is quite obvious that we have to take up the adjournment motion. At it

[Mr. M. Asaf Ali]

happens, the wording of my adjournment motion also ought to be before the Nawabzada. The wording of the adjournment motion happens to be:

"To discuss the grave situation that has arisen in respect of the Indian Navy, affecting practically the whole of it, as a result of mishandling by the immediate authorities concerned."

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan: Tell Mr. Mason what the mishandling is.

Mr. M. Asaf Ali: There was a considerable amount of discussion yesterday when unfortunately the Honourable Member was not in the House.

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan: I was in the air at the time.

Mr. M. Asaf Ali: It is time that he came down to solid earth. There was considerable discussion yesterday in the House, and it was more or less in deference to the wishes of the Government and the difficulties which the Government were feeling in having a discussion yesterday, that I agreed to the postponement of my adjournment motion. In fact, the adjournment motion of which I had given notice was postponed to Monday. But, in the course of the day other news came through which naturally precipitated the advancing of the time of the adjournment motion and I insisted that it should be taken up today. And that is why we happen to be here today. Personally I feel Sir that you have indicated what is eminently reasonable under the circumstances because if Mr. Mason can make a statement, a comprehensive statement on the whole subject, the discussion on the adjournment motion will be properly regulated. It is not as if the Government do not know what the House feels. It is not as if the Government are unaware of the facts of the situation. They know exactly what we are complaining against. They know what we are going to condemn, if we are going to condemn them at all. Therefore, it is better that Mr. Mason should make a statement now and allow us an opportunity of giving the Government a piece of our mind.

Mr. President: I do not think any further discussion of the question is now necessary. I must make it clear that I do not view every adjournment motion as necessarily a censure motion.

Mr. M. Asaf Ali: It may not be.

Mr. President: It may or it may not. The idea is to bring into discussion some important subject. I need not dwell on the utility or the exact scope of adjournment motions in general. That is one thing.

Assuming that the Government have come to any pre-conceived policy of their own, I do not see why it should be difficult for any Government to change it after hearing the views of the House. I do not think that any decisions which any Government take are necessarily of such a nature that they cannot be changed, if once disclosed. On the contrary, to my mind, it will be more for the benefit of the House to know what their views are and then express their reactions so that the Government will have an opportunity of their policy being criticised and then changing if they deem it proper, their policy in the light of the discussions of the House. I personally hold that view. I do not know what the policies of the Government are and I am not concerned with them. Therefore, in the interests of a better discussion of the subject and in the interests of all, I call upon Mr. Mason to make a statement. But I have left it to him to make it long or short and settle the contents of it as he wishes, as Mr. Mason is the best judge of it. I have assured him that I shall give him as much time as he wants and in addition to that, he will have an opportunity of replying, when the adjournment motion is taken up. His time will be outside the time of the adjournment motion.

Mr. P. Mason: Sir, I had hoped to give the facts regarding Bombay and Karachi before the House and I had intended to speak during the debate on the question of policy. But since it is your wish and perhaps also the wish of the House

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: No. It is the wish of one party. Sir, I think there is a good deal in what Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan said.

Mr. P. Mason: Sir, I am entirely in your hands.

Mr. President: I think the Honourable Member should make a statement now.

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: Is it to be a statement or an argument as well? If it is a statement well and good, but if it is an argument it should be made after the adjournment motion has been moved.

Mr. President: The statement may contain facts and arguments. A statement does not necessarily exclude all arguments and, as I have suggested it will be for the Honourable Member to make his statement as he likes.

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan: Just now, Sir, you said that you thought he ought to make a statement. Do I understand that the Honourable Member should make that speech which he was going to make during the course of the discussion now, before the adjournment motion is taken up? He has nothing more to say with regard to the facts: it is only with regard to the adjournment motion now that he has to say something.

Mr. President: I think the matter has been sufficiently argued. We need not pursue it any further.

Mr. P. Mason: That is exactly the position. This is in fact the speech that I was going to make on the adjournment motion. I will now make it—I have a right to speak again.

I have had to speak in the House a number of times during this session, and I have had to speak on subjects of the most serious importance; but I do think that in a way this subject is perhaps the most serious of all; because to my mind the possibilities of danger for the future of India implicit in the subject that we are discussing are even greater than in the other very serious subjects which we have talked about during the last month. I was afraid yesterday that a debate today might lead to a hardening of the attitude of those who have been guilty of indiscipline and that that might lead to a prolongation of the struggle which could only be bad. But I am glad to say that that immediate danger has now passed and they have returned to work in most cases. But we are faced, I think, with a still more serious danger regarding the future. This is not the only incident of this kind that has taken place. It is much the most serious, but it is not the only one and I do feel that the attitude of the House towards this question may have a very big influence on the future and on what the armed forces may do and feel in the future. That is why I say I think this is such a very serious and important subject; and while I do speak on it—I hope with a very deep sense of responsibility which I am sure is shared by all parties—I would ask the House to consider the decision to which they come on this motion very carefully indeed for this reason.

I am conscious in discussing this question and also those other questions which are referred to and which are so very controversial—Java and the I. N. A.—I am conscious of the immense divergence of opinion that exists between this side of the House and that, and I think it is best to recognise that that great difference does exist and for each of us to try as much as we can to understand the other's point of view. I do, I hope, try to understand the point of view of that side of the House, and I would ask them to try in the same way to understand ours; and in both those cases and in this—particularly in the I. N. A. case and in this it seems to me that there is a great rift of opinion between us which is partly due to the fact that I think on that side of the House you rather forget, or so it seems to me, the difference between the civil point of view and the military point of view. On this question there is the tendency to refer to these acts of indiscipline as strikes. In fact they are always called strikes in the papers and by the persons concerned in them. I was taken to task yesterday, perhaps quite rightly, for referring to them as mutiny. When I say 'rightly', I do not think that they are not mutinies, because technically

[Mr. P. Mason]

there is no question that any refusal of duty is a mutiny; but I may perhaps have been tactless in using the word so frequently. But I do want to stress the difference, the immense difference which exists between a trade dispute and indiscipline on the part of the armed forces. I hope, I may not seem to be lecturing the House on this subject for it is really an obvious point; but I feel that it is one which needs stressing because I think it has sometimes been forgotten in the heat of argument. The difference is this; that if mill workers decide that they will not make cloth, while it does bring pressure to bear on the millowners because they do not get their profits, and it brings pressure to bear on the public because they do not get their cloth, it is pressure which is brought to bear fairly gradually and there is time for discussion. But it is a very different matter indeed if the armed forces engaged in indiscipline. I would ask the House to think, with a great sense of thankfulness, of what we have avoided in the last few days. There was a stage in Bombay when the ships got up steam in order to hoist up the 4-inch ammunition and threatened to fire indiscriminately on the town—it must have been indiscriminate—it could not be otherwise. They were, I am glad to say, wise enough to avoid that criminal act. But warships and aircraft and cannon are very dangerous tools and all the equipment of modern war does get steadily more dangerous every year; and if men, because of some grievance, some fancied grievance in some cases, or it may be a real grievance, are to take the law into their own hands and they have those tools in their hands, a very great danger does arise not only of loss of life and property but also because in the ultimate resort power does depend upon the use of force, and those who command that force may get power into their own hands. I hope I have not talked too much on the subject, but it does seem to me to be of vital importance.

I spoke of the fact that this is not a solitary instance and I must acknowledge the fact that this danger is one which threatens us all.....

Babu Ram Narayan Singh (Chota Nagpur Division: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, is this a statement of policy?

Mr. President: Order, order: it is his statement.

Mr. P. Mason: It is a danger which involves all the troops, because we began, I am sorry to say, with indiscipline among the R. A. F. and that led to indiscipline in the R. I. A. F. and that led to this. This last was much the most widespread and it was much the worst, because it involved rioting and violence and shops were looted. But we hope now that the men have returned to work and will carry on; and because this is a matter of such immense seriousness the policy of government will require very careful consideration, and they must undoubtedly consult in this matter the wishes of the people, and I think there is no doubt that this question will be laid before the Defence Consultative Committee and discussed there. I think that should be the first step that we take—to discuss the question with them. Obviously there will also need to be inquiries into facts and the Defence Consultative Committee is obviously not a body which could itself conduct such an inquiry. It seems to me that there will have to be two kinds of inquiries—one purely service, military inquiry and there will need to be a number of them and also I think a very full and impartial consideration of the whole question of how this trouble arose and of the reasons for the indiscipline. For that, I think it will certainly be necessary to consult the whole of the Government. I can only give at the moment the views of the military authorities on the subject and they are inclined at present to the view that with that inquiry members of the legislature should be associated.

Now, Sir, with regard to what is described as victimization, I said yesterday that I shall give no assurance that punishment would not take place and that is still the position but I can say that there will be no mass punishments. There will be no victimization. We shall have to consider the whole case very carefully. I gave you an instance just now of one case in which obviously a man on the most frivolous grounds threw his lot on one side rather than on the other and I am sure that is the case with the majority. They are very young.

Petty Officers and Chief Petty Officers have kept out of the whole business and they have stood fast throughout and in Karachi in particular they were very helpful indeed, so that those affected are mostly very young and I think most of them got excited and were misled and therefore there will be no mass punishments but some one must have misled them and I think it is essential that if that person can be found or those persons can be found and if a charge can be brought home to them Government should reserve to themselves the right to punish such people with the object partly of preventing the spread of further acts of indiscipline and secondly to make the position clear for the future. But in selecting such people and in considering whether or not the charges would justify their being brought to trial or punished, it will be necessary to consider the very electric atmosphere in which we are at present and certainly as far as military authorities are concerned, I can assure the House that the greatest care will be taken to avoid anything which might lead to a general deterioration of feeling.

That is the policy as far as I can explain it at the moment. As I say it will require further consideration and discussion both with the Defence Consultative Committee in the first place and possibly with others and later it will require confirmation by the Civil government as a whole. That, at any rate, is the line on which we are thinking and if we proceed to this adjournment motion, I would once more very seriously ask the House to consider the effects of such a motion, as is suggested. It implies censure of Government, in fact it means censure of Government, and it means that those who have taken part in this indiscipline are not exactly condoned but made to feel that they may have been right in taking the course they did. Well, Sir, there are channels by which any genuine grievance can be brought to light and I do not think any one can say that these men could not have brought these matters to light without taking the action they have taken and I do think that if the action of Government in this matter is condemned, it will be an encouragement to the armed forces to resort to these kinds of measures whenever they feel that they have any grievance. And however well looked after an organisation may be, it is almost impossible to have any body of men who cannot think of some grievance. I now ask the House to consider very carefully indeed what effect that might have on the future, particularly at this very difficult time. My friends on the other side, I expect, will form the Government of the future and they will have to maintain these forces and I do hope that they will do nothing which might lower their efficiency and their discipline at this juncture.

Mr. President: We shall now take up the adjournment motion and shall carry it on till 12 minutes to 6 P.M.

An Honourable Member: Why not till 6?

Mr. President: That is not necessary under the rules.

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan: I would like to ask some question. May I do it now or in the course of the debate?

Mr. President: The Honourable Member can do it in the course of the debate.

Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi (Calcutta and Suburbs: Muhammadan Urban): Why not wait for 12 minutes, Sr.

Mr. President: Mr. Asaf Ali.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

SITUATION *re* STRIKE AT BOMBAY AND KARACHI BY R. I. N. RATINGS

Mr. M. Asaf Ali (Delhi: General): I move:

"That the Assembly do now adjourn."

This is to discuss the grave situation that has arisen in respect of the Indian Navy, affecting practically the whole of it, as a result of mishandling by the immediate authorities concerned.

[Mr. M. Asaf Ali]

I was hoping, Sir, that after the statement which the Honourable War Secretary had promised us there would be no necessity for me to ask the House to adjourn to consider the question which I had proposed yesterday but I regret to say that I have not found in the statement made today anything which may justify my not moving this adjournment motion. He has certainly given us some facts and figures which we had already gathered from the newspapers. He has also indicated the course of action which the Government propose to take and I am glad that in so far as the Government have agreed to refer this question to the Defence Consultative Committee, at least one point which had been urged has been accepted. The other steps which the Government propose to take will naturally have to be considered both by the Defence Consultative Committee and the War Department, but these are matters for the future. I am concerned with the conduct of the immediate authorities who were concerned in the case and whose mishandling has resulted in the very grave and serious situation to which the Honourable War Secretary was referring. It is the beginning, Sir, of the trouble that I am concerned with. It shows how utterly unimaginative, how utterly inefficient, how absolutely ignorant of the feelings of their men were the officers who did not take notice of the grievances which were within their knowledge for months together, perhaps, I should say for years together. It is the Indian navy that they are now dealing with. Its history, as all of us know, is a very brief one. This Indian navy is still in its infancy. About six years ago, there were only about six, or perhaps twelve sloops. Since then, it has grown to its present proportions. During the last five years, these boys of the navy, who come from respectable families, who are educated, who are young, (and I am prepared to say that they may also be excitable), have gone through the stress of war, and in these five years, they have seen service, not merely in the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean, but some of them, have seen service beyond the Suez Canal. Perhaps the War Secretary will remember that on one occasion, when landing was taking place in Sicily, at a very critical time, it was this navy that helped them in that landing. Sir, these boys have seen service everywhere. I notice a flicker of smile on the face of one of the Members on the Treasury Benches. He may be wondering now a congressman is talking of these boys taking part in the war, and of their discharging their duties not merely to their own satisfaction but to the pride of Mr. Attlee and others and I am talking about them—yes, I am talking about them, I am quite as proud of these boys as I am of my army, and of my air force as anybody can be. Whatever may have been our attitude towards the war, it has nothing to do with what these boys have done and what these boys are entitled to on account of their achievement in the past. That attitude was on political grounds. What I am saying now is obviously the approach of those who are not looking at the war, but who are looking at the results of the war. The entire mind of these boys has been conditioned during these years of very grave happenings. They have compared things not merely here, but elsewhere, they have worked side by side with the Britishers and with others. They have seen the difference, difference of pay, and conditions of service, difference of amenities allowed to the one and the other, and the behaviour of the one towards the other. This trouble has been brewing for a very long time. It is not a question of a sudden flare up. The sudden flare up most probably came after what I would call a very trifling incident in the life of a navy. But the real trouble had been brewing for some time and it is the neglect of that fact which I am now condemning. This trouble would never have arisen if the authorities had known the feelings of the boys, had known what was passing in their minds, had known what exactly it was that they were expecting. All the time they were hearing about freedom, about national self-respect about national dignity, about freedom of the people in the whole world, and today they find that in their own country, after it has been said by Mr. Attlee and many others that they are proud of this navy for all that the Indian navy has done, small as it may be after all this, they find their

very Commanding officer, King, goes and calls them names, which I am ashamed to repeat here. He treats them in a manner which even others who may not have been so well trained for fighting may have resented and may have retaliated, but perhaps with greater violence than these people did. I do not wish to stress that point. But still here are facts, you cannot run away from them. As for their grievances, they are what would be considered legitimate anywhere. I am not talking of the political demands that they put forward. The political demands may have been brought up, as you know, in the stress of circumstances. They may have said to themselves "Here we must appeal to the whole of our country, to every Party, every person concerned, we, the sons of the soil, we are appealing to our leaders, to our nation and to our people". That is a point to be looked at in its proper context. I am not going to deal with their grievances here and now, whatever they may be. But I must point out one thing that in spite of the fact that they felt this discrimination and this treatment by their fellow subjects of the so called Commonwealth and Empire—treatment by their fellow subjects or fellow officers. After having experienced the air of superiority put on by their fellow subjects, these boys took up that attitude. I think we ought to look at the whole affair in the spirit which it deserves. I need not say anything further for the simple reason that I am as fully conscious of the gravity of the situation as anybody else may be. I think I am fully capable of pouring vials of wrath over the heads over there on the treasury benches, I can wither them with the fire of criticism and all the rest of it, I am fully capable of drawing upon a kind of vocabulary which is fairly familiar in this House. But the only subject, in respect of which I wish always to avoid it is the subject of the army. I am as conscious of it as anybody else that the army is to be kept right away from party politics. I have said it before and I repeat it again, I do not want a single man in the army who is not patriotic, I want them to be fully patriotic, but I also want them to be impartially patriotic. They must serve their country, they must serve their people, they must fight for the freedom of their country, whenever and wherever it may be possible and so long as they are animated with these feelings, I respect them. I honour them and as I said yesterday, the entire country will back them to the last man if they fight for national self respect. If it is proved that it is national indignity which they are feeling, I say—all honour to them. But if in

4 P.M.

their excitement they have gone beyond proper limits, the whole matter has to be considered calmly, quietly, in a place where we can give our views, where we can hear the War Department's views, and where we can advise the War Department to take the proper steps and not steps which may make a bad situation worse. Sir, not merely this country but the whole world today is in an explosive mood—let us not forget that. It is not this country alone which is in that explosive condition but the whole world is in that state; that is as evident to me as anything can ever possibly be to any one. I see it as clearly as I see the daylight. The War Secretary referred to strikes and the danger of strikes. I am fully conscious of the danger of strikes in the army. But, pray, who started it, and who taught this lesson? Was it these boys who started it? It was the American army which started it; it was followed up by the R.A.F. which gave the cue to the R.I.A.F. and then it was followed up by the R.I.N. It is a chain of incidents that started elsewhere, and therefore to blame these boys alone would, to my mind, be rather out of proportion. It is true that other things have happened—most regrettable things—things which no one regrets more than I do. But at the same time do not lay the blame at the wrong door. I once again say that I wish to exercise as much restraint as possible, although it is extremely difficult in the circumstances to exercise restraint. But my restraint is due to the fact that I realise that today India's ship is nearing the shore,—I am using a simile which was used by Sardar Patel in another place. It is nearing the shore, we are facing great danger, the ship has to be piloted carefully out of the shoals and rocks which lie ahead. It must be piloted as tactfully, as carefully and as cautiously as possible to the shore; and it is for that reason that I do not wish to say anything which may in any way contribute to the deterioration of the situation.

Mr. President: The Honourable Member's time is up.

Mr. M. Asaf Ali: Sir, all I can say is this that not one word has been heard in justification of the conduct of the immediate authorities whom I am condemning by this motion.

Mr. President: Motion moved:

"That the Assembly do now adjourn."

Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi (Calcutta and Suburbs: Muhammadan Urban): Mr. President, Sir, it is difficult to speak with restraint on this subject, for the reason that I am convinced that if the immediate officers in charge in Bombay, Karachi and other seaports and those at the top, wherever they were, either on the Flagship or at the Naval Headquarters, had been careful and tactful, things could have been stopped and we would have avoided the difficulties facing us. The Honourable the War Secretary used the words "electric atmosphere". That is so, Sir. But may I point out to him that there is another aspect to the problem for which that good German word "Zeitgeist" (spirit of the age) would explain my meaning better? These officers, either of the army or the air force, but particularly of the Royal Indian Navy, immediately after the cessation of hostilities went back into the spirit of the pre-war days when it was considered a legitimate privilege to treat the Indian section of the forces unkindly and disrespectfully. The basis of the whole trouble is discrimination. If I started giving examples—and they are galore—my time would be finished. But it is surprising to note here today that the War Secretary has not said one word about the treatment given to the Indian ratings, although in the broadcast and the official communiques we are told that their grievances had not been brought to the notice of the officers and men at the top. The only answer that I can give to this is that the men in charge in the War Department, and especially in its Naval Section, belong to the company of opium-eaters. They should have known and should have stopped in time the trouble that has arisen. It is no use appointing committees after the event. They admit that these boys were heroes of the war. The Prime Minister of Great Britain also has said that. They admit they are young, they admit that they have seen things which they would not have seen in their villages; and yet was it not possible for them to realise that these boys also possessed a sense of honour and a sense of dignity, and above all they possessed a soul? To kick a man is perhaps easy, but to kick his soul is damnable. The language used for these Indian ratings was, to say the least of it, ungentlemanly. I would have liked the War Secretary to tell us that the man who used that language had all his teeth broken, in the sense that he had been kicked out of the navy for using language to the heroes of a war which was not mine but somebody else's. The language used for these heroes, to say the least, was gutter language.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall (Leader of the House): Sir, has it been proved that this language was in fact used?

Several Honourable Members: It has not been denied.

Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi: I would have been glad if the Honourable Leader of the House or any of his colleagues on Government benches had got up and said that the published report is not correct. If it is not correct, the officer is absolved; but, if it is correct, what have they done? We have been told that there is a difference between a civil strike and a military strike, which is called technically a mutiny. I agree, Sir, that the technical language is mutiny, but I should like to know what was done to stop this mutiny. Did the people at the top or in Bombay, Karachi and elsewhere move their little finger to avoid this mutiny before it began. I agree with every word of the homily the Honourable the War Secretary has preached us regarding the difference between civil and military affairs. Sir, I consider that our boys, for whom he used the words 'excited and misled' were excited and misled; they should not have done what they did; they should not have acted as they did. But may I ask the Honourable the War Secretary or the folk on whose behalf he is speaking here today, who provoked them to it? These boys who could

do their duty in the war, did not go mad all at once over-right; why did they commit the acts to which exception is being taken whether in Bombay or in Karachi. Mr. President, these boys have behaved as any group of young men would have done and our boys had a greater justification to behave as they did, than men of the American and the British forces because here besides being members of the force and having rendered meritorious war service they have received, instead of rewards, instead of kindness, unkindness and kicks.

Sir, the statement, or the arguments, or whatever name we give to the speech delivered by the Honourable the War Secretary, was halting and half-hearted. It created the impression on me that he himself did not quite believe in what he was being asked to say. He went a step forward and said that these poor misled boys were being egged on to do what they had done by people who were taking advantage of their youth. It may be so, but I should like to know what the Army Department or its sister department, called the Home Department, have done to find out the people who are instigating, encouraging and misleading these boys. They sit silent and then when trouble comes we are told that a committee will go into it. We are promised a thousand and one things which usually never happen and action is never taken upon the recommendations made. Whenever, Sir, as I have said before, a thing has to be shelved, send it to a committee. The military are expected to take action immediately wherever there is anything wrong and yet they have taken no action except to arrest these boys, to stop their food and to stop their water, until, as the Prime Minister of Great Britain said, yesterday, they surrendered unconditionally. Unconditional surrender in other parts of the world has aggravated human misery and if these people stand on their false prestige, if these people do not realize that India has undergone a change, that the worm too has turned, I am sure things will become worse and worse. We are out for a new order and a new world and unless and until these people have decided to adopt the fundamental principles of the spirit of the age, we are going to pass through a long period of trouble. I remember, Sir, in the Bengal Assembly when Mr. Fazlul Huq, was ruling us with Mahasabha Assistants, the leader of the European Group in one of his speeches got up and said, "Govern or get out". May I also tell the Honourable Members to my left "Govern or get out", and the government that is in my mind is government in the interest of Indians. Your age has finished; a new age has dawned, and unless they go with the spirit of the age, I see trouble, I see misery for my own countrymen as well as for those who would like to crush them.

Sardar Mangal Singh (East Punjab: Sikh): I have listened to the speeches of both the Honourable the War Secretary and the Deputy Leader of the Congress Party. After hearing them I have no hesitation in supporting the motion that is now before the House. Honourable the War Secretary has talked of discipline and indiscipline and talked of various other things, but he has not said a word in defence of the conduct of the immediate officers who are the subject of condemnation by this motion. The country should be thankful to the efforts of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on whose advice the country have been spared widespread bloodshed, but I would like to warn the Government of India that they should not feel complacent about it; the Government of India should not think that the trouble is finally over. I warn the Government to understand the background of this trouble. This trouble in all these places is due to continued racial discrimination which is practised throughout the War Department. All those gentlemen who have any practical experience of the War Department, in the Navy, the Air Force, or the Army, will bear me out that at every step you meet with the most atrocious racial discrimination in the administration of the defence forces. I therefore would like to ask the War Secretary to examine this question very carefully and remove this racial discrimination from the administration of the Defence Department. The leader of the strike at Bombay has clearly said that for months past they have been requesting the authorities to listen to them but the average military officer thinks that the Indian airmen, sailor, or soldier, is a mercenary and he is always at his beck and

[Sardar Mangal Singh]

call. He does not understand or realize that he is a citizen in uniform. He lacks that feeling and therefore there is this trouble. These educated young boys, they have seen actual warfare and in actual warfare they have also seen that they are equally fighting and they can do every job equally as well as the British soldier and the officer. But in the matter of treatment, they are getting very unequal treatment. It is here that the shoe pinches. It is a protest against this continued practice of racial discrimination in this Department. I would request the Honourable the War Secretary to examine this question and keep that in mind.

About the conduct of the immediate officers, the strikers complain that Commander King misbehaved. They were dissatisfied with his conduct and they did not ask for any Indian officer. They said that their previous Commander should be sent back. The authorities did take some action after that and after some time Vice-Admiral Godfrey went there and he again used language which should not have been used. He talked on the air using bullying language and he went so far as to say that he would not hesitate to destroy the whole Indian Navy, as if the Navy belonged to him personally or belonged to his grandfather! This Indian Navy has been built up by the toil and money of the taxpayers of this country and no Commander-in-Chief, no Admiral has the right to get up and say that he will destroy this Navy. I expect the War Secretary to get up in reply to this debate and dissociate his Department completely from the broadcast of Vice-Admiral Godfrey and it was due to this bullying broadcast that yesterday's bloodshed took place otherwise things would have improved. I do realise that probably His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief saw the mistake and removed him from command and put General Lockhart there in command of the situation. But that will not do. I want the War Secretary to get up in this House and publicly and unambiguously dissociate the Government of India from that broadcast so that in a similar situation in future no other officer will behave like that.

I am glad, Sir, that the Honourable the War Secretary has assured the House that there will be no victimization so far as Bombay or Karachi naval ratings' strike is concerned. I am also glad that he has given the assurance that there will be no mass punishment. But there is one point on which I would like the Honourable the War Secretary to make quite clear that no punishment would be given even to individuals before the matter is taken up by the Defence Consultative Committee. On this point he was not clear, or at least I did not understand him to make that point clear that no case would be taken up individually before this matter is brought before the Defence Consultative Committee. He did say that there would be a public enquiry into the whole affair and in that enquiry the Members of the Central Legislature would be associated. So far so good. But I would like the Government of India to review the whole question of the reorganisation of the Indian Army because it is inherent in the composition and organisation of the Indian Army that racial discrimination is always kept there. The very composition of the units is based on mistrust. In every regiment there are sections, there are companies of different racial sections. The Honourable the War Secretary shakes his head, but I would like to assure him—give me any unit, any regiment . . .

Mr. P. Mason (Government of India: Nominated Official): 11th Sikhs, 18th Garhwal Rifles, 17th Dogras . . .

Mr. President: Order, order. I am afraid the Honourable Member is going much more into details than he should on this occasion. That is a wider question which we need not touch here.

Sardar Mangal Singh: I was making a point that the whole trouble was due to racial discrimination which was being maintained on this subject. Unless that goes I can assure the House this trouble will not be over. Those days are gone when the people in the old army knew only to salute and nothing else. But now the position is changed. Educated people are going there. They are

taking an active interest in the politics of the country. Therefore you cannot deal with them as if they are machines. They are human beings and the human factor should be taken into consideration. If I know that in my country I am being discriminated against a foreigner, I think such a Government which maintains such discrimination has no claim on my allegiance. I will have the right to revolt against such a Government. He is talking of discipline and indiscipline in the army! If any Government has any right to claim my allegiance and discipline in the army that Government should inspire confidence, that Government should stand for my rights. If I am ill-treated and if I am discriminated against in my own country, I have every right to rebel against that Government. I therefore submit that when the enquiry is ordered into the strikes of the naval ratings of Bombay, the whole question should be taken up and re-examined so that such a trouble may not recur.

Sir, I support the motion.

Mr. M. R. Masani (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadan Urban): The background to my remarks this afternoon is a statement, I was glad to see as I came into the House, by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the President of the Congress, that he had the Commander-in-Chief's authority to assure all persons concerned that there would be no victimization or vindictive action taken and that all legitimate grievances would be sympathetically examined and redressed. It is this which makes me resolve to exercise the same self-restraint that has been exercised by previous speakers this afternoon.

The first point that I would like to make is about the grievances of these men. I am sorry to say that the Government of India have misinformed the British Prime Minister as to the position because, according to a press report, Mr. Attlee said in the Commons that these grievances had not been previously presented. That, Sir, is not true. I shall make this statement,—that in the past few months Naval Headquarters in Delhi have from time to time received reports and complaints in regard to pay, food, clothing allowances, and leave and travel facilities given to ratings in my city of Bombay. The statement that has been issued by the Central Strike Committee of the strikers says this:

"We have all of us been in the Indian Navy for several years. During this time we have been undergoing untold hardships, low pay, bad food and the most outrageous racial discrimination. With the end of the war the problem of demobilization and resettlement has come face to face for thousands of us. We have at innumerable times made representation to the authorities for the redress of our grievances, particularly against racial discrimination and for equality of treatment, a demand which every self-respecting Indian patriot will completely support, but the authorities never listened to it. Therefore, following the example of our brothers in the Royal Air Force, we decided to go on strike and for the last five days we have been on a peaceful, disciplined and organised strike."

That was the issue some two days ago. The grievances which have been simmering for a long time have now blown up as a result of the offensive behaviour of Commander King and the arrest of two of the naval ratings' comrades. Then there is the ill-treatment of the ratings generally, the insulting attitude of Commander King. Where are then the subjects of food, of clothes, of leave and travelling facilities and the invidious discrimination made between those who are to be demobilised—the people of this country and those who are British. And there are the very ambitious, almost utopian plans of resettlement training for British personnel that are in force in our country. I do not know if they are at our expense, I am open to correction there. But in this country there are ambitious, comprehensive plans of resettlement training for British personnel, while the plans for resettlement of our own ratings are still on paper.

Another major cause of these disturbances is the feeling of insecurity among the ratings. When the war neared its end in September, 1945, there were 3,000 officers and 28,000 ratings in the Royal Indian Navy. After that, three postwar plans have been made, I understand. Here again, my Honourable friend opposite will correct me if I am wrong. I can only give third hand information, unlike him. I understand that the first postwar statement said that 900 officers and 9,500 ratings were to be demobilised, leaving a force of 18,500. A second plan replaced this plan and, according to that only, 18,000

[Mr. M. R. Masani.]

men were to be retained. And the third plan, the present plan, stipulates for only 11,000 to be retained. The result is that a feeling of fresh insecurity is created each time, in the minds of these men and, since demobilisation has been proceeding slowly and arbitrarily, they feel that whatever few civilian jobs may be going will all be exhausted by the time they are released from their commitments. The fact that the small number of 11,000 is to be retained is most distressing, particularly in view of the fact that three cruisers have been taken over by the Royal Indian Navy from the British Navy.

Another factor that makes for irritation is that, while on the one hand hundreds of Indian Officers and thousands of Indian ratings are to be demobilised, three hundred British Royal Navy officers are being transferred to our establishment. These are some of the very specific grievances of which Naval Headquarters have been aware for a long time.

The trouble, Sir, is that according to naval law you must either take things lying down or ask for redress individually, because I am told that any combined representation is unlawful in the Navy. Every man must be for himself and will be dealt with as an individual. That makes it extremely difficult for the peaceful redress of grievances to take place and men who are frustrated and whose grievances are unredressed are driven by the conduct that Commander King indulged in to take the extreme step. The *Times of India*, which nobody will accuse of being an irresponsible paper, has this to say about the blunders of the Government of India today:

"On the face of it, these performances have been far from creditable to all concerned. In principle, resort to such methods by military personnel is inexcusable: in practice its very occurrence and in some respects the grounds for dispute reflect deplorably on the discipline and command of the units and forces concerned. Discipline and command, be it noted, are no mere matter of rigid obedience or enforcement of authority; they equally comprehend close understanding between officers and men—the constant concern of the former for the reasonable interests and comfort of the latter."

The motion today is to censure the naval authorities for failing to ensure this close understanding between officers and men and for their lack of concern for their interests and their comfort, which was their duty.

These naval incidents have led to a situation in the city which I have the honour to represent here, which must cause concern to every one of us. According to newspaper reports, 98 people have been killed and 496 people have been injured and admitted to hospital. These figures are not generalisations. They are the addition made of figures submitted by about four or five hospitals in Bombay. If they were challenged, I would have no hesitation in reading them.

My Honourable friend said that it was necessary that the two points of view and the gulf that separates them should be understood and explained and I shall make bold, in the same spirit in which he has done it, to try and ask him to examine this question. Why is it that these persons, whom he has chosen to call 'Mutineers', have the unanimous support of the citizens of Bombay? It is on record that the Bombay Municipal Corporation adjourned as a mark of sympathy with the naval strikers. It is on record that the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee has passed a resolution sympathising with their grievances. It is on record that the Royal Indian Air Force in Bombay are also on strike in sympathy, and the students and workers have also come away from their normal avocations. Things may happen which we do not like, but why is it that the average Indian has reacted in the way he has done and expressed his sympathy for the cause of these men? I make bold to say that the difference is not between the military and civil discipline. Our conception of discipline is different, because the contrast is between Indian and British conceptions. That is because we do not accept the moral basis of your authority. Your law is not law to us, because it has not got the sanction of the people of this country behind it; and that is why when your military or civil law is broken, every one of us instinctively reacts with sympathy for the rebel. In other words, to come down to fundamentals, the real cause of this mutiny is the existence of British rule in this country. We have got to get down to bed-rock. It is not a matter

of food or clothing. The fact remains that, so long as there is alien rule existing in this country, you cannot get that discipline, that loyalty to the navy and to its flag. And what flag? The Union Jack! I can imagine the irritation it must be every day to any average Indian boy to have to hoist a foreign flag. Until their own flag comes, that loyalty which my Honourable friend expects will never be forthcoming.

Sir, my Honourable friend will say "Oh, we want to go". I can then only say: "You have lingered too long. You have lingered so long that you are bringing our edifice down in ruins. You have given reign to every disruptive tendency in this country, disruptive of our nationalism. Who are the people who called out the Bombay workers in defiance of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee? It is the Communist Party, your wartime allies, whom you fostered, whom you gave every facility, because you wanted to disrupt our nationalism during the period of the war. Now that you have fallen out with their principals in Moscow, they have turned against you. That is why I make an appeal to you to go while there is still an army, a navy and an air force in this country intact. And so the sooner you go, the better for this country."

Now I want you to understand the situation. Unconditional surrender was demanded according to Mr. Churchill, of only two bitter enemies—Hitler and Tojo. And now to these two, the Government of India have added a third, our own naval boys. These are not enemies. The flag they fly is not the Jolly Roger. It is the tricolour of the Congress and the flag of the Muslim League. These are the flags of the people of this country. They are not the flags of pirates or of irresponsible people. And if our boys in their teens do go off the deep end and indulge in unwise actions, I will not call them mutineers. They were only unwise, but their motive was to assert their self-respect. If these boys indulged in unwise actions, Vice-Admiral Godfrey also indulged in actions that smack of extreme irresponsibility. My Honourable friend has tried to explain away the Vice-Admiral's broadcast. Let me read the words again to refresh his memory. He did refer to the physical destruction of the Royal Indian Navy. These are his words:

"To continue the struggle is the height of folly, when you take into account the overwhelming forces at the disposal of the Government at this time and which will be used to the utmost, even if it means the destruction of the navy of which we have been so proud."

What can it mean except the destruction of the ships, which make up the navy? I make bold to say that a Vice-Admiral who talks in this language far exceeds in irresponsibility anything our boys have done.

Well, Sir, we have been told that the situation is under control and that prestige has been preserved. It has been preserved no doubt with the co-operation of men like Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in Bombay and Mr. Gazdar in Karachi. It has been preserved due to our national leaders of all parties endorsing the call of the authorities. But I wonder whether this is the kind of victory worth having? It is reported that when the ratings who had surrendered landed at the pier in Bombay, large crowds applauded the ratings. They are the moral victors of the struggle—the men who surrendered. Sir, in view of the assurance that has been given by the Commander-in-Chief that nothing will be done further which will exacerbate the situation, I wish only to remind the opposite side of the words of Abraham Lincoln that "Nothing is ever settled that is not settled right", and I hope, Sir, now that the lesson has been learnt, it will result in the redress of the legitimate grievances of these men and a recognition of their patriotism and of the self-respect that they have preserved for this country.

Mr. P. J. Griffiths (Assam: European): Yesterday, when this House discussed the advisability of sitting today, I expressed doubts as to the wisdom of a debate on this particular issue at this juncture. It was my fear that a full and frank expression of opinion, without which a debate of this kind would be meaningless, might well make the situation worse rather than better. Since, however, the House decided otherwise, I cannot let these doubts deter me from saying certain things which may be unpalatable to some of the Honourable Members in this

[Mr. P. J. Griffiths]

House. I propose to begin by saying something which will probably be unpalatable to the Front Benches. Perhaps I should make it clear to begin with that what I am now saying is a purely personal view. That view is that on an occasion of this kind, when we are discussing an issue of first class importance connected with the Forces of the Crown, the War Member should have been in this House to deal with the debate. This is not the first occasion during the present Session when matters of great importance relating to the Defence Forces of the Crown have been discussed and on none of those occasions has the War Member considered it necessary to be present. I recognize his reluctance, in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief, to be embroiled in these disputes, but he is also War Member and this House is entitled to expect that when a first-class debate is about to take place the Member in charge should be here to deal with it. In saying that I cast no reflection upon the War Secretary, Mr. Mason, whose lucidity of exposition and sincerity and courage in handling these matters, I greatly admire.

I turn now to the more direct issues concerned. It seems to me that there are four separate matters to be considered. Firstly, we have to make an accurate estimate of what has really happened; then we have to ask why it has happened; from that we have to go on to consider its probable effects; and finally we need to address ourselves to the action now to be taken. Let me take the first: what has happened? Here it seems to me of the utmost importance neither to exaggerate nor to minimise but to try to form a just judgment of exactly what has taken place. I do not want to use harsh words, but there is no other word by which to describe what has taken place than that word which my friends dislike so much—the word 'mutiny'. Mutiny not in a technical sense, but mutiny in a real, full and practical sense. Ships were seized; shells were prepared for firing; shots were fired. What else must soldiers or sailors do to come under the category of 'mutineers'?

Prof. N. G. Ranga (Guntur *cum* Nellore: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Why should they not? You go out first.

Mr. President: Order, order.

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: I realise that I declare these actions to be mutiny. My arguments may fall on deaf and unresponsive ears.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Your hearts are dead.

Mr. President: Order, order.

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: Let me therefore just read from a paper which is edited by a relation of the Leader of the Congress party—I mean the *Hindustan Times*. What do I find as the heading in the *Hindustan Times* yesterday? It says "Indian ratings mutiny at two centres". Don't let us pretend that by calling a spade an agricultural instrument instead of a spade, we somehow make the situation better. Let us admit what has happened is a mutiny. In the course of the mutiny certain demands were made. Those demands fall into three categories. The first is what you may call service demands such as those for pay, allowances, gratuities, better food and the like. We have not yet here before us sufficient material to judge how far those demands were reasonable or how far they were unreasonable. Whether they were reasonable or unreasonable, no army and no navy anywhere in the world can admit that even if men have reasonable complaints they can go into open mutiny to enforce their demands.

Then I turn to the second class of demands made by the mutineers—demands for the release of certain arrested persons.

Mr. Manu Subedar (Indian Merchants Chamber and Bureau: Indian Commerce): Has the Honourable Member any first-class information as to what was said by Commander King?

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: Have you?

Mr. Manu Subedar: That is why we propose to withhold judgment.

Mr. President: Instead of putting questions to the Honourable Member and his answering them, he should be allowed to proceed with his speech.

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: The reasons for the arrests of these persons are somewhat obscure, but they seem to have been accused of writing political slogans on walls inside the naval camps. Let me put this question to my Honourable friends: Is there any country in the world or any navy in the world the members of which would be allowed to write political slogans on the walls in their camps?

Diwan Chaman Lal (West Punjab: Non-Muhammadan): Is there any other national Legislature in the world which has the misfortune of being addressed by a foreigner?

An Honourable Member: Is there a German member in the House of Commons?

Mr. President: Order, order. The Honourable Member should be allowed to proceed with his speech.

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: As it seems apparent that rhetorical questions are not understood I will confine myself to simple statements.

The third class of demands related to Indonesia and the Indian National Army. I do not know why these demands were put in but I suspect it was done to gain the sympathy of my friends on those Benches. One can understand that even though one cannot excuse a mutiny with regard to service conditions. But when a mutiny is conducted for political reasons, on account of demands by the members of the Army or the Navy that the Government shall or shall not employ the forces of the Crown in a certain way, such a mutiny can claim neither our understanding, nor our sympathy, nor our toleration. Mutiny on these grounds is something which would without fail undermine the very foundations of the State. It is very difficult for my Honourable friends here who have never been associated with any fighting service to understand what is meant by the bonds of discipline. Let me tell them that discipline is not something which exists just to ensure obedience. It is something far more than that. It is some thing which means a spirit of cohesion. It is something which brings unity to the forces. It is something which makes it possible for each man to rely on his neighbour in time of danger. It is a spirit which inspires men in the forces with pride and self-respect; and it is for this reason that when you break down that intangible spirit which must animate any fighting force, when you break down that spirit, your army or navy becomes a rabble and a dangerously armed rabble at that. It is for this reason that mutiny is regarded by all states as one of the most serious of crimes

Why did this mutiny happen? I am not going to stop to deal with the local causes: I want to deal very briefly with the causes of a wider and more general nature. I will begin first by agreeing to a limited extent with my friend, Mr. Masani. I do agree that deep down the fundamental cause of this trouble, and of all the other widespread troubles in India today is the strain inherent in the present political situation. That is perfectly clear to everybody—no arguments are necessary to prove it. There is a maladjustment, there is a sense that the present form of Government is outworn; and as long as that sense persists so long will incidents like these be likely to occur. Let us admit that frankly. There is only one thing we can do about it and that is to effect as fast as we can a constitutional settlement. But we can not say that until that constitutional settlement takes place, men may mutiny and capture ships and that soldiers may desert.

An Honourable Member: Why not?

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: Because we have to hand over to you something worth handing over. Until the very day when the change of Government takes place, it is the duty of the existing Government to maintain the machine in such a condition that it is worth your while taking it over.

I come now to the second factor, which I believe to be a very real factor in the trouble, and that is the bad example set by certain men of the R.A.F.

[Mr. P. J. Griffiths]

Speaking as an ex-member of the R.A.F. myself, I deplore very deeply that bad example which was set, and I hope that if on any future occasion similar indiscipline occurs in the R.A.F. the authorities will take the strongest possible action to deal with it

An Honourable Member: Thank God you are not War Minister.

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: Then I pass on to the third general cause of this widespread trouble, and here I have got to speak out quite frankly. You cannot have people going about the country, making inflammatory speeches, speeches deliberately intended to stir up trouble, speeches deliberately aimed at making the armed forces waver in their allegiance—you cannot have speeches of that kind going on day in and day out, without their having repercussions on the psychology of men in the armed forces of the Crown. I have not got the time now to quote them—on some other occasion I will do so—but Honourable Members know perfectly well that they have been made by some of the most influential and some of the most vociferous Congress leaders during the past two months.

Then I pass on to one more cause and that is the effect of the events connected with the I.N.A. trials. I do not propose to discuss them in detail—I have given my views on it only a week ago; but it does seem to me that when 20,000 men belonging to the armed forces of the Crown are lauded and made into national heroes for having gone over to the enemy

An Honourable Member: They were handed over to the enemy!

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: it would be the height of folly to expect that it would have no reaction on the discipline and morale of the armed forces of the Crown.

And so, if I have to sum up the causes of this trouble, I should say, first you have the general cause—the political maladjustment; secondly you have certain local causes, about which we do not know very much yet; and thirdly, you have the unwise and thoughtless agitation carried on in the political field by certain men who should provide more responsible leadership.

What are the effects of this likely to be? I need not stop to dwell on the long term effects. I need not remind my Honourable friends that there is one thing that will above all else matter to a self governing India and that is, to have an army and navy and air force on whose unwavering, unhesitating and unarguing obedience she can confidently rely. It may well be that what has taken place today

Sjt. N. V. Gadgil (Bombay Central Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Leave it to them.

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: I cannot leave it to him

Sjt. N. V. Gadgil: You must.

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: It may well be that what has taken place today will weaken that reliability, that dependability, and that when my Honourable friend, Mr. Asaf Ali, becomes the War Minister in a new cabinet

Mr. M. Asaf Ali: Spare me!

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: and if my friend Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan becomes war minister in Pakistan, they will discover that forces have been unleashed in the army and navy and air force which they cannot control. There is one more consideration

Mr. President: The Honourable Member's time is very nearly approaching limit: he has got only one minute more.

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: I am just finishing. There is just one more word. We have seen the causes, we have seen their effect. What is to be done now? In my view there are two things to be done now. The first is for Government, and it is that Government should make it unmistakably clear that if by any ill fortune there is a recurrence of this kind of thing, they will use to the utmost

the forces of the Crown to suppress it (*An Honourable Member*: Oh!) and in that action, action which will be for the benefit of India herself, they will have the fullest and most unqualified support of this Group.

Finally, there is one more thing to be done, and this is a thing which rests in the hands of my Honourable friends of the Congress Party, and I would appeal to them: Do not make the mistake that you made over the I.N.A. Do not turn these men into national heroes. Already untold mischief has been caused because men who had broken their oath of allegiance have been made into national heroes. Do not repeat that mistake. For these men at least you have no political excuses to offer. These men mutinied for more pay and better food and allowances. Can you make national heroes out of them? So, I say that whatever may have been the follies of the past, whatever may have been the causes of this outbreak, let us see to it that those causes are not aggravated and not allowed to spread elsewhere by making these mutineers feel that the country is behind them.

Dr. G. V. Deshmukh (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Mr. President, it seems to me that the cook of Mr. Mason's story had a lot more sense than Admiral Godfrey or even the Prime Minister of England—or coming nearer the House—than even the Leader of the European Group. For this reason: that that cook knew it was a very insufficient reason to join the so-called, alleged mutineers—I do not call them either rebels or mutineers for reasons which I will presently state. They all seem to go into a panic and they do not realise that they have all gone into this panic out of sentimental reasons and call, what I would certainly call a strike, a mutiny; and you have warships travelling over from England and coming to this place and this Admiral Godfrey with the help of another Rattrey—he says he has overwhelming forces at his disposal and he will destroy the whole of the R.I.N. What are we to think of these people, these naval men about whom, when it suits your purposes, you praise them to the skies—and not only praise them to the skies but in your own despatches you give them distinctions and honours. It suited you then to call them heroes; and now when they complain about the inhuman conditions—bad pay and bad food and racial discriminating behaviour—then you say that they are mutineers. Is that right? I do not think it is fair so to call them. Would you call these people who were merely beginners in naval warfare—they really did not get more than six years' course—my friend Mr. Griffiths and others should know that this R.I.N. has not been long in duration—it is only of six years' standing from the year 1939, and up till now you have increased it twenty-fold, that is, about 19 times the number of the original navy: they are fresh and young and new, and yet in spite of that they go from Akyab to Letpan; they earn distinctions in the battles of Burma; and not only in Burma but among the European nations such as the Italians and others—they also know how brave they are and how gallant they are; and on the beaches of Letpan as well as Akyab they helped this Government to win the so-called European war, and now you come forward and you call them mutineers. I say you ought to be ashamed of yourselves to call them mutineers. After all, what were the real issues that these people raised? Not just for bad pay, not just for insanitary conditions; but do you expect these valiant and brave men, of whom you may be conveniently proud but of whom we will always be proud—you think that they should put up with these inhuman conditions after having seen war all over the world. Certainly not. But what is the real cause of this trouble? I say these are all minor factors about bad pay. The real cause of the trouble is the racial discrimination. It has been made absolutely clear. My friend Mr. Mason says that there must be some one who has led these ignorant and young men to this step. I say whatever has led to this stage is obvious and apparent. It is not only the inhuman conditions—I repeat it again, it is the racial discrimination that has been exercised; and can you deny that that racial distinction is exercised not only in the navy but also in the army?

[Dr. G. V. Deshmukh]

I make bold to say that even among the I.C.S. there is racial discrimination, if they will only speak out. It may not be convenient for them to speak out. Can they deny that racial discrimination exists even now. (An Honourable Member: "They don't go on strike".) They will, if they could. Since they are well looked after with regard to their pay and service conditions they would put up with racial distinctions.

Shri Sri Prakasa (Benaras and Gorakhpur Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Mr. Griffiths mutinied from the I.C.S.!

Dr. G. V. Deshmukh: You cannot expect valiant heroes to put up with those conditions. Now, it has been said: 'We want to hand over your army and your navy and the fighting forces in a good condition for your future government'. Why are you so frightened about it. It is you people in the early stages of the war who called our soldiers and sailors mercenaries and you expect that they will be loyal. I say there is only one remedy to make them loyal. Give them some ideal that they may be proud of. Give them national government and you need not worry whether they will be loyal to us or not. What was the example of Russia? There were so many different communities and races there—even more than in India. Hitler had thought that on account of so many differences the Russian army will not be able to stand and that it will disintegrate but as soon as a common ideal was given to them—and that was the national ideal—what happened? Did the Ukrainian desert the Russian army? Not only the European Ukrainian but also the Russian barbarian from the steppes fought for all they were worth for the common ideal; and, Sir, that is the real remedy, if you want to remedy this state of affairs. Don't be unnecessarily frightened. You have looked after us in your own way for a long time. I am telling you better remedies so that we will be able to look after ourselves much better. You have your own idea of discipline. After all ideas of discipline are relative. Some ideas of discipline which may apply at an early stage will not be applicable at a later stage. You may have your own ideas of discipline. You think that Indian soldiers should be satisfied with a bowl of kanji and should be loyal to you, because they were under the impression that it was the British Government which was giving them pay. I say that the national consciousness has been aroused and you have to take note of it. You must take this new factor into consideration. Not all Godfreys, with all the might of the British Empire, nor the members of the European Group who think that these I.N.A. people should not be considered as heroes,—I even go a step further—not even all the atomic bomb power that you will be able to control will be able to destroy the national consciousness that has been aroused in this nation.

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: We do not want to do it.

Dr. G. V. Deshmukh: Even if you want to do it, you cannot do it. In the circumstances the right thing to do is to give these men a proper ideal. Give them a national government and all these difficulties will disappear like the mist on a fine morning and then my friends need not worry about the future.

There is one more point to which I should like to draw the attention of the House. We heard the War Secretary say that shops were looted. I should like the House to analyse the situation properly and isolate the question of these R.I.N. from the mob fury that has taken place in Bombay. I want you to isolate this, so that the two may not be associated and the real question about these R.I.N. people should not be judged in a wrong way. Now, why do these mob furies break out? We have repeatedly seen that whenever any constitutional progress is going to be made in this country this mob violence breaks out. We have seen that the excuse or the argument is that there are hooligans and there are communists. What I say is this. Is this the duty of the police or the duty of the military to put down this hooliganism? How is it that in a city like Bombay where there are so many police they are not to be found when

mob violence breaks out. I have it from my friends in Bombay that when the post offices were being burnt and when this mob fury was taking place, the police was not to be seen. I make this statement on the floor of the House. I do not want to insinuate anything but what I say is this. It is the duty of the police and if the police every now and then brings forward this excuse that this is the work of the hooligans and communists, then the police is inefficient.

Mr. P. Mason: On a point of order. We are discussing the R.I.N. now.

Dr. G. V. Deshmukh: May I point out to my friend that it was he who alluded to the looting of the shops.....

Mr. President: You need not reply to the point of order. You have got one minute more to finish your speech.

Dr. G. V. Deshmukh: I say that you must isolate this question of the R.I.N. We, Sir, must feel about the losses in Bombay. There are one hundred people dead and there are over 500 casualties. After all if this thing started from the reaction of the bad treatment of the R.I.N. men, then I say that we cannot be so blind or so heartless as not to allude to it on the floor of the House. I do not care whether this is a Provincial subject or a Central subject. I say that if the police is so incompetent then the Commissioner of Police should be done away with. He should be the first person to be sacked.

In conclusion, let me tell my friends that the old order has changed. If you believe even now that by merely paying your monthly salaries you can expect that discipline will be maintained and loyalty created, you are very much mistaken. There is a higher loyalty and a higher discipline and I am very glad that my friends of the I.N.A. and the R.I.N. have proved themselves adherents of this better loyalty and worthy sons of this country.

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan (Meerut Division: Muhammadan Rural): Mr. President, it was refreshing—I do not want to use any other expression, because I have no desire to embarrass my Honourable friends of the Congress Party—to find the Deputy Leader of the Congress Party paying his tribute to the valour and bravery of the Indian soldier.

Mr. M. Asaf Ali: Why should I not?

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan: He said that he was proud of their achievements. I said it was refreshing, because so far all that the Indian soldier has heard from the Leaders of the Congress is that they were mercenaries and rice soldiers. (Interruption).

Mr. President: Let the Honourable Member go on with his speech.

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan: I do not mind interruptions. Don't bother.

Mr. President: It is not a question whether the Honourable Member minds it or not. It is the concern of the Chair to regulate the debate.

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan: Then I hope that the Chair would be good enough to control them.

It would, I am sure, be a source of great encouragement to the Indian soldier who has proved his worth and who has certainly established the reputation of India during the last war.

I am afraid, Sir, that your desire to assist Honourable Members of this House in this debate by asking the War Secretary to make his speech before the commencement of the Adjournment Motion which he was to make during the course of the debate has not really been taken advantage of. Very few Honourable Members of the House have paid much attention to what the Honourable the War Secretary had stated as the policy of the Government of India with regard to this matter. After the Honourable the War Secretary had made his statement, I asked you, Sir, if I should ask questions then or should I reserve my remarks till the debate on the Adjournment Motion took place. Now, Sir, I would like to take this opportunity of asking the War Secretary to clarify further the policy of the Government with regard to the matter of enquiry. I understood the War Secretary to say that there would be more than one enquiry. First, he said there would have to be an enquiry by the services themselves. Then,

[Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan]

he said there would have to be an enquiry by a Commission or Committee whatever you like to call it, with which would be associated the elected Members of this Honourable House and that enquiry would deal as to how this trouble arose and the reasons for indiscipline. Now, Sir, if this Committee or Commission or Tribunal has to enquire into this question as to how this trouble arose and the reasons for indiscipline, I fail to see what enquiry the services would make in this matter, because after all, the services would also enquire into this question as to what were the reasons for this trouble and what were the reasons for indiscipline. What is the object of having first a departmental enquiry and then having another impartial enquiry into the same matters, I fail to understand. If really it is the object of the Government to have an impartial enquiry made into the whole affair, and if the Government are really serious to give an opportunity to the elected Members of this House to be associated with such enquiry, then I am afraid I cannot see any logic in having an earlier enquiry confined particularly by the members of the services only. Then, Sir, there is another aspect of this enquiry about which I would like the Honourable the War Secretary or the Leader of the House, whoever is going to speak on behalf of the Government to enlighten Honourable Members. Would this Commission also be competent to examine the grievances of R.I.N., and recommend to the Government the remedies to meet those grievances or would it only be confined to the acts of Commission by R.I.N.? Sir, I think these are matters about which I would like the War Secretary to make the position of the Government clear.

Sir, my Honourable friend the War Secretary referred to the looting of shops. My Honourable friend Dr. Deshmukh also referred to it and it was also one of the questions which I wanted to ask the War Secretary, as to who did the looting of shops?

Mr. M. Asaf Ali: Not the R.I.N.

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan: Were the R.I.N. responsible? If they were not responsible then I submit that it can not be the subject of enquiry by this Commission. Sir, I do not want to say and repeat the old saying 'did I not tell you so?'. But if the Government would look up the past records of the debates in this House, they would find that on more than one occasion some of the Honourable Members of this House including myself pointed it out to them that the treatment which was being meted out, especially to the Indian officers in the army was such that it was greatly resented by them. On more than one occasion, I pointed out that there was racial discrimination and that it would recoil on your heads and that you should take note of this fact that there was great discontent amongst the various forces of the Indian army and they were feeling very badly the indignity of being treated in a discriminatory manner. Sir, the grievances of R.I.N. have been stated by my Honourable friend Mr. Masam and it is regrettable indeed that no effort was made by the Government either to enquire into those grievances or remedy them till such time as they had to face the trouble which is now facing them. It is a common belief of every section of the people in India that the present Government sit with cotton wool stuffed in their ears, they never listen to the voice of reason till such time as it is not dimmed into their ears. All this trouble that is taking place is due to this belief which generally prevails in the country that it is no use talking to the Government of India in a gentlemanly manner, unless you really create trouble, they cannot be roused from their deep slumber. This feeling, Mr. President, is really unfortunate. I would request the Government of India to shake off their lethargy and be more responsive to public opinion and to what is stated either on the floor of the House or outside. Sir, my Honourable friend the War Secretary is talking of discipline. I am sure there is no one in this House who would not desire that there should be complete discipline in the army. But I would say that the responsibility of the officers is very great with regard to the forces. The duty of the officer is not only to lead his men to the

battle front, his duty is to keep in touch, constant touch with the feelings, sentiments and grievances of men under him. It appears from what has happened with regard to R.I.N. and the incidents which have taken place that the immediate officers certainly were not as careful and as active with regard to their duties as they should have been. Of course, without having full facts before one, it would not be fair to condemn any one out of court. But one cannot help feeling that there must have been something wrong with the immediate officers of these men. I find it difficult to believe that suddenly so many thousands of men would go mad and start creating trouble without their immediate officers knowing something about their feelings and being aware of what was brewing. Therefore, Sir, while I fully endorse the desire of the War Secretary that there should be maintained complete discipline in the army, I submit that the officers who are placed in charge of the men in the Indian army should be such as are really competent and are able to command the confidence of the Indian soldier. Sir, it is very gratifying that the situation in Bombay and Karachi, according to the War Secretary, is practically normal; and I am very glad that the men have called off the strike and have started their routine of duty. I can assure them from here that the Muslim League will use all that lies in its power to secure the reasonable and legitimate demands of the R.I.N., and they may count upon the assistance and active support of the League in redressing their legitimate grievances.

Mr. President: The Honourable Member has one minute more.

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan: Sir, I would appeal to Government to be more vigilant with regard to the feelings and sentiments of the forces in the Indian army and they should always be prompt in meeting their legitimate demands and removing their legitimate grievances. I hope that the commission of inquiry which Government intend to appoint, will be appointed at an early date with full powers to make recommendations to Government on every aspect of this unfortunate incident.

Several Honourable Members: The question may now be put.

Mr. President: I think it is only fair to allow the War Secretary to reply.

Several Honourable Members: Yes, subject to that.

Mr. President: Mr. Mason.

Mr. P. Mason: Sir, I should like to begin, if I may, by referring to the speech of the Deputy Leader of the Muslim League Party because, for one thing, it was the last and freshest in every one's memory, and also because he asked me a number of specific questions; and I do agree that these points wanted clearing up. I apologise for their not having been cleared up. In the first place, events have crowded upon us so thick and fast in the last two days that I did not quite give that anxious and careful attention to the form of what I wished to say that I would have wished to otherwise. The point really is with regard to the two kinds of inquiry to which I referred and I think also, the reference to the Defence Consultative Committee. It appears to me—and I should like to emphasise that I am speaking here really personally, because I have not had time to take the decision of Government on this matter; and it is inevitably something which would require a certain amount of consideration and consultation. But speaking personally, after consultation only with the military authorities, I should say that there are really three things for discussion. The first is the general policy—and that we are already to a certain extent discussing—and that is a question which I would like to have referred to the Defence Consultative Committee as soon as it is constituted and as soon as it can meet; and I hope that every one in the House will agree that that should be as soon as possible. Then, Sir, I think as soon as that has been discussed with them, there will be two things to be done. One will be that we shall need a series of service inquiries into the actual course of events, into what actually happened in each of the various centres. These will be courts of inquiry which will record evidence and make recommendations.

Mr. M. Asaf Ali: To whom?

Mr. P. Mason: To the Commanding Officer in question.

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan: About what?

Mr. P. Mason: They will make recommendations as to the actual conduct and the guilt of the persons concerned, which will be in accordance with the general policy laid down from here after consultation with the Defence Consultative Committee.

I then turn to the scope of the wider inquiry to which I referred. As I say, I visualise myself that this should be a very full and very impartial inquiry on which various elements should be represented. I cannot really go into details because, as I say, I shall have to consult Government as a whole, and a decision of the civil Government would be necessary. But with regard to its scope I quite agree that it should have a very wide scope. It should be asked to inquire into the causes, that is to say, the grievances which the men put forward as their reasons for indiscipline; it should also—I am quite sure—inquire into any allegations made against the officers in question and into the conduct of the authorities in general. In fact it would be an inquiry which would be empowered to bring in a report which condemned the Government of India. But, as I said, I can only speak for myself at the moment.

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan: Would it not inquire as to who were responsible for this?

Mr. P. Mason: Yes, Sir, that is exactly what I just said.

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan: Then, what is the need for the other service inquiry?

Mr. P. Mason: One is an inquiry into the grievances of the men, the conduct of their immediate officers—which is the subject of discussion at the moment—and everything connected with the reasons for the trouble. The others would be regarding the facts and regarding individual men; it would be whether Able Seaman Khan did or did not refuse duty on a certain day. That would be a question which would be quite beyond the scope of the committee of the kind I have in mind. That is why I think we will need to have two kinds of inquiry.

As I said, Sir, I am sorry I failed to make that point clear, but that is really the main question which the Nawabzada asked me. There remain a number of other speeches which have been made in which it seems to me that the essential point—no doubt due to my failure to make myself clear before—has been missed. And the essential point is that I think there should be this full and impartial inquiry; and until that full and impartial inquiry is held it is surely premature for us to make up our minds. For example, there is one specific point which has been made several times, and that is with regard to what Commander King said. The ratings say he used certain language which, I quite agree, is very improper if he did use it. He himself says he did not. I have not made up my mind as to whether he did or did not say it, and I request the other side of the House also to keep an open mind; that will be one of the subjects of inquiry.

There is one other point that has been raised by two Honourable Members, and that is about the looting of shops. I think that there I may have fallen into the very error that I was just asking others to refrain from. I did say that in this incident the looting of shops occurred; and it is my impression that at least some of the reports did say that on the first day, before the civil rising broke out, R.I.N. ratings were guilty of breaking into shops. But I may be wrong, and I think this matter also will be inquired into.

Dr. G. V. Deshmukh: Sir, may I interrupt the Honourable Member for one minute?

The main reason why these shops—Kodak, Whiteaway & Laidlaw, and Lawrence & Mayo—were broken in was that these companies would not sell to Indian customers, but sold their goods to European customers. It was racial discrimination, even there.

Mr. P. Mason: I would ask you to keep an open mind on that question also until an enquiry has been held.

I would like to thank the leaders of the Muslim League and the Congress Party for the restraint which they have showed and for the very general agreement which they expressed with my homily at the beginning on the subject of discipline. It is quite clear that all sections of the House are at one on this question, and do wish to preserve the discipline of the Armed Forces. The question on which we differ is the best means to do it, and it still seems to me that it will be unwise for the House to make up its mind in advance, and to condemn the officers without hearing because you have not heard their side of the question any more than I have heard the side of those who have committed these acts of indiscipline.

Mr. M. Asaf Ali: We can judge by the results.

Mr. P. Mason: I would ask that in both cases we keep an open mind until an enquiry is actually conducted, and when that enquiry has been held then we should make up our mind. And I do again ask the House to consider whether if they do, without knowing the facts, censure the officers who were responsible immediately over the heads of these men, they are not encouraging the other Armed forces to do the same. I am afraid they are.

There were a number of other points raised, and I wish that every Member had shown quite the same restraint as the two leaders did. I do not want to talk about all those points because I do not want to get involved in long arguments on this subject. I think the essence of the situation is just what I have already said, namely, that we should not make up our mind until an enquiry has been held.

But there are two points which I would like to answer: The first is the reference to the Commander-in-Chief and his not being here, and I would like to make it very clear that he has to perform two functions—he is Commander-in-Chief and he is War Member at present. I personally—I am saying more perhaps than I really ought to say—personally I wish that that situation would come to an end and that we could have straightaway a civilian War Member, and I hope we shall before long,—that is only a personal expression of opinion. But so long as the Commander-in-Chief is the War Member, he is first Commander-in-Chief. That is inevitable and that is one of the defects in the position. So long as he is Commander-in-Chief, the Army and the Armed Forces must think of him as Commander-in-Chief and in my opinion it would be absolutely wrong for him to come into the House and become involved in highly controversial questions in which Members will very often say things which in the calm of their own house they would not say, and I am quite sure that he is right in the interest of the Armed Forces not to take that action.

Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon (Sind: Muhammadan Rural): How would he avoid a discussion of this sort in the Council of State?

Mr. P. Mason: Debates in the Council of State are considerably less controversial.

Sardar Mangal Singh: Is that a compliment?

Mr. P. Mason: The second point, on which I would like to say very little, is the question of discrimination. Here again, I want to say something personal. I want to say that I have served now for some four years under the Commander-in-Chief and I can say with all the sincerity I command that it has been his constant endeavour on every possible occasion to eliminate discrimination.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan (East Central Punjab: Muhammadan): Does the War Secretary know about the Navy Club of Bombay?

Mr. P. Mason: I am not giving way. The Navy Club of Bombay is not under the Commander-in-Chief.

Sir, it has been his constant endeavour to eliminate discrimination. I have seen hundreds of instances where he has intervened and taken steps to ensure that racial discrimination shall not take place, but with regard to the particular thing alleged in relation to these ratings

Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi: He has failed.

Mr. P. Mason: I think I have spoken on that subject—the question of pay—sufficiently already, and I think my Honourable friends on the other side do understand. I just wanted to make that one point about the Commander-in-Chief's own efforts. And I would again ask the House not to censure Government on this subject because, as I have said, I think it will encourage further action of a similar nature which I know that we all wish to avoid.

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan: May I ask one question from the Honourable Member? Am I right in understanding that no action will be taken against any member of the Royal Indian Navy till such time as full enquiry has been made by this Commission that the Government propose to appoint?

Mr. P. Mason: I think that is a very difficult question to answer. But may I say that no one will be punished until the question has been discussed with the Defence Consultative Committee. I cannot I think at this stage go so far as to give the assurance for which you ask. (But I can say that this question will be considered.)

Shri Satya Narayan Sinha (Darbhanga cum Saran: Non-Muhammadan):
The question may be put.

Mr. President: The question is:

“That the question be now put.”

The motion was adopted.

Mr. President: The question is:

“That the Assembly do now adjourn.”

The Assembly divided:

AYES—74

Abdul Ghani Khan, Khan.
Abdul Hamid Shah, Maulvi.
Abdullah, Hafiz Mohammad.
Abid Hussain, Choudhury Md.
Ali Asghar Khan, Mr.
Asaf Ali, Mr. M.
Ayyangar, Sri M. Ananthasayanam.
Banerjee, Sree Satyapriya.
Bose, Shri Sarat Chandra.
Chaman Lall, Diwan.
Chettiar, Sri T. A. Ramalingam.
Choudhury, Sreejutt Rohini Kumar.
Daga, Seth Sheodass.
Damodar Swaroop, Sjt. Seth.
Dani, Mr. G. B.
Deshmukh, Dr. G. V.
Ebrahim Haroon Jaffer, Mr. Ahmed.
Gadgil, Sjt. N. V.
Gangaraju, Sri V.
Gauri Shankar Saran Singh, Mr.
Ghazanfarulla, Khan Bahadur Hafiz M.
Gole, Mr. P. B.
Gounder, Sri V. C. Vellingiri.
Govind Das, Seth.
Guruswami, Mr. S.
Hans Raj, Raizada.
Hiray, Sjt. B. S.
Ismail Khan, Hajeer Chowdhury Mohammad.
Jagannathdas, Sri.
Jeelani, Khan Bahadur Makhdum Al-Haj S; ed
Sher Shah.
Jhunjunwala, Mr. B. P.
Kara, Miss Maniben.
Karmarkar, Shri D; P.
Khan, Mr. Debendra Lal.
Killedar, Mr. Mohammad M.
Lahiri Choudhury, Srijutt Dharendra Kanta.

Liaquat Ali Khan, Nawabzada.
Mahapatra, Sri Bhagirathi.
Malaviya, Pandit Govind.
Mangal Singh, Sardar.
Manu Subedar, Mr.
Masani, Mr. M. R.
Menon, Sri A. Karunakara.
Mukhopadhyay, Mr. Nagendranath.
Mukut Bihari Lal Bhargava, Pandit.
Narayanmurthi, Sri N.
Nauman, Mr. Muhammad.
Neogy, Mr. K. C.
Paliwal, Pandit Sri Krishna Dutt.
Rahmat-ullah, Mr. Muhammad.
Ram Narayan Singh, Babu.
Ramayan Prasad, Mr.
Ranga, Prof. N. G.
Reddiar, Sri R. Vonkatasubba.
Saksena, Shri Mohan Lal.
Salve, Mr. P. K.
Sanyal, Mr. Sasanka Sekhar.
Satakopachari, Sri T. V.
Sharma, Mr. Krishna Chandra.
Sharma, Pandit Balkrishna.
Siddique Ali Khan, Nawab.
Siddiqi, Mr. Abdur Rahman.
Sinha, Shri Satya Narayan.
Sri Prakasa, Shri.
Sukhdev Udhowdas, Mr.
Surjit Singh Majithia, Squadron Leader Sardar.
Tamizuddin Khan, Mr.
Thakur Das Bhargava, Pandit.
Vadilal Lalubhai, Mr.
Varma, Mr. B. B.
Vinchoorkar, Sardar N. G.
Yamin Khan, Sir Muhammad.
Yusuf Abdooli Haroop, Seth.
Zafar Ali Khan, Maulana.

NOES—40

Ambedkar, The Honourable Dr. B. R.	Lawson, Mr. C. P.
Anthony, Mr. Frank R.	Madan, Dr. B. K.
Asisul Huque, The Honourable Dr. Sir M.	Mason, Mr. P.
Banerjee, Mr. R. N.	Morris, Mr. R. C.
Benthall, The Honourable Sir Edward.	Naqvi, Mr. A. T.
Bewoor, Sir Gurunath.	Oulnam, Mr. S. H. Y.
Bhattacharyya, Rai Bahadur Devendra Mohan.	Roy, The Honourable Sir Asoka.
Chapman-Mortimer, Mr. T.	Rowlands, The Honourable Sir Archibald.
Chatterjee, Lt.-Col. Dr. J. C.	Sargent, Dr. John.
Cook, Mr. B. C. A.	Sen, Mr. B. B.
Griffiths, Mr. P. J.	Sharbat Khan, Khan Bahadur.
Gwilt, Mr. Leslie.	Spence, Sir George.
Himmatsinhji, Col. Kumar Shri.	Sri Chand, Chaudhri.
Hirtzel, Mr. M. A. F.	Stokes, Mr. H. G.
Hydari, The Honourable Sir Akbar.	Thorne, The Honourable Sir John.
Inskip, Mr. A. C.	Turner, Mr. A. C.
Jehangir, Sir Cowasjee.	Tyson, Mr. Geoffrey W.
Joshi, Mr. S. C.	Vaidyanathan, Mr. L. S.
Khan, Khan Bahadur Z. H.	Waugh, The Honourable Mr. A. A.
Kharegat, Sir Pheroze.	Weightman, Mr. H.

The motion was adopted.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, the 25th February, 1946.

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