

*Friday,
6th September, 1918*

ABSTRACT OF THE PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
Council of the Governor General of India,

LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Vol. LVII

April 1919 - March 1920

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OF
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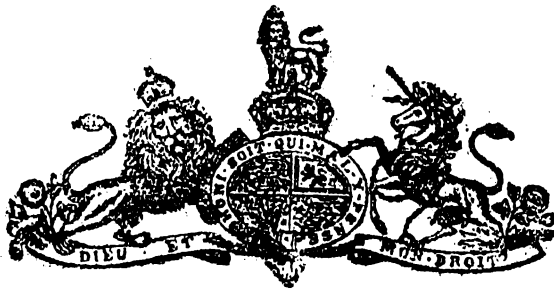


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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE INDIAN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ASSEMBLED UNDER
THE PROVISIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT, 1915,
(5 & 6 Geo. V, Ch. 61.)

The Council met at the Council Chamber, Viceregal Lodge, Simla, on Friday,
the 6th September, 1918.

PRESENT :

His Excellency BARON CHELMSFORD, P.C., G.M.S.I., G.M.I.R., G.C.M.G., G.C.B.E.,
Viceroy and Governor General, *presiding*, and 57 Members 49 of whom
were Additional Members.

RESOLUTION ON REFORM PROPOSALS.

The Hon'ble Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjea :—“My Lord, I have 11-4 A.M.
the honour to move the following Resolution :—

‘ This Council, while thanking His Excellency the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India for the Reform proposals, and recognising them as a genuine effort and a definite advance towards the progressive realization of responsible government in India, recommends to the Governor General in Council that a Committee consisting of all the non-official Members of this Council be appointed to consider the Reforms Report and make recommendations to the Government of India.’

“ My Lord, my Resolution divides itself into two parts. The first is in the nature of a preamble or preface ; the second is the operative part of the Resolution. The Resolution thanks your Excellency and the Right Hon'ble the Secretary of State for the Reform proposals. It then proceeds to state the reason for this expression of gratitude, and finally recommends the formation of a Committee to submit proposals for the consideration of the Government of India. The Committee is to consist entirely of non-official Members of this Council, and, my Lord, here perhaps a word of explanation is necessary. My Hon'ble friends on the official benches must not assume that by not including them in this Committee, I desire to cast any reflection upon them or show any want of confidence in their judgment with regard to these proposals.

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"I am animated by far different motives. The Report which is the subject-matter of this discussion has been presented to the Cabinet by the highest authorities connected with the government of India. It has behind it the support of the authority of your Excellency and of the Right Hon'ble the Secretary of State for India, and your respective Councils. In one sense it is the product of the highest official wisdom, guided by sympathy with Indian aspirations and a keen solicitude to uplift India to a status of equality with the self-governing Dominions of the Crown. But, my Lord, after all it is an official report. The officials have had their say. The Right Hon'ble the Secretary of State has invited public criticism. We are of the public, the representatives of the public in this Council, and we feel that in this matter of supreme importance, vitally affecting the interests of our people, we should be permitted to stand on our own legs, to form our own conclusions, unaided by official advice and unfettered by official guidance. My Lord, I trust my Hon'ble friends on the official side will accept this explanation in the spirit in which it is tendered, and absolve me from all blame and from all desire to treat them otherwise than with the respect and consideration to which they are entitled.

"My Lord, the first part of the Resolution has an intimate bearing on the conclusions which the Committee may arrive at. Their conclusions will be largely determined by their attitude, their standpoint, their whole outlook with regard to the Reform proposals. If they reject them outright, refuse to look at them as unacceptable or undiscussable, their recommendations will partake of a certain character. If, on the other hand, they accept my Resolution their recommendations will follow a different line. Speaking for myself, I will say this, that I regard the Reform proposals as a distinct advance upon the existing state of things, nay more, as a definite stage towards the progressive realization of responsible government. My Lord, in the whole history of British relations with India, there never has been a more gracious message than that of the 20th of August, 1917, and the country has welcomed it as such, nor a more statesmanlike document than the one which is now under consideration. My Lord, if I am permitted to anticipate the verdict of history, I will venture to assert that when the dust and the heat of the present controversy has been allayed, and things are seen in their true perspective, a grateful posterity will accord to your Excellency and the Right Hon'ble the Secretary of State a high and honoured place among the truest benefactors of the Indian people. My Lord, our fathers regarded the Queen's Proclamation as their Magna Charta. The message of the 25th August 1911 was even a greater charter, and this one is the greatest of them all; and our English friends, deeply interested in the political advancement of the people of India, including Commander Wedgwood than whom there is not a more stalwart champion of Indian Home Rule, have invited us to accept it as such. My Lord, I do not wish to conceal from myself or from this Council,—I have never concealed the fact from the public in my other capacities—that the scheme needs improvement, modification, and expansion. It seems to me that the authors of the scheme themselves are cognisant of this fact, for Mr. Montagu has openly invited public criticism, and has openly declared that he would be delighted if a better scheme could be substituted in place of the one he has suggested. My Lord, the fact of my making a recommendation for the appointment of a Committee implies that in my opinion the scheme is one that should be considered, criticised, amended, expanded. But let me not be misunderstood. I take my stand upon what your Excellency was pleased to observe the other day as the basic pledge. We want to build upon it; we want to modify and expand the scheme in conformity with its essence and spirit, so that it may satisfy our legitimate aspirations and carry out the gracious intentions of the message itself.

"My Lord, the Report devotes a considerable amount of space to what indeed constitutes the vital feature of the whole scheme, namely, the reform and expansion of the legislative and executive machinery of the Government. The authors of the Report concentrate their attention upon the Provinces. They make them the starting point of their deliberations, and the merit of the Report

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is to be largely judged by their recommendations under this head; and I will repeat what I have already observed before, namely, that here, in the domain of provincial reform, we have a distinct advance, a great advance, upon the existing state of things, and a definite stage towards the progressive realization of responsible government. Before I sit down, my Lord, I hope to be able to prove this proposition to demonstration. Let us look at the matter a little more closely. The Report recommends that every Province, major or minor, big or small, is to have a Governor and a Council, with two Members, one of whom is to be an Indian. What does this mean? It means that one-man rule disappears from India. It means something more. It means the association of the Indian element in the work of the highest Executive Council in every Province.

“Then the Report recommends the complete separation of Provincial and Imperial finance. My Lord, this is a reform for which we have been pleading since 1890. The late Mr. Justice Ranade, an honoured name in the annals of Indian progress, was the first to recommend it as a member of the Finance Committee. He was supported by Sir Charles Elliot, the President of the Committee, by Justice Cunningham and by the late Sir William Hunter, and we are now within a measurable distance of the fruition of this reform.

“My Lord, coming to the Legislative Councils, there is to be a substantial element of elected Members in that Council. I ask what does that mean? It means that the representatives of the people will have a decisive voice in the making of those laws which affect what are called the Transferred Subjects, and a considerable measure of influence, larger than at present, in determining those laws which affect the Reserved Subjects. That is an advance upon the existing state of things.

“Now, my Lord, let us pass on to the Executive Government. What do we find there? The Executive Government under the terms of the Report will consist of a Governor, and an Executive Council consisting of two Members, one of whom is to be always an Indian, and a popular ministry. In view of the subjects to be transferred, I take it that in the major Provinces there will be at least two popular Ministers, and in the minor Provinces there will be at least one. Now counting up the figures, what do we find? We find this that, on the Executive Government of the major Provinces, out of five members, three will be Indians. On the Executive Government of the minor Provinces out of four members two will be Indians. Therefore, I am justified in holding that the Indian element on the Executive Government of the Provinces will be adequately represented; in some cases their position will be one of preponderance.

“Now, my Lord, let us pass on to the Budget. The control of the Budget is the crux of the whole situation. What do we find there? The Budget is to be prepared by the Executive Government as a whole on which there is to be an adequate element of Indians. The Budget thus prepared will be laid before the Legislative Council, and the Legislative Council will be at liberty to pass Resolutions upon the Budget, upon any item of the Budget,—and mind you, the Resolutions of the Legislative Council will be binding upon the Government absolutely so far as the Transferred Subjects are concerned, and also as regards the Reserved Subjects, save and except when a certificate is given by the Governor in respect of any item in the Reserved Subjects declaring that the vote is not to be accepted in the interests of public safety and tranquillity or in the discharge of his responsibilities in regard to the Reserved Subjects. This, however, is a power which will be used only on emergent occasions. It is not a power which will be put into requisition every day. Therefore, my Lord, I am right in holding that so far as the Budget is concerned, the representatives of the people will have a substantial voice in the framing and the disposal of the Budget and a decisive voice in the disposal of the Transferred Subjects.

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"Now, my Lord, I come to what indeed represents a fundamental and far-reaching change in the constitution of the Government of the Provinces, namely, the division into Transferred and Reserved Subjects. Certain subjects which are called transferred will be made over to popular ministers to be appointed by the Governor, presumably on the ground that they command a majority in the House. What these Transferred Subjects should be will be determined by a committee that will hereafter be appointed. We are not left altogether in the dark about this matter. The Transferred Subjects are to include Sanitation, Education, Local Self-Government, Co-operative Credit Societies, Agriculture and so forth. Now I desire to invite the attention of my Hon'ble Indian friends, non-official friends, to the nature and character of some of the subjects that are to be transferred to popular ministers. My Lord, among the Transferred Subjects are those which in my opinion, and I think in the judgment of all impartial men, are nation-building subjects. Let us take one or two of them. Take for instance, Education. The control of primary and technical education is to be made over to popular ministers. What does that imply? It means this, that the popular ministers or the representatives of the educated classes will be brought into actual living contact with the illiterate masses of their countrymen, shaping, guiding and moulding their minds and aspirations, leading them onward and upward to the up-building of a true national life. My Lord, it is quite clear that the illustrious framers of the Report who made this recommendation were anxious that an Indian nation should spring up, which is to be the basis of responsible government. It seems to me that this is a striking testimony in favour of the acceptance of this part of the Report.

"Then, my Lord, there are to be Standing Committees attached to departments or groups of departments; these Committees to consist of Members to be elected by the Legislative Council. Their capacity would be advisory, but they would be trained in executive and legislative work. Lastly, Members may be appointed to positions analogous to those of Parliamentary Under Secretaries. All this is an indication of the genuine desire on the part of the framers of the Report to prepare a training ground for the future ministers of a responsible government.

"My Lord, I think I have demonstrated that there is a considerable advance in the Legislative Councils in the Executive Government of the country, in the matter of the Budget, a considerable advance in all these respects, an advance giving a substantial measure of power to popular representatives, and therefore I think the first part of my proposition is proved, namely, that your Excellency and the Right Honourable the Secretary of State are entitled to our grateful thanks. But something more yet remains. My contention is that you have responsible government, the first stage of responsible government under these proposals. My submission is that you have responsible government, or at any rate the beginnings of responsible government at the first stage; you have an increased measure of it in the intermediate stage, and you have a complete measure of it after ten years when full autonomy is conceded. Let me proceed to the demonstration of this proposition. My Lord, the responsible ministers are to hold their offices during the lifetime of the Legislative Assembly, that is to say for a period of three years. They will be eligible for re-appointment in the event of their being re-elected by their constituencies. Therefore it comes to this, that their continuance in office as Ministers after their first term of office depends upon the vote and the suffrage of their electorates. Therefore, from the very first it will be their duty, it will be their interest to try to please their electors and to obtain from them a re-election on the second occasion. It seems to me therefore that the accountability of these Ministers to their electorates begins from the very start; but more than that: their responsibility to the Legislature is enforced in a more direct way. The supplies, relating to the Transferred branches will be voted by the Legislative Council. In the case of an unpopular Minister, the Legislative Council may refuse to grant him the supplies. Suppose the Member in charge of Sanitation wants Rs. 50 lakhs for Sanitary purposes, and the Legislative Council, he being unpopular, declines to give him more than 2 lakhs, the Minister is handicapped, he cannot go on with his work,

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the Governor will give him a quiet piece of advice to resign and therefore resign he must. Thus, even in the first stage, I say there is responsibility to the electorate in a modified form and in a larger measure to the Legislative Council. And after five years what happens? The salaries of the popular ministers will be placed on the estimates and voted upon every year, and after ten years there will be complete responsibility. Therefore I claim that my second proposition is also proved, namely, that you have responsibility, or the beginnings of responsibility at the first stage, a greater measure of responsibility at the intermediate stage, and a complete measure of responsibility at the final stage.

“ My Lord, I am sorry I am not able to speak in the same terms of approval of the recommendations which have been made by your Excellency and the Secretary of State as regards the Government of India. Here I may be respectfully permitted to strike a note of dissent. Your Excellency was pleased to observe the other day that you had proceeded as far as it was possible for you to go, consistently with the principles laid down in the message of the 20th August 1917. I respectfully venture to differ from your Excellency in this matter. The message of the 20th August says—I am not quoting the exact words, but in substance the message says—that self-government within the Empire is the end and aim of British rule in India, and that it is to be attained by and through progressive stages of realisation. My Lord, there are no signs of any progressive stage of realisation in the proposals regarding the Government of India. There are no popular ministers, no Transferred Subjects, no popular control over any definite section of the Budget. I freely admit that the constitution of the Legislative Council is to be liberalised; two-thirds of the members are to be elected; but, my Lord, it is handicapped by the creation of a second chamber, which I fear will cause delay, friction and even retrogression. My Lord, a second chamber has not been much of a success in France or in the United States, and even in its own native soil it is, I am afraid, a sick'y plant. Lord Morley said not many years ago that this institution in England needed to be ended or amended. I do hope and trust therefore that this part of the proposals will be modified before final adoption by Parliament.

“ My Lord, there are other recommendations in the Report, in advance of the existing state of things, recommendations bearing on local self-government, on the question of the admission of Indians into the commissioned ranks of the Army, on our industrial development, and the Indianisation of the services. I do not wish to trouble the Council with any observations under these heads. One word I wish to say about local self-government. The Report recommends complete popular control over the local bodies as far as possible. My Lord, if this is given effect to, it will help to carry out the great principle which Lord Ripon laid down in his great despatch of May 1882, namely, that these institutions should serve as the instruments of popular and political education. They will also develop, foster and strengthen the electorates so necessary for the ultimate success of responsible government.

“ One word more, my Lord, and I am done. Taking the Report as a whole, I think it must be conceded that it affords a striking illustration of change in the angle of vision on the part of our rulers, and I venture to assert that it ought to be accompanied by a similar transformation in our attitude in regard to the government of this country. If an advance, a substantial advance, towards peace, conciliation and popular contentment is made by our rulers, I submit that the clearest considerations of common sense and patriotism demand that it should be followed by a similar movement on our side. Adaptability, my Lord, is the law of life, individual and collective. Adaptability is life, the lack of it is death. Adaptability has been the saving principle of our race throughout its long and chequered history, and we should in pursuance of that eternal law and time-honoured principle, adapt ourselves to our newborn conditions. And, my Lord, if I am permitted to interpose a personal remark, I will say this that opposition to Government has been the watchword of my public life now extending over a period of 45 years. I claim this, no matter

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whether it is a merit or demerit. I claim this that no living Indian politician has been more strenuous, more persistent, in his resistance to the policy and the measures of the Government than I have been. But, my Lord, a change—a welcome change—has come over the spirit of the dreams of our rulers, and they have now stretched out to us the hand of fellowship and friendship, and I invite my countrymen to grasp it with alacrity and enthusiasm, and in co-operation with British statesmanship to march forward to the accomplishment of those high destinies which, under the providence of God, are reserved for our people.

“My Lord, we live in a psychological moment in the history of our country. We are at the parting of the ways. The future is committed to our care and keeping. We can make it or we can mar it. I appeal to my countrymen to make it by the exhibition of those qualities of courage, prudence, sobriety and self-restraint, coupled with patriotic devotion, which constitute the crowning attributes of national life. I make this appeal and trust that it will not fall upon heedless ears.

“With these words, my Lord, I beg to move my Resolution.”

11-31 A.M.

The Hon'ble Sir Gangadhar Chitnavis:—“My Lord, I beg to support the Resolution. I believe it will be pertinent to the matter under discussion if in this connection I refer to the Memorandum signed by some of us in the Central Provinces. In that Memorandum we expressed our opinions on some aspects of the present Reform Scheme. We stated therein that however much some of our countrymen may like the Congress-League scheme, yet we are strongly of opinion that it would not do for us to reject any scheme that did not exactly fit in with that scheme so long as it happens to be in full consonance with its underlying principle, that principle being, as we understand it to be, self-government by progressive stages, but at the earliest possible date compatible with orderly progress and good government. We distinctly stated therein that it behoved us to accept the present scheme as it was sure satisfactorily to lead us nearer to that goal. There are no such things as minimums and maximums in practical politics. Politics is essentially made up of compromises, and so long as a compromise does not involve the surrender of any cardinal principle, it ought to furnish the only sole sure and safe means of meeting differences and difficulties inevitably arising out of conflicting and clashing claims and interests. Viewed from this standpoint, we therefore are of opinion that the scheme now before us, though it may be capable of changes and improvements in certain particulars, is a notable advance on the present system of government, and also promises to be the nearest, though it may be somewhat gradual and cautious, approach to the ultimate form promised in the announcement of August 1917. Modern self-government is a most complex and complicated science, and has to be carefully studied and practised, and it will be by the judicious exercise of the processes mentioned in the Report that we will be enabled to march on to successive stages, and the greater our success the more rapid will be the rate of progress towards the goal. We are all glad to find that the country is generally adopting this view. Thanks to the efforts of some friends in and out of Council, the attitude adopted both by the Congress and the League appears to be one of co-operation and not of rejection. The Report, which is universally praised for its sympathy and friendliness to the aspirations of the people, is evidently published and circulated for criticism and opinion, and in accordance with that dictum certain suggestions have been made and will be made from various quarters. It will be for Government carefully to consider how far, without injuring the various interests of the country, they can adopt and accept the suggestions that will be made. But it is a matter for satisfaction that a policy of co-operation and response seems to be the guiding principle of the opinions that have been generally expressed. We all hope that this spirit of co-operation that has been now engendered and a further consideration of the proposals both on behalf of the Government and people will make it possible to introduce such changes of course within limits enunciated in your Excellency's speech, as may harmonise different conceptions of thought and facilitate the progressive

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realisation of self-government and free national development of the country, so as to prevent deadlocks in administration, ensure peace and safety and avoid the evils which we find are not dissociated even with the administrations of the most advanced countries of the world. I hope the Joint Committee now proposed will bring about this desired result, and I therefore beg to support this Resolution."

The Hon'ble Sir Fazulbhoj Currimbhoj :— " My Lord, I rise ^{11-35 A.M.} to give my hearty support to the Resolution.

" On your Excellency's initiative, the Secretary of State for India came to visit us and the Reform proposals are the result of that visit. The Reform proposals are a distinct advance on the present form of administration. I do not wish to go into the details of the proposals, as a Committee is going to be appointed and they will consider these proposals in detail and submit their report. But we must acknowledge that your Excellency and the Secretary of State for India have devoted much anxious thought to the question, and have sincerely attempted to solve the difficult problem of Indian administration. Whatever the final shape the Reform proposals may take, your Excellency's and the Right Hon'ble Mr. Montagu's names will ever remain memorable and will go down to history as among the friends and benefactors of India.

" With these remarks, I beg to support the proposal."

The Hon'ble Raja Sir Rampal Singh :— " My Lord, I rise to ^{11-36 A.M.} make a few observations on the Resolution that has been moved by the Hon'ble Mr. Banerjee. I fully endorse the view expressed in the Resolution that in the Reform Scheme a genuine effort has been made for the progressive realisation of responsible government in India, and that it is a definite advance towards that goal. The Report itself is a momentous State document that shall occupy a most prominent place in the history of this country. The deep insight into Indian conditions which it displays, the true and genuine sympathy with the Indian people which it evinces, and the honest efforts that have been made to suggest substantial improvements on the present constitution, are all well worthy of our sincere and grateful appreciation. It cannot be denied that the problem of constitutional reform which the authors had to grapple was full of difficulties and complexities, and the fact with which they have handled it in a statesmanlike manner deserves all praise. In order to form a just estimate of the proposals, we must take into account certain facts which have a close bearing on them and which cannot be ignored. India is going to have a real Constitutional Government introduced in the country unknown to it for all practical purposes, for centuries in its administration. It would serve no useful purpose to shut our eyes to the existing conditions of the country and the multifarious interests involved that have to be safeguarded. What wonder is there if caution amounting to nervousness as some persons call it is the keynote of the scheme. I think caution in the first stage of experiment is necessary for the very success of the proposals themselves, and I have no reason to demur on that account. Then, again, we have to see if the scheme is a substantial advance on the present state of things, and are the proposals calculated not only to give a potent voice to the representatives of the people in the administration of the country in the experimental stage, but also to help us in the future in the realisation of Responsible Government in India to which England is now pledged? It may be that the proposals do not go far enough and that they have been too much hedged in undesirable restrictions and reservations. But the fact cannot be denied that they are in the right direction and have been conceived and promulgated in a liberal and sympathetic spirit with that object in view. But leaving aside all these considerations, can we ignore the declaration of policy which the Right Hon'ble the Secretary of State made on the 20th August last year? I think too much stress cannot be laid on a careful scrutiny of the precise terms of that declaration. It is the basic principle beyond which the authors could not go, and it is to their credit that they have given it a liberal interpretation and have carried out their mission in its connection in the same spirit. Needless to remind the Council that the announcement of the policy embodied in the said declaration was hailed with feelings of satisfaction in this country. Now our demands should be confined within the four corners of that declaration. It would be taxing the patience of the

[*Raja Sir Rampal Singh ; Raja of Kanika.*]

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Council too much to go into the recommendations in detail, and to show their merits and demerits, for most assuredly there are shortcomings which require modifications. But briefly I may touch upon them. The suggestion for the creation of Privy Council and the Council of State in the Government of India is in the right direction. I can not conceal from the Council my own feeling that a House similar to the House of Lords on improved and reformed basis would have been preferable to the State Council. The constitution of the Legislative Assembly having a majority of elected Members is a distinct and substantial improvement on the present constitution of Council and is all that could be desired. I only wish that the authors could have seen their way to provide for the appointment of ministers and the transfer of certain subjects to their portfolios in the Government of India also as they have done in the case of Provincial Governments. It is a matter of satisfaction that the authors have done their best to improve the constitution of Provincial Governments and to provide rightly in a limited manner for the transfer of responsibility over the representatives of the people. The introduction of responsible government in India is in its initial stage, and so it is necessary that in order to get a training some definite subjects should only be transferred in the beginning, and after we have gained an experience other departments may also be entrusted to our charge. In the Provincial fiscal arrangements I regret to find that no definite provision has been made for the expenditure on the Transferred Subjects, and I am afraid the would-be ministers shall have to face and bear the odium of devising means and ways for fresh taxation when the allotment made by the Executive Provincial Government would not suffice for the expenditure on the subjects in their charge. This is not fair and requires substantial modification. The most serious shortcoming I could find in the Report is that, while the authors have recognised in paragraph 147 the position, status and stake which landholding classes have in the country, they have failed altogether to provide for their adequate and effective voice in the new régime that is to be ushered in. But we can derive satisfaction from the proposal that these matters of detail would be dealt with by the Committee to be appointed in that behalf. I therefore wholeheartedly support the Resolution of the Hon'ble Mr. Banerjia."

11-43 A. V.

The Hon'ble Raja of Kanika:—"My Lord, I rise to support the Resolution so ably moved by my friend to my right. The Report on Constitutional Reforms, drafted by your Lordship and the Right Hon'ble Mr. Montagu, marks, my Lord, the most momentous event in the political relations of India and England. The Report, apart from the fact of its being a most liberal education by itself, lays down the first steps upon which the India of the future is going to be built. The announcement made in Parliament on the 20th August 1917 by His Majesty's Secretary of State for India with the fullest approval and support of the Home Government laid down definitely the ultimate goal of British Rule in India, and the principles which led to the announcement were the only logical and inevitable outcome of Britain's mission in India. The Constitutional Reforms initiated in 1909 only gave us the power and increased facilities to deliberate without any responsibility at all. Now, however, for the first time, Indians will work under and feel the weight of responsibility along with the privilege of power, and the scheme as framed works the first stage towards the progressive realisation of responsible government in India.

"It is perfectly true, my Lord, the scheme fails to satisfy the expectations of many people. To some people, it does not go far enough. According to them, the position of the people of India under the scheme is very far from the position of the sovereign citizens of the West or of the British Colonies, who make or unmake their own governments. Such a complete development of responsible government in India must take some time. But all the same we are thankful, my Lord, that at last, after long years of weary waiting, we have turned the corner and though the goal is a long — a very long way off yet, — still the goal is in view and, what is more, we know now that we shall be daily marching towards that end. So that, after all, my Lord, the attainment of

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[*Raja of Kanika ; Mir Asad Ali, Khan Bahadur ; Rai Sita Nath Ray Bahadur.*]

complete responsible government in India is no longer a question of policy—that has been laid down in the clearest terms—but it is solely a question of time. May it come soon will be the earnest wish of us all. That it may come soon will be the earnest endeavours of each and all of us both inside and outside this Council.

“The scheme, my Lord, no doubt requires modifications and revisions in particular cases. Without entering into details at present, which will be more fully considered by the Committee, we all agree that the Government of India should be liberalised.

“But, as a representative of the landlords, I feel it my duty to point out that the scheme reveals a very inadequate appreciation of the important position of the landlords in India.

“My Lord, I have very great pleasure in supporting the Resolution.”

The Hon'ble Mir Asad Ali, Khan Bahadur:—“My Lord, I had the honour to welcome the proposed Reforms and to express my views on them on the 26th of July last. The Madras Presidency Moslem League, of which I have the honour to be the President, while welcoming the Reform proposals and tendering their thanks to your Excellency, suggests some modifications and improvements therein. These have already been published in the *dailies* of Madras. 11-46 A.M.

“As a representative of the Moslems of the Madras Presidency, I tender my grateful thanks to your Excellency and to the Right Hon'ble the Secretary of State for the Reform proposals. I acknowledge them to be on the whole a considerable advance over the present position. The scheme will constitute a real step towards responsible and progressive government when it is modified and improved in the light of the criticisms of responsible leaders and public bodies, as well as of the recommendations of the Committee of non-official Members of this Council which it is proposed to appoint. I am, therefore, glad to give my hearty support to the Resolution which is before the Council, though I would at the same time beg to be allowed to express the feeling of my co-religionists, who are disappointed with the scheme as regards the inadequacy of representation of their community. I hope that when these proposals take their final shape, the Mussalmans will get adequate representation in all bodies—Local, Provincial and Imperial.”

The Hon'ble Rai Sita Nath Ray Bahadur:—“May it please your Excellency, I cannot let slip this opportunity without expressing my very heartfelt gratitude to your Lordship and to the Right Hon'ble the Secretary of State for India for the most sympathetic spirit in which your Excellency and the Secretary of State approached the consideration of the several questions relating to Constitutional Reforms in India for which all classes of people have long since been so eagerly looking forward. 11-49 A.M.

“The Reform proposals before us are undoubtedly the outcome of patient inquiries and thorough discussion, and the results obtained, as far as the Provincial Governments are concerned, are highly satisfactory, and I feel no hesitation in saying that the several Reform proposals have been conceived in a generous spirit and in a spirit of true sympathy with the aspirations of the people, for which I venture to say your name will go down to history as one of the noblest benefactors of the country. Though some of the Reform proposals may not be altogether satisfactory to some of my countrymen, I say that, taken as a whole, they are enough to satisfy the hopes and aspirations of a very large section of the people of this country. As I observed in a different place and in a different capacity that as in business so in politics there must be apprenticeship. You cannot aspire to be the head of a firm unless you have fitted yourself by successive stages and by long period of apprenticeship to assume the responsibility of controlling the firm. So in politics you cannot however, otherwise fitted by education, have the full responsibility of carrying

[*Rai Sita Nath Ray Bahadur ; Rai Bahadur
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on the administration unless you prepare yourself by training and by successive stages to assume the full responsibility of self-government. It would however be going too far to say that the several schemes of reforms relating to the Provincial Governments are full and complete and that they are altogether infallible and not at all susceptible of further development and improvements. Such defects that are there may well be left to the consideration of the Committee proposed by the Resolution before the Council.

"The Reform proposals before us have conceded many things and conferred upon us the responsibility of carrying on the administration of some departments of the Government, and if we succeed in managing them well, the Report says that the British Government would be fully prepared to invest us with greater powers and responsibilities enabling us ultimately to attain the full measure of self-government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.

"Regrets no doubt have been felt in some quarters that the proposals relating to the Government of India are not quite as liberal as those bearing on the Provincial Governments, but I feel confident that a thorough revision of these in the Committee proposed would help us to submit recommendations, which the Government might see fit to accept, and thus satisfy, as far as possible, the legitimate aspirations of the people.

"This is surely not the proper time for entering into a discussion of the minute details of the Reform Schemes, but I cannot abstain altogether from bringing to the notice of your Excellency one or two matters of special importance. It is no exaggeration to say that the zemindars and merchants represent very important interests and have the largest stake in the country, and their loyalty and devotion are unquestioned. It is well known that the zemindars pay to the Government Exchequer about one-fourth of the whole income of the Government of India. In Bengal and Bihar, the great body of landholders form a very important and influential class whose services have been repeatedly recognised and, as such, are entitled to an electorate of their own. If special electorates are considered necessary (as it justly should be) for the representation of planting and mining interests, for the Chambers of Commerce and possibly also for the Universities, I do not see any reason why separate electorates should not be provided for the great body of Indian merchants, both in the Provincial Councils and in the Imperial Council. I hope this matter will receive special attention of the Committee to be formed.

"With these few words, I beg to support the Resolution."

11-54 A.M.

The Hon'ble Rai Bahadur B. D. Shukul:—"My Lord, I welcome the Resolution so eloquently moved by my friend the Hon'ble Mr. Banerjea inasmuch as if accepted it will give the elected non-official Members of the Council an opportunity to consider, in a body, the whole Reform Scheme and place their considered opinion about it at the disposal of your Lordship the Secretary of State for India and the British Parliament, the final Tribunal by whom the future destinies of the Indian Empire will be decided. It is but, in the fitness of things, that the 'Reasoned criticism' of the Reform Scheme, by a dignified and responsible body like this, should be made available to the Government and the country before any final decision is arrived at. The very dignity of the joint report on the Indian Constitutional Reforms, an outcome of many a month's labour and thoughtful deliberation on your part which has already been gratefully acknowledged and hailed by the whole country as a historic and unique document, as well as the supreme importance of the issues at stake, demand that such an opportunity should be given. Whatever be the verdict of the country in the matter of details, there undoubtedly is unanimity on one point, namely, the spirit of genuine sympathy displayed by your Lordship and the Secretary of State, with the legitimate aspirations of the people. It is for the first time in the annals of British Rule in India that the desire for self-determination on the part of the people has been recognized by the authorities as legitimate. The memorable announcement of the 20th August 1917 has been taken as a basis of the impending reforms and the people naturally expect

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that the great and noble ideal set forth therein should be realised. The goal of responsible government being once assured to us, there should be no waver-in and no faltering.

"My Lord, so far as the scheme embodied in the Report is concerned, I admit that it is a step in advance in some directions. Decidedly it is an improvement upon the existing state of affairs, but I wish this step, the very first step taken, were more courageous, more forward, and more substantial. The gracious acknowledgment of India's loyalty by His Majesty, our beloved King-Emperor, has gone straight to our hearts. The repeated declarations that paramount regard for the words pledged and the guarantees given is the common heritage of England and India are full of virtuous import, and it was expected that a bolder and more liberal scheme of reforms would be forthcoming than the one before the country. There is no doubt, as has already been expressed by the Hon'ble mover, that several measures of reforms which the people urged for years have been conceded for which we have every reason to be thankful, but at the same time undue limitations have been imposed which not only mar the good spirit in which the whole scheme has been conceived, but are sure to hamper, if not stay, the progress of the very reforms, which your Excellency is so keen to see successful. Such limitations, my Lord, must be done away with in order to make the scheme successful and quite satisfactory. This is the general feeling of the country, my Lord, and I think I shall be failing in my duty if I do not place the same before you to-day not in a spirit of any carping criticism, but in that of a friendly co-operation, which your Lordship has so kindly invited. While a genuine effort has been made to introduce the principle of progressive realisation by gradual stages in the administrative machinery of the Provincial Government, it is passing strange that the same salutary principle has been departed from in the case of the Government of India. While it is recognized in the very Report itself that 'it is impossible that the duties which fall to the Government of India should be administered autocratically' no ostensible effort seems to have been made to weaken that unrestricted power so far as the Government of India is concerned or to liberalize it in a manner so as to bring it into line with the form of government proposed for the administration of Provinces, a change which would have been far more in keeping with the real spirit of the epoch-making announcement of the 20th of August than what has been proposed at present. Unless and until that is done, I am afraid, my Lord, it will not be possible for the tender plant of responsible self-government established in Provinces to thrive vigorously under the stunting influences of the Government of India not sufficiently liberalized. It will be thus obvious to your Lordship that the scheme needs substantial modification, particularly so far as the Government of India is concerned, in order that India, should be placed in a position to realize the goal of responsible government by gradual stages within a fixed and not indefinitely long period. Apart from this the important questions of fiscal autonomy and Indian armies still remain in abeyance. Unless India is given fiscal autonomy and unless India possesses armies of her own manned by Indian sepoys and Indian officers, and unless by these means it is made self-contained, self-defending, and self-reliant, how can it be hoped that she will be able to retain her position honourably as a self-governing unit of the British Empire to which we are all so proud to belong.

"My Lord, I quite recognize that the present scheme is not the final word on the subject of reforms. It is only a temporary device, a tentative measure, and I am not unmindful of the fact that your Lordship and the Secretary of State are fully alive to its defects as pointed out in paragraph 354 of the Report and reiterated in your Lordship's day before yesterday's speech, but my Lord, we must not forget that this is a scheme which has never been given a trial in any other part of the world and which as has been stated in the Report 'is charged with potentialities of friction' and what wonder, if there is a general anxiety felt all over the country that this 'friction' might bring about the wreck of the whole scheme which would be unfortunate.

"My Lord, I think the time has come when a policy of mutual trust and confidence should without hesitation be adopted. The gigantic war of

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liberty which has caused such mighty upheaval in the greater part of the world has also very naturally had its effect in India. Along with England and her Allies India has been pouring its men and money into the gigantic war which it regards as a war against oppression and a war in the defence of the cause of liberty, and it would be a great disappointment if the right to self-government and self-determination were conceded to it in a halting manner. I am not an advocate of any catastrophic changes; nor do I insist upon having full responsible government conceded to India all at once. By all means give us responsible government by stages, but let not the stages be long, weary and indolinite. Let the Government and the people know exactly as to within what period the final goal is to be attained. We are asked to 'show ourselves capable of statesmanship and self-restraint.' Well, my Lord, as regards the first, have not Indians already given ample proofs of their high qualities of statesmanship? Have they not filled with honour to themselves and to their country the high posts to which they have been appointed in British India and the Native States, and is it not really disappointing that they should still be thought unworthy of discharging their responsibilities properly and efficiently in the domain of the Government of India. And as regards the second, namely, the qualifications of self-restraint, my Lord, just consider for a moment if 'self-restraint' has not got a limit to it. The Report has placed the noble ideal before us as stated in paragraph 324 that henceforth the aim of the Government would 'no longer be to govern a subject race by means of the services but to make the Indian people self-governing.' We have already been under the established rule of the present form of government for so many years, and what do we find? The factors of general poverty and ignorance are still dominating to an extent that your Lordship should have found yourself constrained to withhold from us those liberal measures of reforms which are already enjoyed by our other fellow subjects of the British Empire. Is this not in itself the strongest condemnation of the present régime, and as for its love of reform, I need only refer to those measures of reforms pertaining to one section only, namely, local self-government, enunciated by that Viceroy of hallowed memory, Lord Ripon, 35 years back, with regard to which an admission is made in paragraph 13 of the introductory chapter of the Report that 'in a space of over 30 years the progress in developing a genuine local self-government has been inadequate.' If such has been the fate of a small measure of reform and if its development has not been sufficiently rapid in these last 30 years, how can the people be blamed if they are impatient and if they ask for a definite guarantee that the pace of progress of these reforms of greater magnitude, will not be indefinitely delayed and that they will be carried out within a definite period of time.

"My Lord, it is assumed that the British officers employed in India are more interested and can be more successful in protecting the interest of the people than the people themselves or their leaders, and therefore so long as the people are not sufficiently equipped to protect their own interests, the control must remain in the official hands. This is an assumption to which one cannot help taking strong exception. Are not the leaders of the people who live and move amongst them, speak the same language and are of the same mood and ways of thought, better fitted to understand as to what is best suited for their own people? Could any one deny this? Does not the past history of the present Government corroborate this? Is it not a fact that it has been a long-standing complaint of the ryots that their grievances have not been speedily and properly redressed, and that sufficient attention has not been paid to alleviating their moral and material conditions? And who brought their grievances to the notice of the Government from time to time? Certainly their own spokesmen, but to what avail, we all know and it was destined for your Lordship and the Right Hon'ble the Secretary of State to recognize the fact that 'mass education, sanitation, peasant indebtedness, technical education are long-standing questions which it was beyond the power of official government to handle without the co-operation of the people.' After this would it be fair to say, I respectfully ask, my Lord, that the officials

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and not the leaders of the people are the proper persons to protect the interests of the people? To my mind the real remedy would lie not in the retention of control in the hands of the official government, but in forming electorates in a manner so as to secure an adequate representation of the landholding classes on the expanded Councils of the Empire. If this fact is recognized the scheme, I am sure, will be capable of such improvement as will meet the wishes of both the Government and the people. Your Lordship has only to take up an attitude which was adopted by Lord Durham in the case of Canada and all the misunderstanding will be over. He observed—'If the colonists make bad laws and select improper persons to conduct their affairs they will generally be the only, always the greatest, sufferers and like the people of other countries, they must bear the ills what they bring in themselves until they chose to apply proper remedy.' If this held good in the case of Canada, why should it not hold good in the case of India? It could not be said, my Lord, that conditions in India are much more backward than those of Canada when responsible government was established there. Too much importance has been attached in the Report to religious dissensions and general ignorance prevailing in India. Well, is it not a fact that when Lord Durham recommended responsible government for Canada, he had to complain of 'no means of instructions having been provided in that country for the people.' And does not the history of Canada with its unhappy record of incessant quarrels between the French and the English bear ample testimony to the undaunted spirit displayed by Lord Durham, for which he never had so much as to repent. I earnestly appeal to your Lordship to adopt a similar attitude with regard to this country, and I am sure you will not have to repent either. Rather, your name and that of the Right Hon'ble the Secretary of State will be handed down to posterity as one to whom for ever will belong the honour of making India a self-governing unit of the British Empire. The Hon'ble mover's suggestion, if adopted, will enable the Committee to suggest such modifications as will not only minimise friction, but would even accelerate the pace of progress in the matter of reforms and enable India to reach the destined goal within a definite period of time, and I am sure the Government of India will receive their criticism in the spirit in which they will be made, and display the breadth of mind, the farsighted statesmanship and the boldness of spirit, which the occasion demands. Let the Government trust the people, and trust only begets trust. Indians place their claims upon the principles of justice and liberty and the right of self-determination. I confess, my Lord, that we were rather disappointed day before yesterday when we were told by your Lordship that all that could be given was given, and that we must go so far and no further. Yet I have not lost all hope. I still believe that your Lordship will yet continue to keep an open mind and, if backed up by you, I am sure British statesmanship will rise equal to the occasion and concede to India a more liberal and substantial measure of reforms which will not only be found conducive to her best interests, but will greatly enhance the prestige of the British Empire in the eyes of the civilised world. It is my earnest desire that the reforms now introduced should harbingers an era of peace and good-will and not that of agitation or unrest, and that there should prevail a feeling of mutual esteem and equal citizenship among all the fellow-subjects of His Majesty's Empire and, above all, that the same sense of comradeship, which exists amongst them to-day, while they are heroically laying down their lives in the battle-fields of France and Mesopotamia for the cause of honour, justice, and all that civilization stands for, should survive and prevail among them when the horrors of war have passed away and peace dawns upon the whole Empire."

The Hon'ble Sardar Sundar Singh Majithia :—" My Lord, the announcement of 20th August, 1917 marks a red letter day in the history of India, as it clearly and definitely sets forth that 'the policy of His Majesty's Government is the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.' After the Proclamation of Her Majesty

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Queen Victoria, Empress of India, of blessed memory, when after the Mutiny of 1857 India passed from the hands of the East India Company to that of the Crown, and which is considered as the Magna Charta of India, this announcement is an epoch-making one which a civilized Government has issued, defining the progressive steps which they are prepared to take to reach the goal, they have set before themselves, in the administration of this country. India has been under the rule of dynasties of different nations, and it is one of the greatest achievements of a great nation that under its civilizing influence and benevolent rule Indians are awakening to their sense of responsibilities as citizens of a great Empire. Who could have imagined or contemplated that under the régime of our past rulers and on the occasion of a gigantic struggle, the like of which the world has ever seen, a free discussion of a benevolent measure could be tolerated. Such a thing under autocratic rule was an unheard of thing, and is only possible under the ægis of Pax Britannica. Furthermore, thanks to this great Empire, we are passing through a critical period of this war safely. Thank God that anxious days are over and the pall of dark clouds has been sufficiently lifted from over the grim spectacle of the bloody battle-fields in the different theatres of the war, and as an effect of recent victories of the Allied armies the silver gleam of an honourable and an everlasting peace is looming in the horizon, but here in India, except for some very slight temporary inconveniences, we are passing our days in the ordinary pursuits of life, quite undisturbed and oblivious of what is happening yonder. This peace and tranquillity is a boon for which we ought to be grateful to the vast resources of the Empire which can accomplish all this.

“In pursuance of the policy set forth in the famous announcement the Right Hon'ble the Secretary of State visited India and received, along with your Excellency, representations, both written and through deputations, from the different interests of the country. Your Excellency and the Right Hon'ble Mr. Edwin Montagu went into the mass of evidence placed before them with great patience and labour, and the Reforms Report—a document of very great importance to the country—is a living testimony of the sympathetic handling of the problems that were presented to any two responsible officers of the Crown. The honesty of purpose and the zeal to carry out, in right earnest, the spirit of the announcement, is apparent from every page of this State document. The country has been invited to criticise the proposals and the different bodies, who have any stake in the country have given the matter their best thought and have suggested improvements in the scheme. The various views and opinions that have been submitted, I have no doubt, will receive full consideration at the hands of the Government of India and the Home Government in due course, and India will be put on the road leading to the goal of responsible government as an integral part of the great British Empire. But in the terms of the announcement of August 20th, the 'progress in this policy can only be achieved by successive stages.' We have recently had before our eyes the result of hasty climbing of the ladder of responsible self government in Russia—a power which once was a real menace to India and about which we in our younger days used to hear so much. Where is that great and once greatly feared first-class power to-day? Its politicians—idealists in their way—have by their ill-considered and hasty actions brought about their own ruin, and the great Russian Empire has been reduced to an ignominious position. Russia presents to us an object lesson which we Indians should always keep before our eyes. It is therefore no use our becoming impatient idealists and pressing for responsibilities which our shoulders are not yet strong enough to bear. Our old ways of administration, and I may say of civilization, have to be moulded anew in the mould of Western civilization, and we have to adapt ourselves to the circumstances by acquiring a thorough knowledge of the ways of the Western methods of government from Great Britain, the greatest democracy in the world. It is therefore in the fitness of things that 'the British Government and the Government of India, on whom the responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian people, must be the judges of the time and measure of each advance.' We must lay the foundations of

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the future government of India as an integral part of the great Empire on sure and sound basis and not on shifting sands. The scheme has been well conceived and well thought out and though, like all creations of the human brain, it could not be expected to be flawless and perfect in every detail, and being a tentative measure for the transitory stages, may not be free from defects, but it must be conceded that it is a genuine effort and is a definite step in advance upon the present conditions towards progressive realization of responsible government in India, and our thanks are due to the two distinguished authors of the Reform proposals for the sympathetic way in which the problem has been handled. It should therefore be the earnest endeavour of every well-wisher of the country to give the scheme his best thoughts and help the authorities to improve it and free it from any conceivable defects that it may happen to have.

"My Lord, on behalf of my community, I have to acknowledge with grateful thanks the concession by the Government of separate communal representation to the Sikhs on 'the system already adopted in the case of Muhammadans.' The Sikh community is grateful for this kind recognition of their claims, as I believe that it is on these definite and fixed communal representations that the harmonious and contented working of the Government depends, and the unity of the Empire firmly rests. No doubt the ideal of welding together the different component parts of the Indian communities into one Indian Nation, that the distinguished authors of the Report have in view, is a noble one and is one which must be achieved in the end when different communal interests must give place to national interests, and all component parts of the Indian Nation are assured of their recognised and respective shares in the administration of the country; but that is an ideal stage which under present conditions is not attainable in the near future. So it is not right that minorities be allowed to be swamped out of existence by strong majorities. It is therefore right that the rights of the minorities should be recognised and maintained by Government. Even the well-known compact of the Moslem League and the Congress people rests on the recognition of the claims of the Muhammadan community being given a definite and an adequate share of representation, not on numerical basis, but on the importance of the community as a great minority, and they have been allowed representation in excess of their numerical strength. Those who can read between the lines will have noticed the letter of the Hon'ble Raja Sahib of Mahmudabad which some time back appeared in the press setting down in very clear terms that any endeavour to go behind the Moslem League and Congress compact arrived at at the Lucknow Congress, either on the part of the Government or on the part of any one else, as regards the separate representation of the Muhammadan community, will not be acceptable to Muhammadans. For Muhammadans communal representation is a settled fact and Government cannot even go behind these 'adequate safeguards' until they are released from this pledge."

"It is therefore a matter of sincere gratification to us that Government has been pleased to extend this recognition in our case. It is earnestly hoped that when the preliminary Committees are formed to investigate the franchise, constituencies and the list of Reserved and Transferred Subjects, they would receive clear and definite instructions from Government for adequate provision being made for the safeguarding of the Sikh interests when the question is finally determined by them. The community hopes that they will be represented on these Committees, as a good deal depends on the manner in which these Committees conduct their proceedings."

"In face of the recommendations contained in the Resolution of the Hon'ble Mr. Surindra Nath Banerjea, I think it will be premature for me to discuss in detail the scheme at present, as the Resolution of my Hon'ble friend proposes and provides that a Committee of all the non-official Members of this Council be appointed to consider the Reforms Report and to make recommendations to the Government of India. In case the Resolution were accepted by the Government, it will give Hon'ble Members ample opportunity to ventilate their

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views in a practical manner when they consider the scheme in the Committee. So I will only content myself with welcoming the Reforms Scheme which, with a few modifications, has a great future before it. It is an honest endeavour to carry Indians forward on the road leading to the goal of responsible government in India. In offering my hearty support to the motion of my Hon'ble friend, I trust and hope that his Resolution will merit the acceptance of the Government of India that it deserves."

12-21 P.M.

The Hon'ble Maharaja Sir Manindra Chandra Nandi:—

"My Lord, I have had the pleasure and unique privilege of heading the list of the 19 Members of your Council who approached your Excellency about two years ago with a memorandum on the Reforms which we desired at that moment in the constitution of the various Governments and Legislatures in the country. We had then no idea of pressing upon your Excellency's attention any scheme of responsible government, as we then thought that nothing more could be expected for the moment than some improvements in the existing machineries of the Government. We had then no idea that, within so short a time, it would be possible for us to have any beginnings of responsible government in this country. The Declaration of August 20th, 1917, however, carried us much further than the position we pressed for in the famous and historic memorandum to which I have just referred. This declaration is a unique charter of our rights and freedom, and has been made the basis by your Lordship and His Majesty's Secretary of State for India of very far-reaching proposals. It is not difficult to pick holes in the scheme or to find fault with the various proposals which form its constituent parts. I will not take up the time of this Council by recapitulating what these proposals are, but I will only mention the fact that, for the first time after a long spell of centuries, we are going to have a very large measure of self-government not only in our local affairs, but also in the more ambitious and responsible administration and government of the Provinces. As very fully explained by my Hon'ble friend the mover of this Resolution, we have been promised by the scheme a very large measure of responsible government in the domains of legislation, administration and finance, and in the course of a very short period we shall be allowed opportunities of establishing constitutional conventions which will lead us automatically to a Parliamentary system of government. No amount of captious criticism can do away with the fact that the proposals formulated in your Lordship's report on Constitutional Reform do constitute an effective machinery for the establishment of responsible government in India. They mark a definite and substantial advance on our road to complete self-government. With practically complete control over all the existing machineries of local self-government, with a very large measure of popular control introduced into the Provincial administrations, with some power of the purse in all the Local Governments to begin with, with the racial bar removed from all the public services and the Army, and last, though not the least, with increased influence in the 'workshops' of Delhi and Simla, we shall be well started on the high way of responsible government. The proposals fully and sincerely give effect to the spirit of the Declaration of August, 1917, and mark a definite and substantial advance on that road. I, therefore, feel it a great pleasure to accord my whole-hearted support to the Resolution of my Hon'ble friend, Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjee."

12-25 P.M.

The Hon'ble Mr. Malcolm Hogg:—"My Lord, I rise to oppose this Resolution, because I cannot see that any useful purpose will be served by the appointment of the proposed Committee. The Resolution proposes that a Committee should be appointed, consisting of all the non-official Members of this Council, to consider the Reforms Report and to make recommendations upon it. I am really at a loss to understand what object the Hon'ble mover had in view in making this proposal, because, in my opinion, the result of the appointment of this Committee would be either futile or actually mischievous, and I will endeavour to explain why I hold this opinion."

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[Mr. Malcolm Hogg.]

Many of the Hon'ble Members of this Council have already expressed their opinions upon the Reforms Report in considerable detail and with great emphasis. In their speeches and writings, a wide diversity of view has appeared, but the opinions expressed have fallen, I think, into two main schools of thought. There is one school of thought which regards the Reform proposals as entirely disappointing and inadequate, which was at first disposed to have nothing to do with them and to reject them altogether, but which latterly, more I think from considerations of policy and tactics than from any change of view, has rather shifted its ground and is now apparently disposed to patronise the reforms provided they are altered out of all recognition and mutilated into an imitation of the Congress-League scheme. There is a second school of thought which recognises the Reform proposals as generally acceptable, but desires them to go further and in fact asks for more. Now, it appears to me, that these two schools of thought are radically and in principle different, and I cannot see how they can arrive at any common conclusion except by either the entire sacrifice by one side or the other of its convictions or the partial sacrifice of their convictions by both sides. Now, what does this mean? It means that the result of the deliberations of the proposed Committee can be only one of two things. If both parties stick to their convictions, the Committee will have to present a set of recommendations representing the views of the larger faction together with either a minority set of recommendations, or else a comet's tail of dissenting minutes. Such a result, I think, would prove the appointment of the Committee to have been unnecessary and its labours futile. The alternative is that by a sacrifice by both sides of a part of their convictions a sort of anæmic compromise will be arrived at which will satisfy neither side and represent the real views of nobody. This result I should regard as actually mischievous, because it would be misleading, and because I cannot believe that any good comes out of the sacrifice of convictions for no better purpose than the pursuit of a fictitious and spurious unanimity. I cannot understand why there should be, as there appears to be in some quarters, such a keen desire to pretend that all think alike when all manifestly do not think alike. Healthy differences of opinion do no harm to any one, and they are in fact a normal feature of political life in every country. It would indeed be a very surprising thing if, on a subject of such complexity and such importance as the Reforms Report, all the non-official Members of this Council were to think exactly alike. It would argue a sad lack on their part of the power of individual thought and independent opinion and judgment. On these general grounds, therefore, I oppose the Resolution.

"But I may perhaps be permitted to explain briefly why it is also objectionable to me personally.

"I do not propose to-day to enter in any detail into my views on or criticisms of the Reforms Report for three reasons.

"Firstly, such an expression of views seems to me to be scarcely relevant to the Resolution which is before the Council.

"Secondly, the body which I have the honour to represent upon this Council is at present engaged upon studying and formulating its views on and criticisms of the Reforms Report and has not yet completed its task. I have therefore no mandate to speak for them on this subject to-day, and anything I might say would only represent my personal opinion.

"My third reason is that the Reforms Report is a lengthy document and a document of the very greatest importance. It would be obviously impossible within the limits of a speech in this Council, to deal adequately with our views and our criticisms upon it; and if I endeavoured to compress my remarks within such a limit I should inevitably fail to do justice to the case which I should desire to present. I therefore prefer to leave the full expression of the views of my constituency until the completion of their written report, which will, I hope, be submitted to Government and published within a few weeks.

"But this much I must say to make my position clear. I have referred to two main schools of thought which have manifested themselves in the

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discussions which have already taken place upon the Report. I belong to yet a third school of thought. While not desiring in any way to take up an attitude of hostility towards the Reforms Report, I am of opinion that in certain important respects the proposals made go too far and move too fast, and I have little doubt that those whom I represent will press for modifications in that direction. Holding as I do these opinions, what possible object could be served by my sitting upon a Committee with the other non-official Members of this Council, many of whom belong to one or other of the two schools of thought to which I first referred, and endeavouring to arrive with them at common conclusions and common recommendations? It would, I submit, be the veriest waste of time to do so. I maintain, therefore, my Lord, that the proposal made in this Resolution for the appointment of a Committee would be at the best futile and at the worst demoralising. I submit that a far more normal and a far more useful course would be for Hon'ble Members to submit their views and criticisms to Government, either severally or by groups composed of men who really do think alike and who are not merely joined together in a forced and uncomfortable union, the only bond of which would be a common worship of the false idol of sham unanimity. But if this Resolution should be passed and if Government should decide to act upon it, I would respectfully request that my name may be omitted from the Committee."

12-34 P.M.

The Hon'ble Mr. G. S. Khaparde :—"I rise, my Lord to support this Resolution in the main operative part of it though I disagree with what my Hon'ble friend described as the preliminary part of it. All discussion in this Council has very rightly begun with the declaration of the 20th August 1917. I do not propose to read out that declaration, but I propose to point out what appears to me to be rather an important thing not yet brought out, and that is, that the first paragraph gives, I believe, the views of the Government in England, the British Government as a whole, and states what the policy has been and what ultimately it is desired to be. The next paragraph begins with the words 'I would add,' and those three words lead me to believe that over and above the declaration which has been made by the British Government the Right Hon'ble the Secretary of State for India was giving expression therein to certain views of his own. And then there is the last paragraph which says that 'publicity will be given in all directions' and so on. It may be taken to be of the same character as either the second paragraph or the first paragraph: it does not matter which. So that I take it that the first paragraph is the declaration of the British Government, of the Imperial Government as a whole. The next paragraph, on the other hand, is the opinion of the Right Hon'ble the Secretary of State for India. That opinion is certainly entitled to great respect, and as coming from the highest officer of State, it is entitled to all the respect that we can pay to it. But I submit it does not stand on the same level as the first declaration, the first being that of the whole Cabinet and the whole Government of England while the next is a declaration made by a very great person for whom I have the greatest respect possible, but still it is not on the same level as the first. As to the third declaration about publicity, etc. that can be taken whichever way you like. Whether it is taken as on the same level with the first or the second paragraph does not matter. But taking these things in their order, this leads me to my next point, which is that to the first part, that is to say (a), the declaration of the whole Cabinet, our utmost respect is due and it is not permissible—at least I believe it—for anyone to go beyond it or to criticise it. We have got to take it as it stands. It is like the aphorisms with which we are familiar in the *Shastras*. There is to be no reasoning about that matter. The next authority, that is to say (b) the declaration of the Secretary of State is very high indeed, but has to be interpreted as we interpret our *Purans* and our *Smritis* and all those things in which it is permissible to add something or explain away something, or do as the lawyers do with regard to all laws, namely, interpret and expound them for the benefit of the jury.

"Now in carrying out this policy we perfectly recognise the immense labour that has been bestowed on the Report. We recognise it fully and perfectly appreciate also, as has already been expressed in the main Resolution of the Congress

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held lately in Bombay, we appreciate and very deeply appreciate the great adroitness shown and the trouble taken, as far as possible, to bring our Indian aspirations within the proposals for reform. These we recognise and we admit, and for that and to that extent we feel very grateful; but we also recognise two more things, and those two things are:—one, that the task was tremendous, great, very immense. It is like legislating, or laying down, the constitution for a whole Continent, as India has been described in the proposals, with all its variety and number of peoples. Obviously the task was one of great difficulty; and unfortunately it had to be done within a certain time-limit. Certainly the declaration does not give any time-limit, but the work had to be done the best way it could. These two things, however, namely, the difficulty of the task and the time-limit, have acted, re-acted and led to a certain amount of trouble, leaving room for us to make suggestions; because they made it unavoidable that some portions of the task should be left over. I believe that the highest human beings—or at least two of them—were employed on this work for a long time, and it is only a testimony to the poverty of human nature that something is still left for others to do. But there it is and we have got to face it.

“ Now to that extent your Excellency, I propose not to discuss the whole scheme, not to mention the proposals in detail, but merely to refer to a few points which strike me as really of great importance.

“ The first portion of the Report assumes that there are no constituencies in India worth mentioning; that constituencies have to be created, then they are to be educated, and made fit to operate and act. Now these suggestions are very good and I recognise their merit. But I humbly submit that there *are* constituencies in India, and my learned and Hon'ble friends here, who have been working on this Council for five years, have not been doing it on their own account, but representing certain constituencies and certain interests who sent them. There are these District Boards, there are these Municipalities, there are the Universities, there are the Chambers of Commerce and there are a number of other bodies, all of them representing, I submit, very intelligent classes of people and there are other constituencies. I agree that they may have to be enlarged, but to say that there are no constituencies and that the constituencies are to be created appears to me to begin a little too early, in fact to begin at a point where there is no historical evidence for it at all.

“ My next point is that though we are diverse and though we are something like different nations and all that, still each unit of us has got a history of its own and very great history too. Hindus have got a great and ancient civilisation to speak about, certain tendencies which they have inherited. Our Muhammadan friends have got their tenets and their traditions, their empires, their methods of thought; they have got a history of their own and an imperial history too. They came to India and ruled for over seven hundred years; they tried to get into the sentiments of the people whom they ruled and they tried to make their rule popular and it did become popular to the extent that Hindus fought to maintain the power of Muhammadan kings. So there is a tradition there. Then there are the Parsis who have got also a long tradition; they belong largely to the trades and to this day they are the most able and the most forward in industrial enterprises, as also in political thought, because our Dadabhai Naoroji was the greatest patriot and the greatest man, and I humbly submit the best man too. There are the Christians and they have got a great history behind them about which I need not speak. Even the Jews have got a history of their own. So, notwithstanding all this diversity, I submit each unit has got a civilisation, is a civilised being and has got tendencies of its own, which if we can properly utilise would certainly make for the best government going. Now, it is said, how about these races, how about the people that are said to be not politically-minded, people said to be ignorant and so on? Well, I have an argument of my own. In embryology which is a new science and a very important one, it is said that every fetus represents the history of the evolution that it has gone through from the time the human being existed as mere mass, then became an aquatic and then a vertebrate and so on. Those that

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have examined the fœtus, who have looked at it and seen it say that he represents moons of ages in a few seconds and at the end of nine months when it ripens crores of moons of ages that have gone before. So also with history. Take what period you like, you find that in it are preserved specimens of nearly every stage of civilisation even to this day. When you come from England and get somewhere about Socotra island the sailors tell you that cannibals live there, and coming from England with its high civilisation to these islands which are in between you meet cannibals and people like rustics and so forth. History always preserves all the specimens, and so does embryology. In India, these traces are preserved; we have got our hill-tribes who are not politically-minded; we have got all sorts of people; but we have also got a very intelligent class of people who think politically, read politically, go to other countries, see the best of it there and naturally desire to introduce the best that they have seen elsewhere into India. I saw this representative government in England, and it was the greatest ambition of my life to try and introduce it into India because it has got to come here and we want to get it. However, as I said this is only an argument against diversity of races and a large number of people not being politically minded and so on. In judging of the human frame it will be seen that the brain is a very small portion of the whole human body. The rest of the human body is much bigger, the limbs, etc., but is it not really the most important part? Similarly, if you take this political body of India there may be various races and there may be large numbers of people, but the thinking head and the brain of the body is also important. Taking the human frame again you do not provide conditions which will artificially develop and lengthen your limbs and make your arms longer than they are. You have got to work for the progress of the whole thing as a whole. Similarly, I humbly submit that in India there is a big majority—though it may be called a minority according to the modern phraseology or rather the phraseology borrowed from statistics—there are so many crores out of which so many thousands and so many lakhs who are literate and therefore they are intelligent. My submission is that literacy is not the same thing as education. In India, there are not many literate people, but there are a very large number of people that are really educated and very good people too, and in villages where I have wandered I have seen many people who can neither read nor write; but you talk with them and discuss matters with them and you find that they give you very intelligent answers. This superstition about literacy being the highest form of education or the whole of education is of comparatively modern origin, and I do not think it is quite correct either. I do not know that Charlemagne was ever able to sign his name; I doubt it very much and I doubt if Sivaji had any literary attainments. I do not think so, but that is another matter; we do not discuss these matters about literacy. My point is that literacy is not the same thing as education. A man may be very illiterate and yet may be highly cultivated, as he is in India, by listening to *Purans* and sermons and going about mixing with people and deriving opinions and correcting them. As I found, literacy does not mean that an illiterate person does not know anything.

“In the Reform proposals it has been said that there are these large masses of people and who is going to take care of them? It is silently assumed that the educated people do not care for them, and that they cannot be represented by the educated people. It is silently assumed that the officers that come here to serve will take care of them; they are the masters and the great people who will look after the masses. I do not want to dispute that assumption about the officers, but I really wish to dispute the assertion that we who are born of them and brought up among them and have our sympathies with them, that we shall not take care of the masses. I take exception to that portion of the assumption, your Excellency. I take exception also to a further assumption, and that will be my last one. I am told that in America they are moving houses bodily; they make tremendous houses; I do not know about the mechanism, I have never been there, but the houses are put on wheels and they

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are drawn. If this is true, it only illustrates my point. The Government of a large Continent like India is a great thing, is a big load. It has to be drawn by a number of teams, not by one horse or by one team. If it is said that you drive only one team and the rest of them stand still, no progress will be ever made....."

His Excellency the President:—"Order ! Order ! The Hon'ble Member has reached the limit of his time. Will you bring your remarks to a conclusion ?"

The Hon'ble Mr. G.S. Khaparde:—"Most certainly, your Excellency. I only wanted to make a point of this, that I think that progress would have to be all round, and therefore as much in the Government of India as in the government of the Provinces. I do not subscribe to the view that the Provinces ought to begin first, and after they have advanced something could be attempted afterwards in the Government of India. I said all this to show that I disagree with the Hon'ble mover with regard to that one sentence, namely, 'definite advance towards the progressive realisation of responsible government in India.' I wish those words had not been there, and then my support would have been whole-hearted and there would have been no need for this preliminary speech of mine. But I thought it my duty to point it out. Except that, I like the idea of appointing a Committee as suggested by my Hon'ble friend Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjea. I think such a Committee will do immense good. We have all spoken our views, we have attended Congresses and other meetings. We have our views which may differ from the views of others. But even if we differ, the differences will be well considered and the joint opinions will be placed at a later stage before your Excellency, which will give your Excellency excellent material from which to choose. You may of course reject some of the proposals, and I believe you will no doubt reject some. But all that has to be said will be put in a short compass and placed before your Excellency. It will be excellent material for your Excellency to place before the Cabinet. So this Committee will serve a very useful purpose of focussing all the opinions which can be submitted very respectfully and with due deference for being considered by the powers that be. So I support the operative part of the Resolution and submit that the Committee should be appointed."

The Hon'ble Mr. Kamini Kumar Chanda:—"My Lord, with all respect to my Hon'ble friend Mr. Hogg, I think it is in the fitness of things that the non-official Members of this Council should be called upon to report on this historic document, the Report on Constitutional Reforms which is a monument of industry, and I am in agreement with the operative part of the Resolution which the Hon'ble mover has placed before the Council in asking for a Committee. My Lord, it is common ground, and even the Hon'ble Mr. Hogg admits that, I think, it is common ground that very important modifications will have to be introduced in the scheme, and the best way, I think, would be to appoint a Committee in accordance with well-known Constitutional procedure to examine this document. In addition to this, my Lord, there is a special reason why the non-official Members of this Council should meet in a body and examine this document. It will be in the recollection of this Council that two years ago, in September 1916, 19 Members of this Council signed a memorandum on Constitutional Reforms and submitted it to your Excellency. That memorandum has been described by Lord Islington as the most authoritative Indian demand. It has since been accepted as the basis of the scheme which was adopted by the Indian National Congress and the Moslem League in Lucknow in December 1916. That was re-affirmed by those two bodies in Calcutta last December, and the Resolution before both the Congresses was moved by the Hon'ble mover of this Resolution, the Hon'ble Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjea, where he described it to be the 'irreducible minimum of our demand.'"

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“ My Lord, this scheme was further placed before your Excellency and the Right Hon'ble the Secretary of State last November in Delhi by a joint deputation of the Indian National Congress and the Moslem League, which was also headed by the Hon'ble Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjea. The Hon'ble Sir Dinshaw Wacha was not present then, but he, together with the other Indian leaders of Bombay, presented a similar document to your Excellency and to Mr. Montagu, in which this was embodied as the irreducible demand. It is thus pre-eminently the considered scheme of educated Indians.

“ My Lord, I think it is very desirable that a Committee should be appointed. This scheme has certainly its defects. It is not, and it cannot be, perfect. It is vulnerable, but all the same, My Lord, it is the Indian demand the Indian scheme, and I quote from the memorandum which was submitted to your Excellency and the Right Hon'ble the Secretary of State by the Hon'ble Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjea when he headed the joint deputation, when quoting the historical declaration of the Prime Minister ‘that the wishes of the inhabitants must be the supreme consideration in the re-settlement’ which formula is to be applied equally in the tropical countries; it is stated :—

‘ It ought to be definitely recognised that the people of India being the party principally affected, are entitled to have an effective voice in the decision of the question which is of such supreme moment to them.’

“ Therefore, I think, my Lord, it is very desirable that a Committee of this Council consisting of the leading authors of the memorandum of the 19 Members, the Hon'ble Sir Dinshaw Wacha, the Hon'ble Mr. Sastri, the Hon'ble Dr. Sapru and others should be appointed to see how far their irreducible minimum has been met in the proposals, and how far the principle of self-determination has been conceded. The Hon'ble Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjea had not signed this document, because at that time he was not a Member of this Council, but of course he has ratified the memorandum.

“ My Lord, I agree with the Hon'ble Mr. Hogg that, regard being had to the operative part of this Resolution, the criticisms on the Report at this stage are not relevant. When you are going to refer the whole matter to a Committee, I think you will be pre-judging the whole issue if you were to express an opinion on any part of the scheme, and I wish therefore that the Hon'ble mover deleted the middle part of the Resolution, namely, that it marks a distinct and definite advance towards the progressive realisation of responsible government.

“ My Lord, there is another special reason why this should be done. Your Excellency told us day before yesterday that not mere destructive criticism is wanted, but constructive schemes should be submitted. This obviously cannot be done here, within the time limit, and I think it is therefore as unnecessary as undesirable to pick up portions of the scheme to point out that the proposals are a distinct advance. The Hon'ble Mr. Banerjea has referred to certain features of the scheme which certainly mark a distinct advance in the political conditions of India and might be taken to constitute preparation for a step towards responsible government. But, on the other hand, it may be as easy to select other parts of the scheme which go the other way but this would not be profitable. Nobody can deny, my Lord, that there are features in the scheme which mark a distinct advance in the political conditions of India. As my Hon'ble friend Mr. Khaparde has said, the special Session of the Indian National Congress and the Moslem League which met in Bombay last week have recognised this. But all the same, as my Hon'ble friend Rai Bahadur Shukul said, these proposals, although they are generous, have not evoked any real enthusiasm in the country. Why is that so? My Lord, we are a people who are easily satisfied. Even a kind word spoken to us strikes a gratefully responsive chord in our hearts. How is it then that these proposals which are really some of them generous concessions in some matters have not captured the imagination of the people. My Lord, there are several reasons for this. In the first place, your Excellency was pleased to observe in your speech the day before yesterday ‘ If there are those who have built up hopes on the words of others, it is of

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them they must make complaint and not of me'. My Lord, may I with all respect, in all humility, point out that the words of the announcement of the 20th August filled us with great hopes. Your Excellency and Mr. Montagu say in paragraph 7 of the Report 'that the announcement marks the beginning of a new policy.' Now there are three items in this declaration. First of all, it declares that there will be an increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, secondly, it says that there should be a gradual development of self-governing institutions, and thirdly, that there will be progressive realisation of responsible government in India. Now, my Lord, obviously the first two items, namely, the association of Indians in the higher branches of the services and development of self-governing institutions are not new policies. Both of them are old. The first dates back as far as 1833, and the second was started at the time of Lord Mayo in 1870, and a great impetus given to it in Lord Ripon's famous Resolution on Local Self-Government. So these are not the features of the new policy; but the new policy consists in the declaration that responsible government shall be the goal of British responsibility in India, and we are given reforms, but we cannot consider that the proposals give us real responsible government in India....."

The Hon'ble Sir George Lowndes:—"My Lord, I rise to a point of order. I ask your Lordship to rule that the Hon'ble Member must speak a little slower. Many of us are most anxious to hear what he says and it is really quite impossible to do so."

The Hon'ble Mr. Kamini Kumar Chanda:—"I am very sorry; I will try to speak slower. My Lord, your Lordship was pleased to observe yesterday that the terms of the reference to your Excellency and Mr. Montagu were confined to the four corners of the announcement. My Hon'ble friend Mr. Khaparde has anticipated me about one of the grounds, I venture to submit, in this connection. I do not know whether the interpretation which the Hon'ble Mr. Khaparde suggested is the correct one, namely, that the latter part of the statement is an *obiter dictum* on the part of Mr. Montagu. But however that might be, I think, my Lord, that there is nothing in the announcement of August 20th to support the second 'formula' which is mentioned in the Report in paragraph 189, that 'the provinces are the domain in which the earlier steps towards the progressive realisation of responsible government should be taken.' I submit, my Lord, taking the announcement as the basis, that we had a right to claim that your Lordship would be pleased to consider whether any element of responsible government ought not to have been introduced in the Government of India. My Lord, any scheme that does not provide for that will certainly fail to evoke any interest in the country. All real power is centred in the Central Government, and unless the people are represented in the Government, I do not think the scheme will at all satisfy the public. My Lord, in the words of the Report, 'pending the development of responsible government in the provinces, the Government of India must remain wholly responsible to Parliament, and saving such responsibility, its authority in essential matters must remain indisputable.' In other words in all matters which it judges to be essential for the discharge of its duties in the maintenance of peace, order and good government, it must, save for its responsibility to Parliament, retain this indisputable power. My Lord, responsibility for good government, which is stated to include sound financial administration, is a dangerously vague expression, and, I submit, there is hardly anything which might not possibly be brought under it. In Colonial Governments the government which is responsible for peace, order and good government is not the Executive only but the Legislature. I submit, my Lord, here too the same thing ought to be done, and the Legislative Council should also be made responsible for peace, order and good government. My Lord, it is realised that, as is stated in Chapters VI and XI of the Report, there are certain matters which probably in the opinion of the authors stood in the way of the granting of the same system of responsible government in the Government of India. It was

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here feared perhaps that if the Legislature were given control over these matters they might use their powers to the prejudice of interests and communities that ought to be protected. My Lord, surely that could have been provided against. The Bengal Provincial Conference has tried to suggest a solution of the difficulty and if the Committee sits I shall place their proposals before the Committee. The problem can be solved in many other ways. These and other matters of detailed criticism I reserve for the Committee. The Resolution only asks for a Committee and it would not be relevant to go into details on these matters which would be dealt with by the Committee.

“ I wish to associate myself with that part of the Resolution which thanks your Excellency and the Secretary of State for the earnestness and the care with which you have made these proposals.”

1-5 P.M.;

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Mian Muhammad Shafi :—

“ My Lord, the Resolution, moved with his customary eloquence, by the Hon'ble Mr. Banerjea, consists of an acknowledgment, a proposition and a proposal. In the first part of his Resolution my Hon'ble friend asks us to express, in the form of a vote of thanks, our acknowledgment to your Excellency and to the Right Hon'ble the Secretary of State for the devoted labour and the sympathetic spirit with which the scheme of reforms presented to His Majesty's Government has been prepared, and I take it from the speeches of the Hon'ble Members who have preceded me that there is absolutely no difference of opinion in this Council so far as this part of my Hon'ble friend's Resolution is concerned.

“ In the second part, my Hon'ble friend puts forward in this Council, on behalf of the scheme of Constitutional Reforms, a claim, the claim that it marks a distinct advance, and to quote his words, ‘ a definite advance towards the progressive realisation of responsible government in India.’ With reference to this portion of the Resolution, although on the whole almost every speaker has recognised that the scheme is an advance, there seems to be some difference of opinion as to whether it is a definite advance or not.

“ In the third part of his Resolution my Hon'ble friend proposes the formation of a Committee of this Council for the purpose of considering the scheme and making recommendations to the Government of India. So far as I have been able to judge, there is complete unanimity so far as the Indian Members of the Council are concerned in respect even of this portion of the Hon'ble Mr. Banerjea's Resolution. Only one discordant note has been struck in this connection by the Hon'ble Mr. Hogg, and I am exceedingly sorry that this should have been so. The Hon'ble Mr. Hogg questions the utility of the appointment of such a Committee, and is of opinion that it will serve no purpose. Now, as all Hon'ble Members are aware, this Council, particularly the non-official portion of it, may be said to be an epitome of the entire non-official population of this country. We have in this Council representatives of the great non-official European community, of the landholding interests and of the Sikh community, of the Muhammadan and of the Hindu communities. It seems to me that in the calm atmosphere of a Committee consisting of the chosen representatives of all classes the various debatable points in this scheme will be discussed in a far more useful and effective manner than they can possibly be discussed in a public meeting or a conference. And I for one am absolutely confident that the deliberations of this Committee will bring about results in the highest degree beneficial to the interests of the country. But there is one more point of view which I venture to place before Hon'ble Members in answer to what was said by the Hon'ble Mr. Hogg. We are all of us, I am perfectly sure, sincere well-wishers of progress in this country, and are anxious for the advent of the day when the British and the Indian elements in our Legislatures and in our public life generally will act in mutual co-operation for the advancement of the country as a whole. To me it appears that this Committee will mark the beginning of a new era, a new era in which representatives of the non-official European community and

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the various representatives of all sections of the Indian community will put their heads together and will, as I trust, succeed in evolving a compromise as between themselves which will be acceptable to all alike. It seems to me that as a beginning of such mutual co-operation and mutual good-will, the appointment of this Committee will have served a highly beneficial purpose so far as the future of India is concerned.

“ My Lord, as regards the second part of my Hon’ble friend’s Resolution, complaint has been made by the Hon’ble Mr. Shukul that the scheme formulated by your Excellency and the Secretary of State does not definitely lay down the period within which full responsible government is to be granted to our country. Now, I for one am of opinion that under the complex conditions prevailing in India and in a transitional stage such as the one which we are passing through, it is impossible for any statesman, no matter how great his experience, to lay down definitely and once for all that responsible government in India shall be reached within a certain definite period. But if my Hon’ble friend had studied the Report carefully, he would have found that there are in this Report indications which clearly enable us to pronounce a judgment upon this question, and, for one, fill me with confident hope as to the early realisation of the ultimate goal declared to be the policy of the Government of India as well as of His Majesty’s Government, that is to say, full responsible government for India. Now, a reference to paragraphs 260 and 261 of this Report will make it perfectly clear to Hon’ble Members that, as regards future development as laid down in paragraph 260, five years after the first meeting of the Reformed Councils the Government of India themselves will consider the question of the expansion of ‘Transferred Subjects’ and of the curtailment of ‘Reserved Subjects,’ and under paragraph 261 a Commission will sit ten years after the enforcement of this scheme with the objects mentioned in that paragraph. I wish to read two passages from this paragraph and to invite the attention of my friend the Hon’ble Mr. Shukul in particular to those passages. This is what is said in an earlier portion of paragraph 261 :—

‘ We would provide, therefore, that ten years after the first meeting of the new Councils established under the Statute a Commission should be appointed to review the position.’

How to review the position is indicated in a subsequent passage in the same paragraph as follows :—

‘ The Commissioners’ mandate should be to consider whether by the end of the term of the legislature then in existence it would be possible to establish complete responsible government in any province or provinces, or how far it would be possible to approximate to it in others.’

“ It will thus be seen that there is a clear indication in this passage that, should the Reformed Councils, Legislative as well as Executive, discharge the responsible duties which will be entrusted to them in the manner in which the authors of this scheme expect they will do—and there is, I trust, good ground for the hope expressed by the authors of this scheme—, then only ten years thereafter it will be open to the new Commissions which will sit for inquiry into this matter, provided they are satisfied that the responsibilities already entrusted have been properly discharged, to give complete self-government to the provinces in which such results will have been brought about ; and if there are provinces in which, owing to the failure of the representatives of the people themselves they have not proved worthy of the grant of responsible government, and the Commission should arrive at that conclusion, who will be to blame for such a result ? We ourselves, not the Government. So that the declaration made in this paragraph makes it perfectly clear that the acceleration of the time when full responsible government shall be granted to our people will lie in the hands of our representatives. Should there be any delay, should there be any inordinate delay, the responsibility for it will rest not on the heads of the Government but on the heads of the

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representatives of our own people in the Reformed Legislative and Executive Councils.

“ My Lord, exception has been taken by my friend the Hon'ble Mr. Chanda to the Hon'ble Mr. Banerjee having brought out in his speech some of the most prominent features of the new scheme of reforms formulated by your Excellency and the Right Hon'ble the Secretary of State. He thought that this was not the stage at which that course ought to have been taken. I venture respectfully to dissent. When the mover of a Resolution lays down a proposition to the effect that any scheme marks a definite advance towards the ultimate goal of self-government, he has obviously got to substantiate that proposition. How else is he to substantiate that proposition, except by pointing out that such and such changes will be brought into existence by that scheme and comparing those changes with the existing state of things, and thus to point out that the scheme represents a distinct advance. My Lord, there was one flaw in the method adopted by my venerable friend which, with your Lordship's permission, I wish to clear up. He merely invited the attention of the Council to some of the prominent features in the new scheme, but he did not make a comparative analysis of the existing state of things with the position as it will be when the new scheme of reforms has been brought into operation. I am not going to enter into the details of this part of the discussion—the Hon'ble the Secretary of the Council need not be afraid of that. But what I wish to point out is this, my Lord, that in the sphere of local self-government, in the sphere of the provincial governments, in the sphere of the Government of India, and in the measure of the control which is at present exercised over provincial and Indian affairs by the Secretary of State, remembering what Lord Morley has said in his 'Recollections' with reference to the functions and powers of the Secretary of State, I say that in respect of all these spheres, when we come to examine the existing state of things and compare the results of the new scheme, it seems to me that the only inevitable conclusion to be drawn from such a comparison is this, that the scheme does mark a definite advance in the direction of responsible government.

“ My Lord, with the greatest pleasure I most cordially support the Resolution which my Hon'ble and venerable friend has laid before the Council. ”

1.20 P.M.

The Hon'ble Mr. Abdur Rahim :—“ My Lord, I have much pleasure in supporting the first part of the Resolution, namely, to thank your Excellency and the Secretary of State for India for the Reform proposals and to recognise them as an advance towards the progressive development of responsible government. There is not the least doubt, my Lord, that the Reforms Scheme is an advance towards the goal that Indians are trying to reach to. But I will be wanting in my duty if I hesitate to say that the community which I have the honour to represent on this Council are not fully satisfied with the way in which the proposals are laid down in the Report. I may say, however, that the Muhammadans are not disappointed, as they are assured that their interests will not be overlooked at the time when the details come to be discussed.

“ As regards the second part of the Resolution, namely, to appoint a Committee, I respectfully beg to submit that I agree with my Hon'ble friend, Mr. Hogg, in saying that the proposed Committee should not be appointed. To me, my Lord, any expression of opinion by the non-official Members of this Council at the present stage is premature. We should not give our views in our individual capacity, but only as the representatives of our constituencies. These constituencies are represented by the various political organisations which have been invited to submit their views. Therefore it would be unfair if we commit ourselves before knowing what the people whom we represent here have to say on a subject of such importance. With these remarks, I offer my sincere and heartiest support to the first part of the Resolution.”

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[*Mr. Ironside.*]

The Hon'ble Mr. Ironside :—“ My Lord, I desire to take this early opportunity to acknowledge and express my hearty appreciation of the language which was used in the eloquent speech of my Hon'ble friend the mover of this Resolution. The proposal embodied in the Resolution is one which I regret I feel myself unable to support for reasons which I do not propose to expound at length: their cogency will be plain and manifest in few words.

1-21 P.M.

“ The European Mercantile community, and with that, I think, I may class the whole of the non-official European community, occupies in regard to this matter a position different—in fact, we think very different—from that of any of the Indian communities here represented. In the Report on Indian Reforms it finds itself practically ignored, and I am bound to take this the first opportunity of offering my respectful protest against the treatment accorded to us by the distinguished authors of that Report. We cannot admit that the settlement is purely one between the European official and the Indian non-official. This community, which has in the past been responsible for so much, is at present so inextricably bound up with and will in the future, I hope and feel sure, take its full and due share in, the economic development and welfare of the country and the people, that as the British official element becomes eliminated it must take its share in the government—an increasing share in the government—and become more and more responsible for the maintenance of purely British—I say that in no hostile spirit—purely British ideals in the country. Not by reason of numbers, but by reason of the immensity of its interests which critically and vitally affect hundreds of thousands of Indians, the European community as a whole must, we feel, be secured from harm in the early stages of this scheme. I do not use these words, my Lord, in any hostile or so-called racial spirit; for me the racial portion of this discussion has no interest. I have worked for years alongside Indian business-men, and all I can say is that I am satisfied with them, and, as far as I know, they have been satisfied with me. We have had no quarrel and we shall have none. But business-men are not politicians. At any rate we speedily learn at the expense of our pockets the need for caution. Some people think and believe that business-men—and particularly European business-men in India—only live to make profits. Well, I appeal to my Indian business friends, who I am sure will admit the fallacy of that opinion, and moreover agree with the need for caution in all things.

“ The Reforms Scheme is of necessity a shell of suggestions. The real substance has yet to be filled, and it will I hold tax the ingenuity and brains of every man in this Council and many more outside to fill it with material of such quality and in such manner that the mass of the people may not suffer thereafter by mistakes hurriedly made now. Few if anyone of us can hope to live to see the full result of our handiwork. So I say in all sincerity, in all friendliness, let us build the foundation sure and true before we think of the superstructure, and before we dream of designing the upper stories. Here again, let me not be misunderstood. I am prepared to accept much that is in the scheme; but if everything is to be effectively and efficiently changed and reconstituted in the short period outlined, it gives me reason for grave misgiving. It cannot work like clockwork.

‘ The best laid plans of mice and men
Run oft a-gley ’

as the old Scotch poet has said. I confess that I consider you are almost expecting the impossible. You will have to work at the speed of your slowest unit. Is there any need for such abnormal haste? No one is going to live one day less or longer whatever happens.

“ I am a man responsible for earning my own and many other people's living, and to do so all my time is fully occupied. The leaders of my community are in similar situation. The consideration of a report of this nature is no work for the last hours of a long day's work in the plains. I should like to know how many people have read the Report page by page, paragraph by

[*Mr. Ironside; Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.*]

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paragraph, digested it and dissected it carefully and thoughtfully. I venture to say very very few. It will have to be digested gradually by the people who are to pay the piper and who should know what the tune is to which they will be asked to dance. The peace of mind my Hon'ble friend so eloquently alluded to in his speech of yesterday I hope to find for the purposes of this Report in these beautiful and peaceful surroundings. I am without a mandate from the community and the interests I represent; they are placed and they have been placed exactly like myself, unable to give the time and thought such as is necessary for its proper consideration. I am, therefore, not competent, I hold, to join in any discussion, to be of any real value, and at any rate to make recommendations to Government at this stage; but because I here and my community do not consider that we have had enough time to consider the proposals with exactitude must not be taken as an unwillingness or hostility to co-operate to make the scheme a successful and lasting benefit to the country and people of all creeds. But, my Lord, let us not forget the people who have no voice to-day, and by all means do not forget the people who will come after us and who will be our real judges."

13: P.M.

The Hon'ble Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya:—"My Lord, I join with my friends in expressing our acknowledgments for the advance which the proposals which your Lordship and the Right Hon'ble Mr. Montagu put forward mark. There is no question that they do mark a large and liberal advance on the existing arrangements. At the same time I feel bound to say that I do not share with my friend the mover of the Resolution before us the optimism which he assumed in describing the effect of these proposals. So far as the proposals go they mark a distinct advance; but our complaint is that they do not mark a sufficient advance, that they do not go far enough to meet the requirements of the country. In your speech the day before yesterday your Excellency was pleased to say that the August announcement constituted the terms of your reference. We have all looked at the matter in that light; but with all the respect due to your Excellency and to your Hon'ble colleague, who laboured with you with so much distinguished ability and elaborate care to frame the proposals, we feel that the interpretation which you put upon the terms of reference, was unduly restricted, and that it should have been much wider. The language of the announcement required that substantial steps should be taken in the direction of the progressive realisation of responsible government in India. That certainly, my Lord, according to the views which many of us humble men take, meant the introduction of responsible government in the Government of India also, and not merely in the Provincial Governments.

"Your Lordship will have noted, and every Member of this Council will have noted, that there is a widespread unanimity in regard to the proposals relating to the Provinces. You will also have noted that there is also widespread unanimity among Indian publicists, among men who have devoted a lifetime to the cause of Indian Constitutional Reform—and who cannot feel with Mr. Ironside that if the Reforms which they consider to be necessary are not carried out that fact will have no effect upon the length of their days, for the matter is of deep interest to them—it affects the lives and happiness of their countrymen and must therefore affect their own lives—I say that there is a remarkable unanimity of opinion that liberalisation should be introduced into the Government of India also, that is to say that the lines which your Lordship and your Hon'ble colleague have recommended for the Provinces, by a division of Transferred and Reserved Subjects should be introduced into the Government of India. My Lord, I do not want at this hour of the day to take up time by pointing out what an array of argument, based upon hard facts, stands behind this suggestion. I will leave it for some other occasion. We acknowledge that you have recommended a distinct line of advance in the Provinces. We feel thankful for the amount of care and patience which you have bestowed upon the proposals, but, my Lord, as your Lordship and Mr. Montagu

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anticipated, you did expect criticism, and we feel it our duty to place such criticism before the Government in order that the proposals might be helped forward. In dealing with this question of the Government of India, I would just invite attention to one matter. In paragraph 350 of your Report you and your Hon'ble colleague have said :—

' At the same time change obviously cannot be confined to the provinces. In proportion as they become more responsible the control which the Government of India exercise over them must diminish. But it is not merely a question of the extent of the control; the nature and manner of its exercise must in course of time be modified. We cannot think that States on the way to responsible government, which have imbibed a large element of responsibility into their constitutions, can be controlled by a purely autocratic power. So also with the duties extending over the whole of India which will be discharged by the Government of India as its special concern. It is impossible that while other duties which differ from them mainly in being local in scope or subject to provincial differentiation are being administered by responsible governments, those which fall to the Government of India should be administered autocratically.

"Of course the Report says that change should come in gradually, but that is exactly where we respectfully join issue; we feel that for the very reasons stated by you, and because the interests which the Government of India will control will be so vast and so important, that there an element of responsibility should be introduced at this stage into the Government of India simultaneously with its introduction in the Provincial administrations. And I want just to put very respectfully one more matter for your consideration and that is with reference to the extent and effect of this suggestion. My Lord, none of us desires to walk with this great haste with which my Hon'ble friend Mr. Ironside seems to think that we do want to; nor does any of us desire any catastrophic change. We do not think we are unalive to the effects of catastrophic changes; we feel honestly, I am sure your Lordship will agree, as honestly as those who differ from us, that the pace that is needed in the highest interests of India and the Empire should be much quicker, much more rapid, much more substantial, than what your Lordship and Mr. Montagu have in your wisdom thought it fit to recommend. My Lord, it has been said that we ought to take a lesson from the fate of Russia. Now we all remember that when the revolution took place in Russia English statesmen clapped their hands and cheered it to the echo. They thought and said that it was the biggest event to the credit of the war. My Lord, I ask that those who brought about that revolution should be judged fairly. It was not anything intrinsically wrong in their arrangements, it was not anything wrong in their calculations and programme, but it was the evil machination of a very ambitious and unscrupulous foe that has brought Russia to its present pass. Let it be said to their credit that those who deserved our sympathy at the outbreak of the revolution were not denied fair treatment when discussing the conditions to which they were exposed. I fear, my Lord, there are not many countries and many people who could have successfully withstood, resisted, or escaped from the evil influence which Germany has brought to bear upon Russia for her own nefarious ends. Let therefore the change in Russia not be condemned too much on that account. But, my Lord, we here are not seeking anything approaching a change of that character. All that we are seeking is that, subject to the Government of His Majesty the King Emperor which is so well established in this land, subject to all the beneficial laws which have been passed during the last 150 years, and subject to all the existing arrangements which ensure peace, order and good government, we Indian subjects of His Majesty should have a determining voice in directing the affairs of this country which our English fellow-subjects have had so long. This power has been the monopoly of our English fellow-subjects so long. We now want to share it with them, not as opponents, not as rivals, but as fellow-subjects who are interested, deeply interested, in the welfare of our country and the administration of our country's affairs. There is no reason, my Lord, I submit, for any apprehension that anything like the fate which has overtaken Russia will befall India if the full measure of our demand is conceded. We shall continue to have the co-operation of our English fellow-subjects in the work that lies before us. Whatever changes are introduced

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will be shouldered and carried out by Britishers and Indians acting together. I submit, therefore, that there is no analogy between India and Russia, and that the fate of Russia should not in any way damp our enthusiasm for reforms which we think are essential in the interests of this country. There is one other point which I might mention. As a contrast to the case of Russia, we should look at the cases of Canada and Australia. They are much more to the point. Canada and Australia have fared well, fared, as everybody knows, admirably well, under the system of responsible government that was conceded to them by England. And I say it on the basis of incontestable fact that India is in every way better prepared to-day to bear the burden of responsible government than Canada was when responsible government was given to her. My Lord, there are two facts more which I should like the Council to consider in this connection. We have been asking for a responsible share in the government of India for a long time past, certainly for thirty-three years. The war has now brought about a tremendous change in the situation. Englishmen and Indians have shed their blood together on the battle-fields of France, Flanders and Mesopotamia in order to vindicate the principles of justice and liberty and the self-determination of nations. There is a determination in the minds of Englishmen to see that Belgians and other small nationalities in Europe should receive the full benefit of those principles before peace shall be restored. It is for that noble object that England has been fighting. England has not lost any of her own possessions; professedly she is fighting for other nations and races. Is it not reasonable, my Lord, then, to expect that the same sympathy which is shown by Englishmen to Belgians and other nationalities in Europe shall be extended to Indians also? Let the facts of the situation be calmly and dispassionately examined. If on an examination of the facts we are found to be wrong, if the facts do not support our claim, we are willing to go out of Court. But we want you to give us an opportunity; let there be a discussion in Committee, whether it should be the Committee suggested by the Hon'ble mover or any other, I do not mind, but let there be a Committee, and then we Indians shall be content.

— “My Lord, it is not a new principle we are asking to be adopted in dealing with us and our country. Some people have said that the principle of self-determination has only recently been enunciated by President Wilson, and that we are taking improper advantage of it. That is not so. The principle we rely on is an ancient principle. It was clearly enunciated and recognised in England nearly seven hundred years ago, when the Victory of Lewes in 1264 had placed Earl Simon at the head of the State there.

‘Now England breathes in the hope of liberty,’ sang a poet of the time, says Green; ‘the English were despised like dogs, but now they have lifted up their head and their foes are vanquished.’ The song announced with almost legal precision the theory of the patriots. ‘He who would be in truth a King, he is a ‘free king’ indeed if he rightly rule himself and his realm. All things are lawful to him for the government of his Kingdom, but nothing for its destruction. It is one thing to rule according to a king’s duty, another to destroy a Kingdom by resisting the law.’

“My Lord, the principle of despotic government, the principle that might is right, was here condemned, and the principle of popular representative government was here advocated in terms which have never been excelled. The poet patriot sang :—

‘Let the community of the realm advise, and let it be known what the generality, to whom their own laws are best known, think on the matter. They who are ruled by the laws know those laws best, they who make daily trial of them are best acquainted with them; and since it is their own affairs which are at stake, they will take more care and will act with an eye to their own peace. It concerns the community to see what sort of men ought justly to be chosen for the weal of the realm.’

“Now, my Lord, we want that this ancient, this time-honoured principle, should be applied to the administration of India, after we Indians, the inheritors of ancient civilisations, have been for 150 years under:

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British rule, after we have had the advantages of English education for half a century and more, after we have so long had the advantage of living under the unifying laws and institutions which have been established by England in this country, after we have had the advantage of seeing this principle beneficently at work in the institutions established by England in other parts of the British Empire. This is all our humble prayer. I quite understand, my Lord, differences there must arise on a matter like that. But I ask all English fellow-subjects, all British fellow-subjects, to consider our prayer with sympathy, and if they cannot agree with us, let them at any rate try to appreciate our position. Let them realise that the question of introducing responsible government into the administration of India is not a question of mere sentiment; that upon it hangs the progress and prosperity of our people, the future of our country, our status in the British Empire, and the rest of the civilised world. Our desire is that we should achieve national progress in all directions under the ægis of the British Crown as other members of the British Empire have achieved, and we desire that it should be made possible for us to do so. It is as a step towards this end, my Lord, that we desire that the element of responsibility which has been introduced in the Provincial administration should be introduced in the Government of India also.

"I do not want to take up any more time of the Council. I am absolutely indifferent as to whether the substantive part, as it has been called, of the Resolution before us is or is not accepted. If it is accepted, I do not object to it. If it is not accepted, I do not object to it either. What the Government required to know was the sentiments of the people as a whole towards the proposals of Constitutional Reform. The Special Indian National Congress and the All-India Moslem League have held their sittings in Bombay, and both these bodies have pronounced their views, regarding them. Happily they have both come to an unanimous conclusion, and they will no doubt place it formally before the Government. They have both clearly recognised the value of the recommendations which have been made. They have also pointed out wherein those recommendations fail. They have also made recommendations for changes and additions. And they have hoped, and I hope they have not hoped in vain, that their recommendations will be considered, and that the final scheme which will be adopted will see an element of real responsibility introduced into the Government of India in order that there should be peace, contentment and ordered progress in the land, power and prosperity to India, and greater power to the British Empire."

The Council then adjourned till Saturday, the 7th September, 1918.

SIMLA :

The 12th September 1918. }

A. P. MUDDIMAN,

Secretary to the Government of India.