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NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION OF INDIA

THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION

Wednesday, December 29 1943.

The Twenty-fourth session of the National Liberal Federation of India assembled at the Sir Jeevanji Mody Hall (of the Cama Oriental Institute) Apollo Street, at 5 P.M. on Wednesday, the 29th December 1943. There was a large representative gathering of delegates, members and visitors prominent among those present being Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, Sir Cowasji and Lady Jehangir, Sir Ram Patkar, The Hon'ble Pandit Hirdaya Nath Kunzru, Sir Raghunath Paranjpye, the Hon'ble Sir B. P. Singh Roy, The Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Sir Vithal Chandavarkar, Mr. T. R. Venkatarama Sastri, Sir Sorabji Saklatwala, Sir Francis Low, Sir Janardan Madan, Mr. Fazal Ibrahim Rahimtoola, Mr. B. S. Kamat, Mr. H. G. Gharapuray, Rao Bahadur D. L. Sahasrabuddhe, Mr. A. D. Shroff, Dr. G. S. Mahajani, Rev. and Mrs. John Mackenzie, Mr. J. A. Collaco and Mr. D. G. Dalvi.

After a musical prayer sung by a group of girls from Prof. Deodhar's Indian School of Music, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Chairman of the Reception Committee opened the proceedings by welcoming the delegates. He said:

"Fellow Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is the third successive occasion on which I have the honour and privilege of extending, on behalf of the Reception Committee, a most cordial welcome to the National Liberal Federation which meets once more in our city of Bombay.

Our very first session was held in this city in the year 1918, and it is as well that after 25 years of existence, and in these troubled times, we should keep prominently before our minds the reasons which gave rise to a new political party, founded by some of the foremost public men of our country, who, in their time, had laid the foundations, and who were the zealous and devoted architects, of the Indian National Congress.

Our political goal has always been the attainment, by constitutional means, of responsible self-government, or Dominion Status, for India at the earliest possible date.

Speaking in a similar capacity just a few months before War was declared, I had reason to observe that the Congress creed is of complete independence, whatever that nebulous phrase may mean, but which must imply, among other matters, that India must be left to her own resources to fight against external aggression without hope of reinforcement from Britain or the Commonwealth of Nations. Leaving aside sentimental reasons, which may weigh with some for adherence to Dominion Status, we Liberals, realise, that ever since the Statute of Westminster, there is no practical distinction between Dominion Status and complete independence, and that our creed will entitle us to a measure of protection from foreign aggression which, otherwise, would not be available to us. How true those sentiments were, and how wise were those who founded the National Liberal Federation of India, is more than ever proved today after what the world has been through, and is going through, and may even have to go through.

Men like the late Surendranath Bannerjee and Dinsha Wacha, men like Chimanlal Setalvad, Srinivasa Sastri and P. S. Sivaswami Iyer parted company with the Congress because they could not conscientiously bring themselves to agree to passive resistance, civil disobedience, direct action and the cult of non-violence and Khaddar, as methods which would attain for this country the ultimate goal of our ambition of self-government. We all long for peace and universal love but the cult of non-violence, as preached by its distinguished author, will not bring us one or the other. We cannot but resist violence with violence; we cannot prevent aggression without violence. It will be against all principles of human nature to see our women and children butchered without using every form of violence to prevent such a tragedy. Whatever the theoretical principles of civil disobedience may be, we have seen, time

and again, that mass civil disobedience has invariably resulted in violence. Like several parts of India, this city has bitter experiences of the results of civil disobedience. We have recollections of men and women being prevented from performing their daily vocations of life, such as being forced—with violence—not to buy what and where they chose. We have seen men and women dragged out of tram-cars by those entrusted to put civil disobedience into action; and, still, we are asked to believe that they are the followers of the apostle of the cult of non-violence.

It has always appeared to me that the cult of Khaddar was economically unsound and illogical in principle. In other parts of the world, home-spun and home-woven textiles are a luxury for the rich and very often beyond the reach of the poor. If all the influence, energy and expenditure expended on propoganda for the manufacture and sale of Khaddar had been utilised for the improvement of agricultural methods, our country today might have reaped some benefit.

It is, therefore, not surprising that the parting of the ways had to come in 1918, and here we are in 1943 meeting to proclaim the principles enunciated by the founders of our Federation.

Two years have elapsed since we last met, and during these fateful years we have heard of, and witnessed, many events which we shall have to review. Three of the most important for India were: the proposals of the British Government brought out to India by Sir Stafford Cripps; the Congress Working Committee's Resolution of the 14th of July, 1942, followed by the endorsement of this Resolution by the All-India Congress Committee on the 8th of August and the consequences to India of these decisions; and the great disaster that has overtaken Bengal and some other parts of India, bringing misery, starvation and death in its trail.

The Congress recognised the great advance underlying the Cripps proposals, *viz.*, that, immediately after the War, the British Government guaranteed to India, Dominion Status with the power to secede from the Empire if it so desired, and that it was left to Indians themselves to frame the Constitution. The protracted discussions at Delhi were confined in the main to the position of the Government of India during the period of the War. All members of Government were to be Indians, except the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief. Attention was concentrated on the powers to be given to the Defence Member, who was to be an Indian. The Congress was not satisfied with the proposals originally brought out by Sir Stafford, but on Wednesday, the 8th of April of last year, India was given to understand that Sir Stafford had effected such changes in the proposals with regard to the powers of the Defence Member as had satisfied the Congress. It was found that, on the next day, Congress began to feel some doubts about the constitutional position of the Government of India during the interim period, specially with regard to the powers of the Viceroy to overrule a decision of the majority of the Government under very special circumstances. Their last minute proposals appear to have been that there should be a gentleman's agreement, whereby the Viceroy was to act as the constitutional Governor-General, and the Secretary of State and His Majesty's Government should have no power to interfere with the majority decision of the Government which should be constituted of the major parties of India with collective responsibility.

This, according to Mr. Jinnah, in a statement made to the press on the 15th of April, meant "the setting up of a cabinet irremovable and responsible to nobody but the majority, and should be at the command of the Congress in the cabinet—if such an adjustment had been arrived at, then it would have been a Fascist Grand Council, and the Muslim and other minorities would have been entirely at the mercy of the Congress."

Mr. Jinnah further stated: "I have noted that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru made it quite clear when he said: 'Suppose that in a cabinet of 15, there was a Congress majority of 8 or 9, added to that Congress majority would be the representatives of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Sikhs and the Muslims.' Thus, the Muslims would be left in a negligible and ineffective minority, but the only conso-

lation the Pandit offered was, if the Muslims did not agree with the majority, they could resign. If this is not a foregone conclusion of the tyranny of the majority, what else could it be?"

Mr. Jinnah continued: "I am surprised to read Pandit Nehru's assertion that I would not have objected to the Congress demand for a national government. I assert that, if the Congress demand had been accepted, it would have been the death knell of the Muslims of India."

Right or wrong, this is the analysis of the Congress demand by the Muslim League. The statement makes it perfectly clear that the last minute demands of the Congress were acceptable only to themselves and would have been strongly resented, at least by the Muslim League, as it would have resulted in a majority in Government being in a position to defy the representatives of all the minorities, with no remedy left in their hands.

The Viceroy's Veto appears to have been one of the fundamental reasons for the failure of the Cripps proposals. A little reflection will show that this was not the only one. Mr. Gandhi opposed the proposals from the very beginning. It was evident that he was not in favour of, or party to, the protracted negotiations that took place. He actually left Delhi during the negotiations, but there remained some members of the Working Committee who were in agreement with him. The reasons for his total opposition to the proposals were never clearly expressed, so far as I know, in public; but it was left to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to give us an insight into this controversy. In an article written by him in the *New York Times Magazine* of July the 19th, he wrote as follows —

"Thirty years ago the British Government introduced the principle of separate religious electorates in India, a fatal thing which has come in the way of development of political parties. Now they have tried to introduce the idea of partitioning India, not only into two but possibly many separate parts. This was one of the reasons which led to bitter resentment of the Cripps proposals. The All India Congress could not agree to this, yet it went far and said, if any territorial unit clearly declared its desire to break away, the Congress could not think in terms of compelling it to stay in the Union." Thus, it will be seen that the other fundamental objection to the proposals was contained in the clauses which dealt with self-determination.

It is evident that, at this juncture, Mr. Rajagopalachari realised that no National Government could be formed without the willing co-operation of the Muslim League, and his subsequent speeches and proposals show how deep down was this conviction. He does not appear to have accepted Pakistan as a principle. He was prepared to consider any proposals on their merits and not turn down, without ample discussion, principles and policies so strongly advocated by the most powerful minority in India. The result has been that a man of his standing in the Congress, with conspicuous service behind him for his party, had to part company with his colleagues, followed by several other leaders, to plough a lonely furrow for the time being. In the press, and from many a public platform, have some of our best men advocated a political truce during the war, and it is sad to think that the first attempt made by a man of Mr. Rajagopalachari's eminence should have resulted in his severance from his party.

Then followed the Congress Working Committee's Resolution of the 14th July which, it was stated, was mainly due to Congress hopes being dashed to pieces failing the transference of "real power to popular representatives so as to enable the nation to make its full contribution towards the realisation of human freedom throughout the world."

The Resolution further stated that "the abortive Cripps proposals show in the clearest possible manner that there was no change in the British Government's attitude towards India, and that the British hold on India was in no way to be relaxed." This statement, I think, can be contested. It shows a considerable amount of ignorance of the realities of the position as it exists. The Congress

rejected proposals which definitely promised India, after the War, as much freedom and independence as the Dominions of Canada and Australia enjoy, including the right of secession, and also promised an immediate and considerable devolution of power to representative Indians in the Central Government.

It must not be forgotten that, when the Act of 1935 was being considered, there was a refusal to include in the Act any allusion to Dominion Status; and stringent safeguards for the protection of British trade in India were enacted; while in 1942 the British Government came forward and actually promised India the same Dominion Status immediately after the War, and disowned all intention of demanding any special protection of British trade in India.

Frustrated in their ambition to form a National Government of their own conception the Congress started the new slogan of "Quit India." They contended that a National Government could only be formed under such conditions and, in their opinion, with such National Government, the millennium would arrive.

Surely, it can be contended with considerable force that, if we have not been able to attain communal unity even when our country was threatened by the aggression of an enemy noted for its barbarism and atrocities, there was no hope of responsible men and women of the country coming together to form a provisional Government, simply because the British had withdrawn. To believe that Indians would forget all their differences the moment the British quitted the country shows a complete lack of political foresight. The Congress asserted that "the frustration of their hopes had resulted in a growing satisfaction at the success of Japanese arms." This sweeping statement cannot surely be admitted. India is not so unpatriotic as to welcome Japanese successes. The rapers of women and the butchers of children were at our gates and, at such a time, Congress feared "passive acceptance of aggression" without itself making a visible effort to fight for hearth and home. At such a time, it desired to shift the responsibility on the shoulders of others and threatened civil disobedience, while continually talking of non-embarrassment. If "India in bondage can play no effective part in defending herself," yet in this same India in bondage, representatives of a certain school of thought threatened open rebellion. The speeches made by prominent members of the Working Committee that preceded the Resolution, and the Resolution itself, show a sense of irresponsibility unbelievable amongst men of wisdom and patriotism. The Resolution is, in parts, most beautifully vague. It advocates non-violence, while, again, it suggests a desire to fight aggression with the military forces in the country.

On more than one occasion, the Congress Working Committee have shifted from violence to non-violence as a cardinal principle of their policy. The country has a right to know what it has to expect from them. The British must quit, but the Congress would be pleased to agree to the stationing of the armed forces of the Allies in India. May one ask as to who was to control those armed forces; who was to direct their strategy; who was to arrange for the financing of the army; and who was, finally, to take command of the Allied arms in India? All this is left to the imagination or perhaps to be settled after the British quit. It did not strike Congress that the consequences may either be military autocracy or a withdrawal of all armed forces from India. This is exactly what the Japanese wanted. On the 14th of April, the Japanese radio said: "If the British really wish to defend India, as they profess they do, they should immediately withdraw their military and naval forces from India." Truly were the Congress unconsciously echoing the sentiments of the worst enemy India has had facing her during the last number of centuries.

As amongst Congressmen, there are many others belonging to different schools of thought—men and women of ability, sincerity and patriotism. They all combined in advising Congress to desist from treading the dangerous and disastrous path it was chalking out for itself. Many had shouted themselves hoarse for communal unity, at least during the period of the War. Amongst others who personally appealed to the leader of the Congress, were Mr. Rajagopalachari and three of his friends from Madras, in a very notable letter dated the 18th of July.

Notwithstanding the opposition and advice of practically all political thought outside the Congress, the Resolution was confirmed by the All India Congress Committee on the 8th of August of last year. What India has passed through since that fatal day, need not be explained in any great detail. The members of the Congress Working Committee were arrested. Mass violence followed, resulting in the loss of many innocent Indian lives and considerable damage to Indian property. It cannot be contested that India's war effort was, to some extent, impeded. Since then, appeal after appeal has been made to the Government of India to solve the deadlock. Mr. Gandhi fasted, with no tangible results. Congressmen, released from prison, have tried to put their heads together, but failed to do so. It is quite evident that the mistakes of Congress are beginning to be realised. Those who have suffered most, are the people of our motherland.

There have been in India, during this period, many representatives of the American press. One of the most distinguished of them was the representative of the *New York Times*, Mr. Herbert L. Matthews. In an article written in the *New York Times Magazine*, he gave expression to his views after a year's wide travel in our country. He met men of all classes and creeds. It is quite evident he came out with the greatest sympathy for India's cause. This is what he says:—

"For the first time, one heard open criticism of Gandhi and his policies. Hindu leaders, in surprising numbers, admitted, privately that his leadership was proving disastrous and that under him—to use Bernard Shaw's classic phrase—the Congress had never missed a chance to lose an opportunity. It is widely realised now that it was a mistake for the Congress to run Provincial Governments on a totalitarian basis, to have resigned as Provincial Ministers when the War began, and to have thought that the British were losing the War and hence could be forced to their knees by civil disobedience. Many are now willing to admit that it was the crowning mistake of all to have rejected the Cripps proposal.....India's tragedy is only too clear. It lies in the inability of the Indians to get together, in the effort of the Congress to get totalitarian control, in communal politics, in the opprobrium cast upon those who walk the middle way."

Is this criticism true, and if it is, are we going to learn by past mistakes and bitter experiences? If many of our countrymen were prepared to admit privately our own mistakes to a foreign press correspondent, cannot they have the courage to admit them openly and take steps to remedy the harm that has been done? If there were many in this country who believed that "the British were losing the War and hence could be forced to their knees by civil disobedience," surely they are now fully disabused of the fatal mistake they may have made. If this criticism is true with regard to many Indians who play a prominent part in India's public life, surely it is just as true of most of our Indian press. It is the press that should guide public opinion and not be influenced by what they believe the public would rather be told. Such a policy will not serve the best interests of our country. It is the press that is very often responsible for "the opprobrium cast upon those who walk the middle way." The lesson to be learnt from this article is:—Our country first, self and party next.

In order that my Congress friends may attach proper weight to the criticisms of this distinguished American, I will give a quotation from the article to prove that he was not under British influence:—

"The British are partly responsible for the Indian deadlock and they intend to continue the present policy as long as the War lasts. They have done nothing to help the Indians solve their present difficulties and they have in general adopted a negative attitude towards Indian aspirations for independence or even for increased political power. They have not even to an unbiassed neutral like the writer, provided convincing

evidence that they really intend to grant India self-government at any foreseeable future time."

This kind of criticism one reads and hears constantly in the Congress press and on the public platform but has been firmly denied by British statesmen. The fact remains that India has been assured that the Cripps proposals still hold the field—which can only mean that Dominion Status is promised to India on the conclusion of the War.

After all, it is not any particular British statesman, or a group of statesmen, who will decide India's future. It is the British man and woman in the street who has the vote, that will have the final say. Will he be influenced by an obstructive attitude to India's war effort, or will he be influenced by unanimous and whole-hearted support to the War? Undoubtedly the latter. The men who will obtain self-government for India will not be those who are constantly speaking and writing in these troubled and difficult times, of India's rights and India's wrongs; but it will be those men who are fighting India's cause on battle fields all over the world. It will be those men and women who are unstintingly helping the war effort of India. It is the work of these that will influence the man and woman who really has the greatest power in England. It is the man and woman in the street who has the power to displace a powerful cabinet minister within the space of a couple of days. This has been known to have happened on more than one occasion in the past. If we are to be farsighted in the interests of our mother country, we have to see that, both in England and amongst the Allied nations, our case is not jeopardised by the unwise actions of some who do not realise the harm they are doing to their own country. It is far better to speak out and face unpopularity than to bandage our eyes, plug our ears and drug our conscience. Let the dead past bury its dead. In my humble opinion, it is not a question of withdrawing any particular resolution that may have been passed by any political party. It is much more important to give unequivocal assurances to the British public and to the peoples of the Allied powers that all classes, all creeds, and all shades of political thought in India are behind this war; that, not only will they not impede the war effort in any way in the future, but, on the other hand, they are prepared unconditionally to help, by word and deed, every effort that India can contribute towards a final and victorious conclusion of this terrible War. If such assurances could be forthcoming, I personally believe that, not only India will gain self-government after the War, but even during the War, we may be enabled to play a most material and important part in the administration of our own country.

No Indian can possibly desire to see any of his countrymen behind prison bars for their political convictions, specially such as have passed their lives in the service of their country. But let us face facts. Congressmen cannot deny that, from the beginning of August of last year, disorders and mob rule prevailed in most parts of India, and that attempts at sabotage still continue in some areas. It is said that the Congress and its leaders had not encouraged or engineered these acts of violence. Assuming this to be so, the Congress leaders cannot be absolved from responsibility for what occurred, because as sensible men they should have realised, from past experience, that a mass civil disobedience movement would inevitably result in mass violence. The Allied nations are surely not going to run the slightest risk of such a state of affairs prevailing again. Such risks can be, to a great extent, removed by such assurances as I have explained. Mr. Gandhi, if he chose, could give such an undertaking on behalf of the Congress, for he has been appointed the leader of the movement in these words: "Such a struggle must inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji and the Committee request him to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken." These powers, given to Mr. Gandhi by a Resolution of the All-India Congress Committee, surely must include doing what he considers best in the interests of the country.

It may not be possible immediately for the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League to come to an understanding on the future Constitution of India, or

even on the Cripps proposals, but these two political parties can certainly come on the same platform to urge the people of our country to support the war efforts of India by word and deed. This may be a starting point for agreement on political issues such as may become advisable for the duration of the War. Such a change of policy is bound to have a most beneficial effect on all the peoples of the Allied Powers and would certainly entitle the representatives of India to a place on the Peace Conferences which must follow a victorious conclusion to the War. India, if its leaders have fully helped towards winning the War, would have an effective voice at the Peace Conferences; but not if they have acted in a manner which has weakened and thwarted, however unintentionally, the war effort.

There is a persistent and consistent demand from all shades of political thought that this so-called deadlock should be solved, and I am sure that all Liberals are as anxious as Congressmen, at present out of prison, and all other political parties who have voiced the same opinion. If we are anxious to help, first and foremost we must face realities. We must remember that the British public and the peoples of the Allied Powers cannot forget what has happened in India since August of last year. Those who have suggestions to make for the solution of this problem must keep this aspect of the case before them. Any tendency to ignore these realities will only make the task fruitless. Therefore, the suggestions must be such as are likely to have immediate results. Looking at it from every point of view, I cannot but come to the conclusion that the suggestions I have been bold enough to make are the only ones that will clear the air and will enable our public men to consider and discuss, in a calmer and clearer atmosphere, the next steps they would be prepared to take to solve India's constitutional problems.

In these troublous times, there has been a considerable shortage of all commodities. For the last number of months, there has been a shortage of food in India, and the tragic events in Bengal have focussed the attention of the world on the misery, starvation and death suffered in the Province. This has brought vividly to our attention the very poor yield of agricultural soil in India. It has also proved how narrow is the margin between subsistence level and actual starvation. Whatever efforts may be made to give temporary relief, these problems must become issues not only of the greatest importance but must take priority over all others for the economic welfare of this country. Conditions will become normal in a few months, but let us not forget the lessons we have learnt and, after the war is over, let us not sink into our usual complacency.

I have now concluded my remarks. Let us hope and pray that the New Year will bring the Allied nations a glorious and complete victory, and that India may be permitted to share in the fruits of a lasting peace which will enable her to build up a great political, social and economic future for her peoples."

On the conclusion of his speech, Mr. Naushir Bharucha the Hon. Secretary of the Reception Committee read letters and telegrams of sympathy which had been received by the Reception Committee from all parts of the country wishing success to the parts of meeting.

The Chairman then called upon Sir Chimanlal Setalvad to move the election of the President. Sir Chimanlal Said:

"Chairman and fellow delegates:

I beg to propose that Sir Maharaj Singh be elected president for this session. Sir Maharaj Singh has held very high administrative posts in this country and was Agent General to the Government of India in the Union of South Africa where he did good work on behalf of the Indian inhabitants of that country. After that he became a member of the Executive Council of the United Provinces. For some time I had been endeavouring to get Sir Maharaj Singh to preside over the Federation session but for one reason or other he was unable to preside. When he took up the premiership of Kashmir my hopes came to an end. But he soon resigned and became a free man. The loss of Kashmir has been our gain. I am sure the session will be a great success under his guidance.

In seconding the resolution the Hon. Pandit Hirdayanath Kunzru said :

I have great pleasure in seconding the proposal put before you by Sir Chimanlal Setalvad. Sir Maharaj Singh is a distinguished member of an illustrious family. I had the privilege of knowing his father who was well known amongst all persons connected with public life both in the U. P. and the Punjab as a man holding progressive views and behind no one in his desire to advance the progress of the country. Sir Maharaj Singh began life as a service man. I saw him in the old days in the pre-Montague Legislative Council in the U. P. replying non-official demands with all the dogmatism of the bureaucrat. Neither his speech nor his action seemed to distinguish him from the servicemen among whom he sat. But we are all glad to see that his thirty years of service have not changed his outlook. He is still a nationalist to the core. As soon as he retired from Government service he joined the ranks of the nationalists. He has held some of the highest positions in the gift of the Crown and it has been a great pleasure to his countrymen that as the holder of these offices he has discharged the duties which devolved upon him with conspicuous impartiality and ability. Ladies and gentlemen, I do not want to stand much longer between you and him. But I think that it is the duty of one who has known him for many years to bear testimony to his high character, his largeheartedness and his desire to place his services at the disposal of the country."

I have known no occasion since his retirement from public service when he was not prepared to shoulder his duty as a public man. Age has not dimmed his ardour. On the contrary, he seems to be growing younger day by day. (Cheers.) I think he can compare with the young and ardent spirits in any political party. He has the courage which every public man ought to possess to tell his countrymen when they go wrong, that he disapproves of their actions. But he has at the same time not only the courage but also the patriotism to tell the ruling power that the difficulties under which we are labouring are to no small extent the result of the policy deliberately pursued by it ever since British rule was extended to this country. He recognises the mistakes of his countrymen. But he will never do anything to encourage the foreigner to consolidate his power and to think that the circumstances in the country can ever justify his declining to bear the responsibility which devolves upon him of advancing the constitutional position of the country and of transferring those powers to it which will enable it to enjoy the blessing of freedom. He always believes, whatever the faults of his countrymen, that it is his duty to stand by them. He stands for full freedom for his own country and for absolute equality with other people in inter-imperial and international affairs.

Ladies and Gentlemen, We are meeting in difficult times. We have often had to contend against the unwillingness of the authorities to part with power. Our difficulties are unfortunately at the present time greater than ever. We are told from time to time that the Cripps offer has not been withdrawn and that it will be renewed after the war. I do not know on what facts these assurances are based but so far as I am acquainted with the pronouncements made by the British authorities, I think that they have only promised us freedom if we come to an agreement amongst ourselves, notwithstanding their machiavellian policy. This, I am sure, ladies and gentlemen, you will agree with me, is not the same thing as promising full self government after the war. The present shortage of food in the country and the plight to which a great province like Bengal has been reduced shows the real character of British rule which is often held up by the authorities for our admiration. The real result of British rule is well reflected in the sufferings of the people in various parts of India on account of shortage of food and other commodities. It shows to what extent the British Government has acted as the trustees of the masses and borne their best interests in mind. Had these things happened in a free country, the Government responsible for them would not have been able to last for a day. It is only in this country that notwithstanding the responsibility of the authorities for the calamity that has befallen Bengal and some other parts of India, the Government can still claim to be the guardians of the best interests of the masses and to make the world believe

that the future of India is safer in its hands than in the hands of her children. I am sure that Sir Maharaj Singh does not agree with this opinion. I am sure that you will enthusiastically approve of his election as the president of the Liberal Federation. I feel certain that you will see in every page and every line of his address, the impress of a sincere and patriotic personality".

Mr. T. R. Venkatarama Sastri (Madras): I have great pleasure in supporting the resolution. I am sure all present here will agree that we cannot get anyone more illustrious than Sir Maharaj Singh to preside over the deliberations of this session.

Hon'ble Sir B. P. Singh Roy (Bengal): I consider it a great privilege to associate myself with the resolution that has been so ably moved and seconded. We are passing through very difficult times; with the present political situation in the country and faced with the crisis of the war, we all suffer from a sense of frustration. I feel that the National Liberal Federation has a great duty to discharge and to play a very honourable and useful role in the present circumstances. Who is more fitted to be at the helm of affairs of the Federation at this juncture than my esteemed friend Raja Sir Maharaj Singh? He brings to the high office of President of the Federation his administrative experience, his deep patriotism, his suavity of manners and knowledge of affairs not merely in India but also in the Dominions. In South Africa as Agent-General of the Governor-General Sir Maharaj Singh rendered very useful services to his countrymen. I am sure he will give us the lead that we need. With these words I have great pleasure in supporting the motion.

The proposition was then carried with acclamation and Raja Sir Maharaj Singh took the chair after being garlanded by the Chairman. He then delivered the presidential address.

Sir Maharaj Singh, who on rising received an ovation said:
Fellow Liberals.

I deem it a great honour to have been elected President of the National Liberal Federation of India and to have been asked to deliver the presidential address at its twenty-fourth session. I wish to tender my sincere thanks to those who have conferred this distinction upon me and in all humility to ask for your good wishes and your confidence.

A Great Loss.

By the death of Mr. Nibaran Chandra Ray the Liberal Party has lost a valued public worker. For many years he served our Federation with zeal and efficiency as one of its General Secretaries. The deceased gentleman was a Professor in a Calcutta College and was for long a member of the Senate and Syndicate of the Calcutta University. He was an active Secretary of the Indian Association founded by the late Sir Surendranath Banerji and devoted his time and talents to the building up of that Institution.

The Liberal Party and Liberalism.

Unlike many of you I have been unable owing to the exigencies of official life to take an active share in the work of our Federation. My creed, however, has been that of a Liberal for more than a generation and I had not the slightest hesitation in accepting many years ago the invitation of my old and valued friend, Sir C. Y. Chintamani, a staunch pillar of liberalism, to join the Liberal Federation. Derogatory remarks are sometimes heard about the strength and prospects of our party. We are told that our numbers are insignificant and our future without hope. Now it is true that we cannot claim to influence the masses of our countrymen in the same way as the Congress or the Muslim League. For this the reasons are fairly clear. We cannot indulge in slogans or popular cries and we cannot rouse the masses by impassioned appeals to their sentiments or their creed. We are a non-communal body (my very presence today is proof of this) and we are unable to point to any immediate panacea for all our ills. Nor can we honestly say that political opponents, whether British or Indian, are always one hundred per cent. to blame. As advocates of the *via media*

and as adherents of the mean as against extremes we cannot be expected to command a large following. But we can legitimately claim to be the direct heirs to the ideals and methods of the Indian National Congress of former days which adopted constitutional means to achieve progress (as distinct from mass civil disobedience) and had among its Presidents men whose names will live through Indian political history, such as Dadabhai Nowroji, W. C. Bannerji, William Wedderburn, Phirozshah Mehta, Badruddin Tyabji, Surendranath Banerji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and a host of others. We may claim with reason that, though there are many thinking persons in India who are not formally and visibly members of our party, there are thousands upon thousands who in their heart of hearts profess our creed. Every politically-minded Indian, who is not a full and active member of the present Congress, Muslim League or Mahasabha, is a Liberal however much he may wish to disown this appellation. In this connection I make bold to say that the majority of Indian Christians, who now number between seven and eight millions, hold substantially the views of the Liberal Party. So, I imagine, do large numbers among the Scheduled Castes, Sikhs and Parsis. Let this, however, pass. Liberals may diminish in numbers and our party may disappear in a future self-governing India, but liberalism represents something which is of lasting value. It is not merely a political philosophy. It is a habit of mind or outlook in life. It is progressive and constructive, not revolutionary or destructive. It insists that all should have equal opportunities for a full life even though all may not have the same gifts and abilities. It is opposed to the dictatorship of wealth, of the privileged classes and vested interests and it advocates the widest possible diffusion of property and power but at the same time it disapproves totalitarian tyranny. Let me quote here the words of a staunch leader of the Liberal Party in the British Isles, the Earl of Oxford and Asquith, uttered in a speech in October, 1926:—

“The fortunes of the Liberal Party may fluctuate but there is only one way in which Liberalism can ever be killed and that is by suicide. Because both on its constructive and defensive side it means two things, the preservation and extension of liberty in every sphere of national life and the subordination of class interests to the interests of the community. Those two ideals were and are the life-breath of the Liberal faith.”

The world-famed city of Bombay, in which we meet today, has produced a succession of stalwart Liberals, possessed of patriotism and intellectual ability and having the courage of their convictions. Many of them well-known to you are present here today. We owe much to them. Nor can I forget to pay a tribute to a stalwart Liberal in my own province, Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru, who continues to do valuable work for the country in the Council of State and is a member of that self-sacrificing body known as the Servants of India Society which has produced many gifted and patriotic Liberals.

The War

The World War inevitably continues to engross our attention. When Sir Bijoy Prasad Singh Roy delivered his impressive presidential address two years ago in Madras the prospects of the Allies were far from promising. Japan had declared war on the side of the Axis powers a few weeks previously. The Russians had lost large and prosperous portions of their country. Important towns in the British Isles had been severely battered by air raids, while France and other subjugated nations had almost ceased to exist. There was, however, one redeeming feature and it was a very important one, *viz.*, the entry of the United States of America into the war side by side with the allied nations. I remember recording on the 8th December, 1941, in my daily diary, which I have kept continuously for more than twenty-five years, that with the enormous material and moral resources of the United States marshalled against them nothing could prevent the ultimate downfall of the Axis powers. I believe that to be still true. In spite of large-scale Japanese successes in 1942 the Allies have marched from strength to strength in Africa, Europe, and the Far East. The astonishingly successful struggle of the Russians, aided admittedly by large supplies

from America and Great Britain, and the victories of the Allies in North Africa, Sicily and Italy, coupled with a satisfactory decrease in losses of shipping from submarine attacks and the defection of Italy from the Axis cause, have changed the prospects of the War. So much so that one may hope not unreasonably that 1944 or at least 1945 will see the end of hostilities in Europe.

India's sympathies have throughout been with the Allies and against the vicious ideology of Nazism and it is a matter of pride and gratification to us that Indian troops of whom, it is understood, nearly two millions are under arms or in training have played a gallant and valuable part in the successes of the Allies in Abyssinia, Syria, North Africa and more recently in Sicily and Italy. They would have played an even more prominent part if opportunities for their training whether as officers or men in all branches of warfare, including the Navy and Air Force, had been given long before the present war, as continuously urged by Indians of all parties and creeds for the last fifty years and more.

Another blunder for which past Governments in Great Britain and India are responsible was the backwardness, when the present war broke out, of organised industries which should have been brought into being in this country one hundred years ago. India was unable to provide war materials on an appreciable scale. Guns, tanks, aircraft, locomotives, automobiles and such like had to be imported from abroad, while lack of suitable industrial training necessitated the despatch of Indians to England for training under the Bevin scheme. Happily there has been improvement of late and one hopes that the industrial movement has come to stay, for it will increase the country's material wealth and reduce unemployment.

Famine and Scarcity.

A major tragedy has befallen large areas in India, particularly Bengal, in the guise of famine. Thousands of our countrymen have perished from starvation and, it seems, will continue for some time to die from lack of food or absence of means to purchase it. Poor harvests, increase in population, profiteering, hoarding, the loss of Burma, the reluctance of provinces to part with their surpluses, the export of foodgrains from India, supplies to the military, difficulties of transport and distribution, inflation and the negligence of the Bengal and Central Governments have been stated to be the main causes of the famine. All these, however true or useful as arguments in debate, have been or are of no comfort to the victims, men, women and children, who have cried for food and received none and it is a startling fact that in India alone of all countries at present within the British Commonwealth have these horrors taken place on a large scale. One of the best achievements of British rule in India—and I gladly admit that certain enduring benefits have been conferred by the British—has been the excellent Famine Code, a result of long experience, with its generally effective methods of dealing with conditions arising from scarcity or famine and of preventing starvation, but in 1943 the machinery of Government, both Central and Provincial, was thrown out of gear with disastrous results. Recriminations regarding the past are useless for the primary purpose of saving life, and lack of food must not be made the sport of politics. It is essential, however, that a Commission should be appointed in due course to ascertain the causes of this famine, to apportion responsibility and, even more, to prevent the recurrence of a similar calamity. For the present we may leave the Governments in Whitehall, New Delhi and Calcutta, all of whom have failed in their duty, to share their degree of blame for lack of prevision and for the acute distress that has prevailed in Bengal, Orissa and portions of Southern India. Fortunately the people of Great Britain, the United States and other more favoured countries have been roused by the cries of the dying. The new Viceroy, Lord Wavell, acted wisely and promptly in personally visiting Bengal in the very early days of his viceroyalty and in invoking the assistance of the military authorities in the distribution of food. The Government of India have also been moved to more effective action. The Press in this country, Indian and European, and members of the Central Legislature have nobly discharged their duty in bringing to light the

tragedy and in inviting help. A special meed of praise is due to the "Statesman" which in spite of criticism has displayed courage and wisdom in exposing hunger and misery. We are also grateful to friends in the British Isles and to Dominions, such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa, which have sent or have promised to send food. Last but not least the people of India in their thousands regardless of creed and race—for famine is no respecter of persons—have responded with keenness and sympathy to appeals from Bengal by the despatch of large sums of money, clothing and food and the creation of charitable organisations in Calcutta and elsewhere.

The after-effects of famine are likely to be acute and prolonged. They will necessitate measures to rehabilitate the impoverished, to continue the importation of food into India and Bengal and to prevent the further disintegration of rural life in the stricken areas. Disease, epidemic and otherwise, frequently follows famine and it is to be hoped that adequate steps will be taken to prevent and deal with cholera, dysentery and malaria. Though Bengal and some other important tracts have been the principal victims, the whole of India has suffered and is suffering from the devastating effects of scarcity and high prices. Food is not always easy to obtain. The prices of grains and other necessaries have soared beyond the means of the poor and show no signs of appreciable abatement despite assurances from Government. Millions in this country are eating less than even the subnormal diets of previous days. The rise in the cost of wearing apparel, fuel and cooking utensils has been phenomenal and much higher than in the case of essentials in Great Britain and the Dominions. The cultivator may have benefited by the increased sale price of wheat, rice and other grains, but he has now to pay three and four times what he paid in 1939 for other necessaries. We hear a great deal of inflation and its causes but not so much of effective remedies beyond increased taxation and loans. Less is said of the huge expansion of paper money and of the crying necessity for the production in India of far more consumer-goods. The control of prices, too, is at present largely on paper. But we of the well-to-do classes are also to be blamed. How many of us have reduced our expenditure on unessential articles or have abandoned luxuries or have helped to take effective action against profiteers and other anti-social offenders? In this connection, I would invite your attention to the "Grow More Food Campaign" too tardily started by governments in India but deserving of our active support. There must still be hundreds of thousands of acres of culturable lands in India which at present lie fallow and which could be used to feed large numbers of people. This is an urgent necessity, for the end of war may well see a shortage of food throughout the world.

The Political Situation in India.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I can only repeat what I said in my presidential address at the All-India Conference of Indian Christians held in Delhi in March this year that at present there is a general feeling among Indians of frustration. On all sides we seem to be faced by difficulties. Like most Liberals and not a few Congressmen I believe that some of our present day evils are due to the defection of the Congress Ministries in 1939. The immediate consequence of their departure was a reversion to absolute rule in many of the most important provinces in India. We are back constitutionally to 1860 for after that year there were at least Legislative Councils in the large provinces. I was and on paper still am an elected member of the United Provinces Legislative Assembly, but my mouth and those of my colleagues in that body have been closed for over four years through no fault of ours. We are powerless to influence Government decisions or to take any share in the administration. We have no control over expenditure and cannot even elicit information through questions. A more pitiable situation it is difficult to imagine!

Another mistake made by the Congress was their refusal to form coalition ministries. Nearly five years ago I pleaded in our Assembly with the Ministers and outside with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru for the creation of a Ministry in the United

Provinces composed of members of the Muslim League and other important interests in addition to members of the Congress Party. There were ample precedents in Great Britain for the constitution of coalition governments. All was in vain. The High Command, it was believed, was averse to any such change and that was the end of it. I state these facts with all the more regret since I had defended the Congress Ministries in the London 'Times' in 1939 against what seemed to me the one-sided and unfair attacks of the late Sir Michael O'Dwyer, and am still of opinion that much valuable constructive work both in the legislative and social spheres was done by them during their brief term of office.

The Congress resolution of August, 1942, was a great blunder. Many of us condemned it at the time as likely to result in violence even though such was not intended. Experience has shown that mass disobedience is both a dangerous and double-edged weapon. Dangerous, since it inculcates in the masses habits of resistance which are subversive of order and discipline, and double-edged in view of the possibility, nay probability, of its being used on occasion against its quondam supporters. What, for instance, was and is there to prevent the Muslim League from using this weapon against the Congress, or tenants and land-owners from refusing *en masse* to pay rent and land revenue? But if the Congress are to be blamed for sins of omission and commission, the Government of India and the British Government are also open to legitimate criticism. Instead of declaring a complete change of policy at the commencement of the war by filling the Governor-General's Executive Council with representative Indians they were content with suggesting advisory committees forgetting that no self-respecting Indian looked or can look upon these as substitutes for the possession of executive power. Further, no representative Conference of Indian leaders was summoned by the then Viceroy either in 1939 or at any time subsequently to discuss not only the political situation but the institution of measures for the protection of India and for ascertaining the best method of helping the Allied cause. Most thinking people realized on the outbreak of war that it would be long and bitter and not a few anticipated the entry of the Japanese sooner or later on the side of Germany. If Sir Stafford Cripps had come to India with his proposals in 1939 or early in 1940 instead of 1942, I venture to state that there would have been an excellent prospect of their general acceptance and that India would have been a happier country today. There had been then no cry of Pakistan as we know it in its present form and no threat of mass civil disobedience. Under present conditions, however, we are face to face with a divided India, with thousands of our fellow countrymen, including many prominent and popular leaders, in prison, the retention by European officials of the key departments of Finance, Defence and Home in the Government of India, a complete absence of popular government in large portions of India, swollen prices, general distress and, last but not least, famine in large and densely populated areas. The suggestions of well-known Indian leaders and of Non-Party Conferences composed of moderate men sincerely anxious to bring about peace between the Government and the people have been brushed aside without assigning any reasons. Attempts to approach Mahatma Gandhi in order to ascertain his views and those of the Congress Working Committee in regard to the present political situation have been consistently refused on the plea that it was essential for Congress leaders first to denounce openly what they had previously commended. It is of little use, however, to dwell at length on past mistakes on this side or the other. A more profitable, though a much more difficult, task is to decide what practical steps can be taken for a solution of the present deplorable situation.

The Communal Problem.

The chief problem that faces India at the present time—and it is most complicated—is the communal issue, that is to say, the tension between Hindus and Muslims—or, to put it into more concrete language, between the Congress on the one side and the Muslim League on the other. Governments in India have failed to solve it. In fact,

their past actions and attitude have aggravated separatist tendencies. By us also opportunities alas! have been lost more than once. If only in years gone by, when a scheme for a federated India was on the anvil and later approved by the British Parliament in the Government of India Act, 1935, the majority community had agreed to the grant of large residuary powers to the provinces, or if the Cripps proposals in spite of certain defects had been accepted, it is probable that the present communal impasse would not have arisen or would at least have been less tense. Now the question before us is whether the India of the future shall be undivided or partitioned. As a Liberal and an Indian Christian—and in either capacity a representative of minority interests—I have never concealed my personal view in favour of a unitary Government in this sub-continent and I believe that outside the Muslim League this opinion is shared by all minorities such as the Scheduled Castes, Indian Christians, Sikhs and Parsis. We would greatly prefer that a self-governing India should at least start under one Central Government—even though with provinces autonomous save for a few subjects such as Defence and Foreign Affairs—and be divided only if the experience of 15 or 20 years shows that partition is essential. I believe that I am right in stating that in Soviet Russia, while the right of the various composing nations to freedom of self-determination is recognized, including the right to secede and form independent states, no nation in spite of religious and linguistic differences has so far parted from the Central Government. The existence of two separate Indias with their own armies, tariffs and foreign relations may well be conducive more to mutual strife than harmony especially when, as has often happened in Europe, the minority in one area is likely to appeal from time to time to the majority in the contiguous zone. Strangely enough, the Muslim League, while regarding statutory guarantees at the Centre as nugatory for the purpose of protecting Muslim minorities, stresses its desire to give the same guarantees to minorities in Pakistan. Then, too, it must not be forgotten that, whereas Muslims in the proposed Hindu India will be a small minority, in Pakistan the Hindus of Bengal and the Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab will form large and, may be, difficult minorities. It is one thing, however, for us to proclaim the opinion of the majority and quite another to win the acceptance of those who are opposed to it, especially when the opposition consists of large and influential Muslim minority claiming millions of adherents. And if it is not possible to secure voluntary acceptance what is to be done? If, as some say, physical force is the only remedy, it is indeed a truly terrifying prospect.

The solution of the problem of minorities in India is more complicated than in other countries because of the large number of Muslims both relative and absolute. To deny the influence of the Muslim League may sound well on a public platform but it is not realistic. There is no easy solution. That is why I deliberately refrain from suggesting any scheme. There are many in the field, some of them admirable on paper, but none has so far been acceptable to both the Congress and the Muslim League. There are those who tell us that the departure of the British from India will lead to an early removal of communal difficulties. It passes my comprehension, however, why the same persons do not tell us now what the solution will be. I repeat that the problem of minorities is extremely difficult and cannot be decided by easy generalisations. I have no doubt in my mind that it was the main cause of the Great war of 1914 and the World War of 1939, and shall content myself with citing only the instances of Alsace-Lorraine, Czecho-Slovakia, the Balkan States, Poland and Danzing. The Treaty of Versailles and the Minorities Guarantee Treaties signed by many powers twenty years ago and more did not remove it. And this complex problem is not confined to Europe. It exists within the British Commonwealth, for example, in South Africa and Ireland and, as recent experience shows, in Burma and Ceylon. It is a world problem and will be one of the crucial difficulties calling for solution at the next Peace Conference.

In these circumstances my own view is that no final decision can or should reasonably be expected in the midst of a world catastrophe on the question of Pakistan. No one can predict with any confidence what will be the precise nature

of the reconstructed world. For instance, will nations in future stand alone or in federated groups? If the latter, what will be the rights and powers of such groups and nationalities? These are vital questions which will have to be dealt with and decided by a World Conference on which we must insist that India should be represented. It may well be that a solution of the problem in Europe may be of help to us in India. I would appeal, therefore, as I did last March and in previous recent years, to Hindus, Muslims and others to postpone any final judgment on the one side or the other till peace has been restored. One thing at any rate is certain. It is that talks of fighting for or against Pakistan or of civil war are highly injurious. Do such speakers realise the implications of what they say? How, for instance, and where, will the fight commence and with what weapons? The only fighting that one can visualize is communal rioting on a large scale with a resulting intensification of ill-feeling. If the recent experiences of internal turmoil in Spain has any lesson for the world, it is that bloodshed and destruction in a civil war do not lead to a permanent solution of a country's difficulties.

Immediate Action.

As regards what should be done in the immediate future it seems to me that either we must acquiesce in the continuance of the present situation at any rate till the War is over or make an effective attempt to reach at least a temporary solution. The first alternative is no doubt that which commends itself to the Cabinet in England and the Government of India as a whole. It has the merit of shelving the difficulty and of imposing an outward calm. I am of opinion, however, that it cannot commend itself to right-thinking persons. It is a case of crying peace where there is no peace. No Indian, whatever his party or creed, is satisfied with the existing form of Government either at the Centre or in many provinces. Its continuance will only lead to increased underground discontent and further deplorable tension between the British and Indian races at the end of the war. Large sections of opinion in the U.S.A. as well as in Great Britain sympathise with us on this point. The present policy of the British Government of insistence on an agreed solution by Indians, theoretically justifiable though it may appear, is as ungracious as it is undignified. No ruling power can legitimately fold its hands and stand aloof in questions of vital importance whether in India or elsewhere. Great Britain did not adopt this attitude in dealing with the problem of self-government in Canada, South Africa or Ireland. They and we must try again and yet again until a solution is reached.

As regards the second alternative it seems to me that the first thing is for the Viceroy and the Government of India to allow an approach to be made to Mahatma Gandhi as soon as possible. We Liberals do not share all the political and economic views of the Mahatma and we have often deplored some of his actions, but there is no doubt that he is the leading personality in the largest political party in India and enjoys very great influence and prestige among the Indian masses, while his name is known to millions in Europe, America and Africa. No really satisfactory solution, therefore, even temporary, can be secured without his acquiescence, if not support. The late Viceroy and his Government made, I venture to think, a great mistake in not allowing a responsible Indian leader, such as Mr. Rajagopalachari or the American statesman, Mr. Phillips, to approach Mahatma Gandhi. India would not have been reduced to chaos if these and other responsible persons had questioned Mr. Gandhi on his views on the existing political impasse and on the means for ending it. If he had asked and still asks, as is probable, that the opinion of members of the Congress Working Committee should be ascertained, I would impose no conditions on their meeting and deliberations. Knowing Mr. Gandhi's consistently strong views on non-violence, we cannot expect him or them to admit responsibility for the deplorable and wicked acts of sabotage which took place in August and subsequent months last year or even to cancel their resolution of August, 1942. Self-respecting and patriotic men, who have sacrificed much, cannot reasonably be

expected to denounce their past. All that is necessary is for the Congress to treat that resolution as a dead letter. I believe that this will be done. For this purpose I am of opinion that the Congress leaders should be released unconditionally. Many of the rank and file, including scores of members of legislatures, are now out of jail and the number of releases is increasing and will, I hope, increase. It is unjustifiable to detain men and women in jail without trial and without their being supplied even with the reasons for their detention. Further, I do not believe for a moment that the Congress leaders would advocate peace with Imperialistic Japan or renounce their anti-Fascist attitude.

The next step would be a conference between them and the leaders of the Muslim League and representatives of other important minorities and interests with the immediate object of forming composite National Governments at the Centre and in the Provinces. In 1941 I did what I could through personal interviews to persuade Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah to meet each other but failed. Others have similarly failed. In this connection I wish to say that no party has been more pressing in its desire to see a settlement between the Congress and the Muslim League than the Indian Communists. In spite of our holding views different from theirs in certain important matters all honour is due to them for what they have tried to do. For several years I have openly and privately pleaded that the Viceroy should hold a conference of leading representatives of different parties and let India know the result of their deliberations. It is only at such a conference, for instance, that the full implications of a scheme such as Pakistan can be adequately discussed. At present we are in the dark as to details. These, no doubt, are governed by principles but the latter not infrequently have to be modified after a discussion of details. Anyhow, it is at least possible that a temporary solution would be reached at such a conference and National Governments be formed throughout India composed of representative persons. I feel confident that at any rate the younger generation of our countrymen on whom the future of India will increasingly rest would bring pressure on the leaders of the different parties, whose views perhaps age has fixed, to come to a settlement. Surely compromise is still a virtue even in our distracted world. Let us listen to the words of Burke: "All government, indeed every human benefit and enjoyment, every virtue and every prudent act is founded on compromise." If, however, the conference is not successful, the peaceful and often effective method of arbitration should be tried. If even that failed, India and the world outside would at least know where the blame lay. For my own part, as I said in December, 1940, and March, 1943, at All-India Christian Conferences and also at the Lucknow Provincial Non-Party Conference in December, 1941, "I would not mind if all the members of the Governor-General's Council were Hindus, or Muslims. I would not object if they were all members of the Congress or the Muslim League, because I feel that in nine out of ten questions no friction or difference on communal grounds can possibly arise."

Post-War Reconstruction.

Nowhere in the world is this problem more pressing than in India. As compared with European countries, though fortunately we have not suffered from the terrible effects of bombing from the air, more leeway has to be made up since, whether in education, economic or social development, we are far behind the United Kingdom and the Dominions. For the world at large I imagine that the main objects of post-war reconstruction will be to devise a scheme for the preservation of world peace, the settlement of international disputes and the guarantee of security by some international organisation. There must also be great economic and social changes as well as protection against world-wide economic anarchy. The main function of any Central or Provincial Committees which have been or will be formed in India for the purpose of reconstruction, apart from temporary though difficult and important adjustments consequent on the return of hundreds and thousands of soldiers, will be to lay the foundations of a well-planned economy which

will increase the cultivation of food, improve agricultural methods, expand rural reconstruction and industries, liquidate illiteracy, and raise the standard of living. For all these Indians have been crying for fifty years and more. After the war large numbers of Indians with technical training will be released for civil duties. Full use should be made of their knowledge and experience. Large sums of money will have to be borrowed as well as taken from current revenues for the latter alone can never solve the limitless needs of the future India. The large and gratifying reduction in the sterling debt of India during the present war will be of help for this purpose. In any case we must think in crores and not in lakhs. A scheme has recently been adumbrated by the Government of India for a national system of education and a committee has also been formed to frame proposals for the improvement of health conditions throughout India. We wish well to both projects but at the same time express the hope that a reasonable time limit will be prescribed for their practical fruition and that the huge sums required will be forthcoming. Schemes have a tendency to cover hundreds of pages on paper and then to hibernate. Ladies and gentlemen, of one thing we may be certain—it is that the reconstructed world will be different from ours and that India cannot and will not be left unaffected. A new and better social order is the dominant theme of the different ideologies of the present time and we must be prepared for far more socialistic and less capitalistic conditions than those prevailing at present. Surely this accords with the Liberal creed which, though opposed to totalitarian tyranny in any form, is equally against the dictatorship of privilege and vested interests and demands that all without distinction of race and creed should have equal opportunities for a full life.

Indians Overseas.

Among the questions—and they are happily many—on which there is unanimity of opinion among Indians none is more important or pressing than that of our countrymen overseas. Curiously enough, this problem is the direct creation of the British Government and the Government of India in the past. To countries such as South Africa, the West Indies, Mauritius and Fiji Indians were sent by Government in a continuous stream under the evil system of indenture now, happily, abandoned. In none of these countries has the experience of our brothers and sisters been really satisfactory in spite of their industry, thrift and law-abiding nature. Strangely, these good points, creditable to colonists all over the world, have in the case of Indians led to opposition and hostile action on the part of jealous opponents. In South Africa Indians have suffered under a system of deliberate filching of political and municipal rights previously enjoyed by them, of deprivation of citizenship in large areas, of oppressive legislation and broken promises. The South African Peggung Act this year, as unnecessary as it is harsh and vindictive, is only one more manifestation of a deep-rooted anti-Indian feeling. From personal experience of South Africa, as Agent-General from 1932 to 1935, and of other portions of Africa in which Indians reside, I say without hesitation that the colour-bar is all pervading. It is the most sinister and cruel of all bars for against it there is no possible redress. It is artificial for it does not exist among children or the unsophisticated nor in certain countries, e.g., New Zealand, and it is more prevalent among the Anglo-Saxon than the Latin races. In South Africa Boers and British equally support its continuance though it is fair to say that the courageous though microscopic minority opposed to it (all honour to them) is composed almost entirely of British stock or their descendants. Some progress has been made in recent years in the education of Indians in South Africa but unless and until the municipal and political franchise is restored or extended to them on the same terms as Europeans enjoy it—of this, unfortunately, I see no prospect—there is no hope of Indian contentment. Speeches by Viceroys or by our countrymen are altogether ineffective. Europeans in South Africa ridicule and ignore them. They know full well that the British Cabinet pleads helplessness and that colour prejudice has increased even in Great Britain during this century to the extent that many hotels and boarding houses refuse to admit Asiatics and Africans in London, Edinburgh and elsewhere, in spite of

their being British subjects and in spite, too, of the absence of such inhibitions in the pre-war continent of Europe. They are also aware that in countries such as Kenya, which are directly under the British Colonial Office, Indians do not enjoy the same rights and privileges as men and women of British race or even aliens from Europe and America. In India also colour prejudice cannot be said to have disappeared and it still raises its head from time to time, though with less prominence than of old. Retaliatory measures against South Africa, economic or political, however much we may sympathise with them, are likely alas! to be of little practical benefit, for India exports to South Africa far more goods than she receives and the number of South Africans in India is infinitesimal. One reform and that alone will have a permanently salutary effect and that is pressure through peaceful negotiations, if possible, but by a self-governing India exercising full authority over her armed forces. Meanwhile it is essential that all the countries of Asia at the next peace Conference should bring the question of the colour bar prominently to the front. Asiatics and Africans everywhere will demand its removal and they will have many supporters among people of European and American nationality. Imperialism, throughout the world, has been largely responsible for antagonisms based on colour or race but it is a dying force at least in Asia. We must see to it that it perishes and that it has no resurrection.

Indian States.

Liberals have consistently urged reforms and political progress in the Indian States as well as in British India. It is obviously impossible for contiguous territories not to be affected by each other's conditions. In such cases there is always mutual interaction. If self-government, for instance, has been declared to be the goal in the near future of Indians in British India, it is inconceivable that their brethren in Indian States, with whom they are connected by ties of language, culture, customs and religion should not have similar aspirations. States in India are at present admittedly in different stages of political and educational evolution, but in all it should be the declared policy of their Rulers to prepare their people as rapidly as possible for full responsible government. This can be done by more and yet more education, by extension of local self-government and through State assemblies and other representative institutions with responsibility as well as power. These and other reforms are the more desirable in large States whose resources are greater and where political movement, whether open or veiled, is stronger and more persistent. Princes have one advantage over the British Government in that they belong to the same race and soil as their subjects and are permanent residents of the country. All the more reason why they should do their utmost to associate themselves with their people and their people with them. At the same time it is very desirable that subjects of Indian States should resort only to constitutional methods for reforms and redress of their grievances, since mass action is equally double-edged whether practised in British India or in the States.

Conclusion.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let us not be pessimistic in regard to the future of our country. When we look round the world today we hear of the terrible ravages of war in almost every country in Europe as well as in China and South-East Asia. Hundreds of thousands have been killed and permanently disabled, flourishing towns have been destroyed in whole or in part, free countries have been subjugated and crushed, while their economic structure lies shattered. Thank God, in this country we have so far been spared the direct horrors of war. We know, too, that there is an increasing number of men and women in different countries who long for a better world after the war in which force and race prejudice will not be the only sanctions. Those who are not against us are for us. With them let us take heart. Even more imperative is the duty cast on each and all of us in India to spread peace and goodwill among our fellow citizens and to dispel dissensions. The future of India lies with her people. United we stand! With this as our motto no power on earth can stop us from reaching in the near future the inspiring goal of free men and free women in a free country.

Second Day's Proceedings.

The 24th session of the National Liberal Federation re-assembled at the Sir Jeevanji Mody Hall on Thursday, the 30th December 1943 with Raja Sir Maharej Singh in the chair. After passing a resolution of condolence on the sad deaths of Prof. Nibaran Chandra Ray, one of the ex-General Secretaries of the Federation, Mr. Sohrab Wadia and Mr. C. L. Narayan Sastri the President called upon Mr. Vinayek Rao to move the following resolution.

1. The War.

Mr. E. Vinayaka Row (Madras) moved the following resolution:—

"The National Liberal Federation of India records its deep satisfaction at the success of the Allied arms on all fronts, in particular it views with pride the splendid part played by the Indian soldiers in Africa, Italy and other theatres of War.

The Federation appeals to the people of India to associate themselves with the war effort till Victory is attained. At the same time it desires to impress on the Central and Provincial Governments the absolute necessity for creating the political and psychological conditions essential to enable Indians to consider the War as their own and to exert their maximum effort with a view to ensure the speedy victory of the Allies".

Mr. Vinayaka Row said:

President, brother delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I have great pleasure in moving this resolution for the first and most important reason that it is not at all controversial. It is one on which there is perfect unanimity of opinion. The sentiments expressed in this resolution will command general acceptance from every group of political opinion including the governments and their servants both at the centre and in the provinces. It is a subject on which both the government and the people are at one. I am aware that one important political party has allowed its leader to say that that section does not co-operate with the war effort of the government for the simple reason that certain impossible demands made by that section were not conceded by the government. You know who made that statement, and who that leader is. He has not made only one statement, but he has made several statements and his statements stand that his party does not co-operate with the government for the reason that the demands made by it with reference to its representation have not been conceded by government. But that has not deterred individual members of that party from co-operating and many important members of that party have participated in the war effort on a grand scale. As far as the Liberal Party is concerned, ever since the war was declared, we have been urging our countrymen to co-operate in the war effort of the Government of India and the local Government. We are greatly pleased that the tide of war has definitely turned in favour of the United Nations. Victories have been won on a grand scale, both in the west and on this side, in the East Pacific, grand victories have been won. The German Navy such as it was and the submarine campaign of the Germans have been brought to a stand-still. The progress of Japan on the seas has been brought to a stop. On land they are still somewhat strong. But very soon, the armies of the United Nations will begin the offensive for which magnificent plans have been made. I have no doubt that very soon our victorious armies will march into Burma and open the road to China.

From all this, I say we can see indications, not only indications, but prognostications of an early termination of the war, definitely on the west and in the east, very soon, perhaps much sooner than people originally imagined. This is a source of great satisfaction. The Americans are glad over it; the British are glad over it; and we too are glad over it. Our contributions to this result have been magnificent, if you consider the relative strength, economically and financially, of our country in comparison with America and England.

In manpower, India has contributed something like two million combatants to the fighting services. And India's war effort in the manufacture and supply of munitions and hundreds of other requirements of war. With India as the base, has been splendid and superb. Our soldiers have won on every front, have done enormous deeds of valour and military renown. India has every cause to be legitimately proud. We are also glad that the Commander-in-chief recently issued a press statement in which he acknowledged in most handsome terms the great part played by India in the victories won and the great part she will still play in the victories that are to be won, in the near future.

But it is sad to point out, but it is my duty to point it out, that Mr. Churchill, the Premier, in the various speeches made by him after the North African Campaign referred to the great part played by the armies that came from the Dominions. He specifically mentioned South Africa, New Zealand, Australia but he forgot to mention India. You will all recall the statement, where at a moment of victory, after the North African Campaign, he announced in a generous mood the assistance he had received from the other United Nations - he mentioned America, South Africa, New Zealand, and Australia - but he did not like to say in the same breath India. I would not mind it if he said India in the second sentence or in the third sentence, or in another statement. I must say, with great regret that such an important politician as the Premier of England has not acknowledged in handsome terms the gallant services rendered by the Indian army in winning these victorious campaigns. It was left to a subordinate limb of the Government, not even the Viceroy but the Commander-in-chief in India, a subordinate limb of a subordinate government, to accord due recognition to the gallant victories won by our soldiers. Mr. Amery is the Secretary of State for India, the custodian of all India interests, but he too did not make any official statement on the floor of the House of Commons or on any proper occasion. India is entitled to expect such a statement. But it does not matter. Let us rejoice that our soldiers have done such splendid work. When the time comes, at the Peace Conference our people can say "Here are we representing two million soldiers who played such a great part in making that Victory possible, making it possible for the representatives of the United Nations to sit together at the Peace table, representatives who, we are told, will dictate terms to Germany and Japan. But I hope they will not dictate terms under which India will evolve independence. I hope they will sit and listen and they will then bear in mind the part played by the Indian soldiers.

The second part of the resolution urges the people to continue to give the same support to the war effort. What is the reason? The reason is, that unless Victory is won and speedily won, the sufferings of the people of India, politically and economically, will continue. Not a day should be allowed to pass which will delay the achievement of that Victory. It is so sadly, so sorely needed by millions of our countrymen.

War effort, of course, means among other things, giving cheques to various war funds. There too we have played a big part. The workers in army, ordinance and other factories, workers in the transport industry, those who engage in the manufacture and supply of a hundred items which our armies require, with India as the base of operations—these play a great part. All these things will have to be produced as fast as possible and as much as possible without any delay. That can be done only if there is the appropriate atmosphere making every one feel that the work and is one's own work. It is a part of our duty to appeal to the sentiment and imagination of the people. But to create the necessary psychological and political conditions necessary for every Indian to feel that this is our War, that the war is meant also for our own benefit, that Victory will bring to India all the aspirations she has been cherishing these years—deferred promises have not much practical value. People would like to know what exactly we are going to get. Something must be done here and now. More than a promise of something coming after the war, it is much better to know at this stage, what, when the war is over, would be quantum of freedom that we could expect politically and economically, without

further promises and without further delay. This can be done. We have been urging towards that end, the complete Indianisation of the army. I have got only a few statistics to give you at the present time. In September 1942, the ratio of Indian officers to British officers in Indian Artillery was 1: 64. Indian Corps of Engineers 1: 33, that is for every Indian officer, there were 33 British officers. In the armoured Corps 1: 25. Indian Army ordinance Corps 1: 163.

Taking all the services, in the army it was 1: 45. Navy 1: 24 and Air Force 1: 65. I expect that owing to the exigencies of war and recent recruitments to emergency commissions, the percentage now is slightly higher. Enough young men could be recruited from our Universities; there are enough men who are anxious to join the services. It is for the Government to make use of these resources. It is not too much to hope, I believe, that by the time we meet next Christmas, I shall be in a position to tell you that the proportion of Indian officers has increased in every branch of the Indian Army. Satisfaction in the army in every direction and every rank and branch of it, is the first political and psychological condition which is necessary to make every man feel that this war is our own war. Nothing is so valuable in fighting as a feeling that one fights not only for one's own present security and military honour but also for the security and honour of posterity. That feeling Government must create in our soldiers and sailors and airmen.

I believe that our appeal will be accepted and something will be done in this respect.

Mr. V. K. Shastri (Bombay) in seconding the resolution, said:

I have great pleasure to see that throughout this year there has been continued success to the allied arms, both on the diplomatic and military fronts. But it is a matter of regret that our Secretary of State, Mr. Leopold Amery has not cared to say one word about India's part in these successes.

The second part of this resolution is very important and we cannot lay too great an emphasis on the necessity of creating appropriate political and psychological conditions. It is very essential, in order to bring about these conditions, that the political leaders now in jail must be released. That must be the first step in order to create the proper political atmosphere. Another thing that must be done is to see that the government both at the centre and the provinces are manned by real representatives of the people, whoever they may be and to whatever party they may belong. It is necessary for creating the proper conditions for winning this war and making it a real peoples' war the present political deadlock should be immediately ended and the present government substituted by a government which can command the respect and confidence of the country."

Mr. Shapurji N. Guzder. (Bombay) supporting the resolution said:

I will touch on points which have been unwittingly omitted by the gentlemen who spoke before.

Sir Cawasjee Jehangir in his speech as Chairman of the Reception Committee laid the blame for the present political deadlock at the door of the Congress. The President Sir Maharaj Singh laid the blame on the Congress and the Government of India. They were both wrong. The sole blame for the present deadlock is the creation of British Government alone. All these 150 years of British rule in India, the policy adopted was divide and rule. In order to continue that policy Sir Stafford Cripps was sent with a most mischievous offer of Pakistan, thus widening the enmity between parties and countries who could rely on British promises when our past experience was so very bitter. Promises were broken and instead of reforms we had Rowlatt act and Jallianwala Bag.

The same thing is going to happen after the war is over. Our past experience has always been rather sad. There has been promise after promise in the last few years. But they do not fulfil any of them. There will be no dearth of enough Indians if complete militarisation is applied in this country.

Our first duty in order to bring about the proper atmosphere in the country for touching the imagination of the people and rousing the people to a great effort in support of the war, after we leave the hall, is for us after reasonable time, say after a week or so, to meet the Viceroy in a body and ask him that those leaders outside who want to see Gandhiji should be allowed to see him and enlist his support. Even a conference might be called of representatives of various parties who are thinking on these lines and a small committee or deputation should see the Viceroy and ask Lord Wavell to see that something is done to resolve the present deadlock.

With this suggestion I give my entire support to this resolution. The resolution was unanimously adopted.

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2. THE POLITICAL SITUATION

The Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri (Madras) moved the following resolution:—

The National Liberal Federation considers that the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee of August 1942 sanctioning mass Civil Disobedience was wrong and ill-conceived and it deploras and condemns the sabotage and violence which took place last year. At the same time it disapproves the policy of the Government of India in continuing to detain in prison without trial well-known and popular Indian leaders and in refusing to allow any approach to be made to Mr. Gandhi and other Congress leaders since their incarceration. In view of the present political and war situation and the fact that Congress is the largest political party in India and last but not least in the hope and belief that the Congress leaders will accept the wishes of millions in this country and agree to treat the resolution of August 1942 as a dead letter, the Federation requests the Government of India to release these persons unconditionally. It appeals to these leaders when released as well as to the leaders of the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahsabha and other important political parties and interests to convene a Conference and to co-operate in forming national composite Governments at the Centre and in the Provinces that at the Centre to be treated by the British Government on the same footing as the Governments of the Dominions. Such co-operation should be given without prejudice to the different view points of the various political parties regarding the future constitution of India and with the earnest desire to leave any important controversial matters for decision after the war. The Federation is convinced that composite National Governments will be of great help in clearing misunderstandings between the various parties and between them and Government, in increasing mutual confidence and in bringing about conditions which will facilitate the inauguration of a satisfactory and workable constitution for India when peace has been restored. In this connection this Federation strongly stresses the continuing obligation of the British Government and the Government of India to take early steps to further the aspirations of the people and to establish National Governments at the Centre and in the Provinces notwithstanding the existence of domestic difficulties.

Mr. Sastri who on rising received a great ovation said: The resolution explains itself. Still I think it will need a short speech to dot the i's and cross the t's. Let me take its important points one by one. In the first place you will understand that this Federation desires that Congress leaders should be released without any

condition and that then they should agree to treat the August resolution of last year as a dead letter. By that statement we mean that the Congress leaders when released should definitely abandon that resolution. It has no more validity. There is no more scope for its operation and the Congress organisation would lose nothing either in prestige or in opportunity of action by letting this resolution lie dead. That is our earnest request, and we state here that in that request millions of people in this country join us. That statement requires little explanation. As far as we see, the opinion of the country taken as a whole is not in favour of the resolution or what has followed it by way of disturbances in the country. These disturbances were not on a scale which would justify the inference that as a whole the people of the country sympathised with it. Then we know in point of fact that great bodies of Indians stood aloof from the resolution and all that it implies. The War effort has not been seriously impeded. The Government has not suffered anything but a slight embarrassment in the administration of the country or in the prosecution of the war. That leads to the clear inference that as a whole the population of India did not endorse the resolution of August 1942 and did not wish that it should stand even on paper to obstruct in any way the further progress of the country.

Do we say too much when we ask that the Congress should agree in consequence of the wishes of millions in this country to drop the resolution? I do not think it is an unreasonable demand to make. Then when Congress leaders have been released and expressly renounced all desire to continue in the spirit of that resolution the next step to take according to this resolution is that they in conjunction with the leaders of the Muslim League and the Hindu Maha Sabha and of other political parties with interests in the country convene a general conference of leaders of India. These should sit together, pool their wisdom and patriotism and then evolve plans for the immediate future. Our desire expressly stated here is that these deliberations, which, we hope, will be in an atmosphere of complete harmony and mutual understanding, should bring about what we describe by two words "national and composite Governments at the centre and in the provinces". You will see, Gentlemen, therefore that we want the leaders of the Congress to move away from their original spirit and then agree to collaborate with other leaders in the country of whom I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that there are many. They should collaborate with these people outside their own specific bodies and in collaboration with them establish composite and national Governments in the country. When we say "Composite" a word of explanation is necessary and as that breaks new ground I should like to explicate it by a word. What we mean is that when provincial governments are constituted in future there should not be wholly composed of representatives of that political party which may happen to be in power. Supposing the Congress were in power in any Province our suggestion is that the cabinet or the ministry they form should be composed certainly of a majority of Congress members but also of a few representatives of other parties in the interests of the country. In other words we recommend a coalition government in each province. That those Governments would not function properly and efficiently unless at the top and at the centre there were a similar Government composed of representatives of all parties and interests in the country follows as a matter of course. Then when such Governments have been established in the centre and in the provinces we believe, ladies and gentlemen, and I think we can assert it without the slightest hesitation, that not only our aspirations of the moment will be satisfied in a way but that it is a result the Government must heartily and cordially welcome. For to them the paramount duty today in India is the prosecution of the war which has entered or is about to on a decisive phase, when India and Japan will stand confronting each other. It is the paramount interest of the Government that in this country conditions should be established which will make that war absolutely certain to end upon the side of the allies. Is that too much again? Though by mutual co-operation all the parties in the country including Congress leaders released unconditionally should agree to establish national and composite Governments and with the guidance of the govern-

ments not certainly disturbing in any way the responsibilities of the Commander-in-Chief or the Viceroy in the conduct of that war that in that way we should help in the re-establishment of peace in the continent. That I think is a consummation devoutly to be wished. Our resolution puts that in prominence so that nothing could be brought against either the spirit or the language of the resolution that I beg to move for your acceptance.

Further down in the resolution we lay down some important propositions and it is to the most important of them that I next wish to draw your attention. You may all remember that our greatest complaint today is that the deadlock, political and otherwise, seems not to be resolvable for the reason that Government puts the responsibility for the initiative on the people of the land. The Secretary of State for India, followed dutifully by the Viceroy and other spokesmen, continually repeats what is a very convenient thing for them that the deadlock is the result of the unwisdom and discord of the leaders of the country divided into warring parties, and therefore the Government could do nothing until those leaders changed their ways and became friends with each other and co-operated in the establishment of conditions favourable to the establishment of a common government. I do not know, Gentlemen, how a Government ruling over 400 millions of people armed to the teeth today with all the weapons of force and violence that could be imagined, a Government which has taken to itself all the powers possible and conceivable and rules with an absolute sway, knows no check whatsoever to its authority—how a Government established in that supreme and unassailable position can tell the world and hope to be believed by the world that it is not their function at all to interfere, that their duty is to watch benevolently, perhaps complacently, perhaps gleefully, while the leaders are not able to come to an understanding and things should go on the present unsatisfactory and disastrous footing. A Government of that kind repeating this absurd proposition day after day seems to me to be condemning itself out of its own lips, and I should pity the world if the world believed it. I know the sensible part of the world, either in India or outside, does not believe it. We throw the onus on the Government. We say to them the responsibility for the impasse is not ours only. You are responsible. By *you* I mean the Government. Being responsible for it, it is your business, more than the business of any other single party in the country, to bring the people together, to put yourselves in their confidence and so to arrange everything without any long delay that a united constitution is possible not only for the purpose of the war but in the days subsequent to the war. That is the proposition which we make perfectly clear. "Notwithstanding the existence of domestic difficulties" we say. The meaning of that is we do not believe Government when they say that the unity of the country is not possible because there are disturbances and disorders in the country. Disturbances and discords there may be, but Government must take due share in this business and bring the parties together and go ahead bravely as they have done several times before in shaping the future constitution of India.

Then another important proposition laid down here—I must make it clear we say here when the Central Government must be treated by the Government of Britain on the same footing as the Government of the Dominions. We mean that for the war, and during the war. You see the importance of that proposition. It is of the essence to the future administration of the land that we should be powerful in determining the future operations of our country. We should be here, I mean the Central Government, what the South African Government is in Cape Town or the Australian Government at Canberra. We cannot be less than they. Any position inferior to them would put us in an invidious situation and prevent us from taking our place, which we assert with all emphasis to be one of complete equality with the dominions and, as it is now understood constitutionally, with Great Britain herself. Any position less than this is injurious to our self-respect and we cannot accept it. We therefore demand that a National composite Government established at the centre should be treated as any Dominion Government

is. And here a further word of explanation is necessary. When we say any Dominion Government we do not say, as some Britishers are very willing to allow, that we want to occupy the position which these Governments occupied yesterday. What we mean is we should occupy a position which they are going to occupy as part of the arrangements of postwar reconstruction in the British Commonwealth. If their position changes for the better, our position changes correspondingly. We do not mean to be for one moment less than they in this political organisation. What we say here about the Constitution of India for the future must be accepted by the Government as fully facilitating their work. We are willing to concede that there should be no definite and final constitution established during the war. What we have asked is that provisional centre should be treated practically as a Dominion Government. We do not pretend for one moment that by the law, by the constitution, we should be made a dominion, but we want equal treatment with the Dominions. We only say that for all practical purposes the Government of Great Britain should treat us as though we were a Dominion Government. That is to say in practice the veto of the Viceroy lies aside, subject always to the higher interests and demands of the war. But we are willing that the enactment of a constitution for India should lie over till after the war, till a conference or convention of all the parties in the country takes place. You will notice therefore the Liberal Federation keeps well within the bounds of moderation when it allows that all the different points of view of the various political parties regarding the future constitution of India should be taken into account, and that their earnest desire is to leave important controversial matters till after the war. That is why I commend the resolution heartily for your support. It is not now we are going to handle or determine difficult points for the permanent constitution of the country. You know one of the very great difficulties raised is the question of separation of Hindu and Muslim interests into distinct and separate and perhaps unco-operative provinces. Our point of view is, that that question along with other questions of similar magnitude and complexity should not be raised during the war but should be left over after the war. When this Federation met in Madras last year it passed a resolution disapproving Pakistan and Hindustan. Of that resolution we say nothing. It is there, still binding on us. We are against Pakistan as a Liberal Federation. But we are willing that the settlement of that difficult question and other questions of a similar order of difficulty should be postponed till after the war when the convention of all political parties in a better and more harmonious atmosphere will be able to tackle them and settle them to the satisfaction not only of ourselves but of posterity. I commend this resolution to your acceptance (Cheers).

The Honble Sir Bejoy Singh Roy in seconding the resolution said:

Ladies and gentlemen, being called upon to speak immediately after the Right Honble Srinivas Sastri I naturally suffer from a great disadvantage and I do not think that a long speech is necessary in seconding this resolution after the magnificent oration of our distinguished countryman and leader, the mover of the motion.

The War has now entered a new phase. To the success of the Allied arms India has made very valuable contributions in men and materials. The Indian heroes are spilling their blood in the cause of the freedom of the world. The famous Eighth Army whose achievements to-day resound through the entire civilized world consists amongst others a large number of Indians—Hindus and Moslems, Rajputs, Sikhs, Mahrathas and Pathans, besides those excellent soldiers, the Gurkhas from the Hindu Kingdom of Nepal. We may therefore hope that this supreme sacrifice of so many noble sons of India and the unprecedented sufferings of the millions of her people due to famine and high prices of the necessities of life would not go in vain. Our contribution to the cause of Democracy and vindication of human liberty is great and when the victorious nations meet for deciding the fate of the world I am sure, that they will have to take into consideration the noble role played by India in the achievement of the victory.

The mere granting of a constitution, however, will not bring us freedom or enable us to enjoy that freedom even if it brings that freedom to our best advantage. Our ability to secure happiness for the poorer sections of our countrymen, to raise their standard of living, to increase their sense of self reliance and self-respect as citizens of a free country, will depend very much on the economic advancement of the people through industrialisation, introduction of a better system of agriculture, spread of education amongst the masses, and social reform. These are much bigger problems than even the drafting of a political constitution acceptable to all sections of the people, though political emancipation alone can make these improvements possible and effective. Situated as we are, India will have to take up the question of economic regeneration and social improvement almost simultaneously with the securing of self-government at the end of the war. There is no time to be lost. Independent countries like England, Russia and China engaged at present in a life and death struggle have already begun seriously to think of post-war reconstruction schemes. In our case it is not merely reconstruction but construction from the beginning. Thus India can ill-afford to dissipate her energy and waste her time in mutual recrimination. Do we realise that from the point of view of our claim for freedom it would be suicidal if at the Peace Conference Indian representatives speak in discordant voices instead of claiming freedom on behalf of the entire Indian people. If they go to the Conference without even an agreement amongst themselves, at least on the fundamental principles of Indian demand, the victorious nations with all their sympathies for our aspirations will neither have time nor the patience to bring about unity amongst the Indian political parties at the Conference.

The National Liberal Federation has never supported direct action. In fact from 1919 onwards we have dissociated ourselves from such movements and time has proved that the National Liberal Federation was right and not other organisations. I am sure that the day is not far distant when even the Congress and other organisations that favour direct action will revert back to the principles laid down by the founders of the National Liberal Federation viz., that the Constitution should be worked to its best advantage and that political rights should be secured and expanded through creation of healthy constitutional conventions. One of the points urged in the motion before the Conference is that the Congress should treat its resolution of August 1942 as a dead letter. I venture to submit that the decision of the Congress in passing that resolution was extremely unfortunate. It has not improved the cause of India's freedom and has not in any way advanced our political unity. There was divergence of opinion even in the Congress camp regarding the policy foreshadowed in the resolution and I am glad to say that the overwhelming majority of my countrymen stood away from the movement. It is time that the leaders of the Congress should realise their mistake and decide to abjure the policy once for all. I am sure Mahatma Gandhi will not hesitate to advise the Congress to do so. The British Government too have their responsibility in helping the cause of India's unity and political settlement and they cannot legitimately take up an attitude of indifference by asking us to settle our differences. Our responsibility is no doubt great but that cannot justify the renunciation of obligation in this matter by the British Government, who have, I regret to observe, largely contributed to the accentuation of communal differences in India. I agree with the mover of the motion that an attempt should be made to set up composite governments in India. I can say from my experience as a Minister in Bengal for over a decade that nothing but a coalition government can succeed in this country and probably Composite Government therefore, is going to be a permanent feature of our future Constitution. As you are aware communal differences were greatly accentuated over the question of formation of ministry in the U. P. Communal peace can never be secured unless the country is ruled by the representatives of both the communities with joint responsibility. So in the interest of settlement of the larger political and constitutional problems as well as for helping communal harmony the Congress leaders should be set at liberty as early

as possible so as to enable them to discuss the future constitution first amongst themselves and later on with the leaders of other political parties in the country. It will also expedite termination of administrations under Sec. 93 of the Government of India Act in several of our provinces. The deadlock must be resolved and let us hope that both the British Government and the Government of India will not be lacking in imagination in taking advantage of the improved political atmosphere in the country created by the changed war situation. Let the British Government prove realistic and let the fire of freedom galvanise us as it has done the people of China and Russia.

Dr. G. S. Mahajani, supporting the resolution said: Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: As I analyse it, there are three factors in the present political situation:---the loss of self-rule in the provinces, the growth of separatist tendencies in the country, and thirdly, the resultant dissociation of the people from its administration and from the world affairs --- and this too at a time when long range policies are being formulated. This isolation in the international sphere is the worst tragedy of the present deadlock. Now, while I whole-heartedly support the resolution, so ably moved by Mr. Sastri, may I just say a word in explanation of a somewhat different solution that I ventured to suggest in the press? It meant in effect: first the withdrawal by the Congress of its August resolution and then the resumption of power in the provinces by forming composite Cabinets on the lines of the Swiss model, to be followed by some suitable arrangement at the centre. The resolution now placed before you asks the British Government to take the initiative of releasing the Congress leaders. I am not, and in fact no leader, no party could be, interested in desiring the humiliation of what is admittedly the greatest political organization in the country. When, therefore, I suggested the withdrawal of the Congress resolution, it was on two grounds. First--neither Mr. Churchill, nor Mr. Amery seems to feel concerned about the deadlock the continuance of which is only hitting our own people, Politics, after all, is a game:--if one move fails you have to start another. Secondly, the movement is in the hands of Mahatma Gandhi, who has often in the past retraced his steps. It might be different with a lesser man or a lesser party; but with Gandhi or the Congress, the fear of loss of prestige need not be a bar to withdrawing a step, if only to regain the initiative. Be that as it may, I have pleasure in supporting this present resolution.

The resolution asks also the Congress on its part to treat the August resolution as a dead letter and proceed to form composite cabinets. This point has really a bearing on what I called the growth of separatist tendencies. I have no desire--nor also the time--to go into the details of the question:--but I do believe that if we had followed the practice of the Swiss Constitution, the Pakistan question would not have arisen in its acute form. Composite cabinets continuously provide opportunities of working to-gether. And it is a lesson of history that common national consciousness arises not by argument, not by any theorising, but by the very experience of living together successfully.

Lastly, a word about why the British Government should take the lead. I grant--I have not the least doubt on that point, that the United Nations will win the war despite the continuance of the Indian deadlock. The vast potential resources of the Allied powers, particularly of the U. S. A., fully ensure the successful outcome of the struggle. Yes, they will win the war, but they will not win the peace if the deadlock continues and the bitterness is allowed to grow. It is mainly on this ground that I feel that Government ought to take the initiative by releasing the Congress leaders and facilitate the early solution of the constitutional problem. With these words, I support the resolution.

The resolution was passed unanimously.

3. Appointments to Posts in India of Dominion Nationals

Sir Raghunath Paranjpye (Poona) then moved:

"The National Liberal Federation of India is opposed on principle to the appointment to posts in India of persons, however eminent they may be, who are Nationals of Dominions which do not place Indians and Europeans on an equal civic footing or do not admit Indians to their countries as colonists and for this reason disapproves the appointment of the Rt. Hon'ble Richard Casey as Governor of Bengal".

Sir Raghunath Paranjpye said:

President, Ladies and Gentlemen: This resolution is somewhat of a different character from the resolutions which we have been moving in such conferences before. But it is of great importance as enunciating a very important principle. A few days ago when the news of the appointment of Rt. Hon'ble Richard Casey was published in the press, I at least felt that this was a very injudicious appointment; and although a certain number of persons have expressed their satisfaction at the appointment, still I believe that all patriotic Indians and all Indians with real nationalistic feelings should enter their emphatic protest against an appointment of this character. We are not referring here to the personal merits such as they may be of Mr. Casey. He may be a very esteemable person, probably he is, nay, he no doubt is, a very esteemable person being a member of the War Cabinet, and a man who has held important offices in Australia and later on in the British Cabinet. He was appointed a minister of state in the Middle East. He may be an important man, although we did not hear of him until a year or so ago. But however excellent he may be, he is entirely unsuited to be appointed to the governorship of a province like Bengal. Our reason is this. In Australia and much less in other dominions of the British Empire, Indians are not treated on a footing of equality. India herself has always welcomed men from other countries but she had recently to cry a halt to this and the Legislative Assembly has only recently passed legislation empowering the Government of India to take counter-measures against dominions which do not treat Indians on a footing of equality. Mr. Casey has come from a dominion in which Indians have not received the same treatment as the native population of that dominion. Indians are not allowed to go there as permanent tourists at all. Even if you want to go there as travellers you have to go through a lot of "khat-pat". In none of these dominions are Indians allowed in any high government posts. In South Africa and other colonies, Indians cannot hold any government post whatsoever. In the face of these facts, the appointment of Mr. Casey as Governor of Bengal, one of the most important positions in our country, is, I think, very insulting. It was going to say, to the self-respect of our people. I do not propose to go very much into that but this is a question of principle. I can go further and say that in other dominions, the appointment of a Governor is made after consultation with and on the recommendation of the Premier of that dominion. In India it is not the position because there is no Indian Prime-Minister who can be consulted on the appointment of a Governor. But it was certainly possible for the British Government to exercise some imagination and see whether an appointment of this kind will be welcomed by Indians. I know there are many people in this country, who for some reason or other welcome such appointments when made. I have nothing to say about that. The appointment having now become a *fait accompli*, I wish Mr. Casey well. But I would rather not have had this appointment made because it is not an appointment which should have been made. When India is on a perfect footing of equality, then certainly these men may be appointed to these posts in India. You may remember a few days ago two South Africans who were appointed to certain posts under the Government of India had the good sense to resign because of an agitation in papers. I think they had the good sense to see they would rather not live in a country where they were not wanted. I do not want to say that Mr. Casey

should follow their example. If Mr. Churchill wanted Mr. Casey to help in the prosecution of war, he could easily have made him a Minister of State resident in India as a servant of the British Government: we could have had no objection to that because there are a number of British and American troops here and he could have been of help in looking after their interests. But that was not done. He has been put in the position of the Governor of Bengal, an important key position in the political economy of India and I think this conference is justified in refusing to accept that appointment and in protesting against it, which is an insult to the self-respect of this county. I have great pleasure in proposing this resolution for your acceptance.

Seconding the resolution, Sir Vithal Chandavarkar said:

If I am not disclosing a secret of the Subjects Committee, we ought to be grateful to Sir R. P. Paranjpye for bringing up this resolution. The original idea was that the President should move it from the chair. He suggested that the principle of the resolution was so important that it shall be moved as a separate resolution so that there might be speeches in support of that resolution. Two appointments made recently in India constituted a very important departure since India came into the British Empire. The one is the appointment of a serving General as the Viceroy of India and the other is the appointment of a citizen of a colony or what is now known as a dominion, as the Governor of Bengal.

I am not here to discuss the principle of appointing a General as the Viceroy of India. There might have been some justification for that on the ground of world war policy although in principle such an appointment was wrong because since 1857, it must be said to the credit of the British Government, they have sent outstanding personalities from British public life, if not as Governor at least as Governor-General, the head of the Government of India.

But at a time when feeling in India is full of bitterness and we are suffering from a sense of frustration, for more reasons than one, apart from our own political status *vis-a-vis* the self-governing dominions, I do not know what possessed the Churchill government to insult and humiliate this country by sending a person, who is, perhaps, may no doubt be, an eminent statesman. But belonging to a country which has not allowed Indians to visit it except for a stipulated period and does not allow Indians to acquire rights of citizenship. I have no hesitation in saying that this appointment is unjustifiable. I must say it to the credit of Australia—I have heard it from people who have gone there—that you are not subjected to the same humiliations as in other colonies. I am told, you are welcomed, you are allowed to live in hotels and you are shown every consideration and hospitality by all classes of people. But at the same time, you are there under certain restrictions. And I think there is no difficulty about passport either. But the difficulty is that you must agree to be only a visitor and cannot acquire any right of citizenship. We have no ground to quarrel with the Australians. If we were free, we would retaliate. Perhaps we have in this country our own sad features of social life where we are treating our own countrymen, like the depressed classes, in a way that is a standing disgrace. But that should not affect our view in considering this appointment. It must also be recognised that Australia has helped us. Australia has sent us food to relieve the famine distress in Bengal. But that should not prevent us from criticising the principle underlying the appointment. What Australia gave us in food, we gave Australia in cloth.

Suppose an Indian of outstanding eminence like Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, who has travelled all over the Empire, were appointed the Governor-General of Australia. In spite of his eminence, the Australians would have objected to his appointment on grounds of colour, on the ground that he was an Indian.

If that is the position, I do not see how we can welcome this appointment and how we can avoid protesting vehemently against this appointment. Today's paper gives an interview which Mr. Casey has given to a newspaper correspondent. After reading that interview, what I fear is that this appointment is not going to be an isolated instance. I am afraid that this is the thin end of the wedge. Mr. Casey

thinks that he is more or less a pioneer. In his interview Mr. Casey is reported to have said, "I think it is most important that Australians should get more and better jobs abroad. I have just drafted a long letter to the Prime Minister on this subject."

For all these reasons, I am very grateful to Sir Raghunath Paranjpye for insisting that this resolution should not be moved from the chair and for persisting that this resolution should be taken up as a separate resolution proposed, seconded, discussed and voted upon.

We know our own misfortunes; we know our difficulties. We may be deprived of our liberties; we may not be free, free to enjoy freedom. But there is no reason why we should be faced with this appointment which is an insult to our self-respect. It is from this point of view that the National Liberal Federation and for that matter, every political organisation in the country, has to come out to protest strongly against the principle underlying the appointment.

The resolution was put to the house and carried unanimously.

4. THE FAMINE IN BENGAL

The Hon. Pandit Hirdaynath Kunzru moved the following resolution :—

"The National Liberal Federation of India shares the universal feeling of horror at the tragedy that has overwhelmed Bengal and has resulted in general misery and starvation in that important province and deaths on a scale hitherto unprecedented in the recent history of famines in India. It sympathises deeply with the people of Bengal and Orissa in their sufferings. The Federation is strongly of opinion that both the Central and Provincial Governments as well as His Majesty's Government are largely responsible for the serious maladministration which has led to the calamity by lack of prevision and effective planning and the shortage of food which should have been foreseen and prevented. The Federation is also deeply distressed at the fact that disease has followed famine and is exacting an even heavier toll of life than starvation. It draws attention to the significant fact that in India alone of all countries at present within the British Commonwealth has such a tragedy taken place."

Pandit Kunzru said:

I need not dilate on the severity of the disaster that has overwhelmed Bengal. The whole country is familiar with the misery that prevails throughout that province. The Government had ample notice that a tragedy was coming and unless adequate steps were taken to cope with it Bengal would be faced with very serious situation. An answer in the Legislative Council elicited the information that there was a shortage of rice of two and quarter million tons. About the same time prices of paddy rose to the shocking figure of Rs. 20 per maund. During the great war the price of paddy, I understand from the statement, had not gone above Rs. 5/- per maund. It was not only the provincial Government that was aware months ago of the crisis that would be in store for Bengal unless it itself took adequate steps to feed the people and save their lives, the Government of India also knew that a serious situation was developing in Bengal. A spokesman in the Council of State said during the debate on the food situation, "By the beginning of May, the situation in Bengal assumed alarming proportions." Shortage of rice in markets, as it seemed, was hopeless and unless desperate steps were taken the collapse of the civil life of the province was inevitable. What did the Government of India do when they were confronted with so difficult a situation, a situation which threatened to result in complete collapse of civil life in Bengal, as the Director General stated in the Council of State? Desperate step taken was to free trade in the Eastern zone. That was proved to be ill-advised, and, a few weeks later, had to be withdrawn. The Government of India shirked their responsibility to take proper measures and to co-ordinate the policies followed by the provincial Governments and to compel the Government of Bengal to put its famine administration in order. It took no steps to discharge this onerous responsibility resting on it. The result was that when it was faced with a major disaster it could resort only to desperate expedients to stave off the calamity that faced

the people of Bengal. But that step did not enable Bengal to hide over the situation, and it did not prove enough to cure the ills of Bengal. Gentlemen, if steps had been taken months ago when there was yet time to stock and create reserves of food and to send it in adequate quantities to the districts I am certain the alarming losses of life that had happened in Bengal would not have taken place. But the Government of India completely ignored their responsibility and His Majesty's Government must share the blame for the failure of the Government of India on such a crucial occasion. The ultimate responsibility of the Government of India under the present constitution rests on His Majesty's Government. They are in the last degree responsible for the character of the administration in this country and for its security and for the welfare of the people. They control, as recent events in Bengal and Sind have shown, the so-called autonomous ministries. They have ultimate power in their hand, but they failed to exercise it and they did not wake up to their responsibility. This is the reality of the distress in Bengal and no words can, in my opinion, be too strong to condemn not merely for their complacency and, if I may say so for their indifference to the people and welfare of Bengal. Mr. Amery stated for weeks in Parliament that the main problem was one of distribution of food rather than shortage of food. The Food Grains Policy Committee, however, has recognised that there is a real shortage of food in India and, quite apart from this fact, more food was needed to make this distribution effective. The Government of Bengal had lost the confidence of the people. This is now recognised even by the Government of India. They had to do something to restore public confidence in the Government of Bengal and to make the people feel that ample food was available and secondly they need not rush to the market in order to lay by large supplies as much as possible. More and more food could be obtained only from others, but for months the British Government, as we can judge by events, did not agree to place sufficient shipping at the disposal of the Government of India to enable them to get wheat from outside.

Ladies and Gentlemen. The responsibility of the Government of Bengal is a very heavy one. It has completely failed to discharge its obligations, but we are not less concerned with the failure of His Majesty's Government and of the Government of India which exercises power which the Constitution has vested in them to bring the erring provincial Governments to book and to take adequate measures to save lives of millions of people. Now, as the resolution states, let me say this that had such a situation been allowed to arise in any other country the Government would not have been able to last for a day. Yet in this country a Government, which has completely failed to discharge its elementary duties, still claims to be the guardian of the masses and keeps all powers in its hands.

Ladies and Gentlemen. The loss of life that has resulted in Bengal owing to the famine prevailing there, has been, as I have already stated, enormous. When I toured some districts of Bengal in October last, my estimate at that time was that the weekly death roll was no less than one hundred thousand. We now understand that the disaster that has followed famine is exacting a heavier or at least an equally heavy toll of human life. Lest you should regard this as an exaggeration, I will place a few facts before you. In Faridpur, it was understood in September and October that deaths from malaria and other diseases amounted to thirty thousand, and in the succeeding month the number of deaths were thirty thousand. Now again, it was said and reported in the papers that as a result of heavy death roll among labourers the standing *aman* crops could not be harvested in some parts of Faridpur, and for the same reason rabi crops could not be cultivated. Faridpur is not the only district in which heavy mortality has occurred. According to a statement issued by the Bengal Muslim League Famine Relief Committee, in Chittagong town 30,000 people died in five months out of a population of 200,000. In the Noakhali district, which has a population of little over two millions, about two hundred thousand people died according to the same source. In Munshiganj, which is a part of the district, it was said sometime ago by the Sub-divisional officer that about 50,000 people died from starvation and malnutrition, malaria and other diseases. In the Faridpur district to which I have already referred, according to the Secretary of the Muslim

League Famine relief committee, over five-hundred thousand have been affected by the malaria in the last five months, of whom, about 30,000 have already died. Cholera in some parts is raging. In addition to the difficulties I have stated a heavy toll of deaths from cholera in Rajshahi, Seeragunj and Bankura is going on. You thus see the resolution indulges in no exaggeration when it says that diseases of various kinds are proving taller now than the famine deaths sometime ago. I will just refer to one historical fact in this connection. It is well-known that since 1770 Bengal has not known such a disaster. The last famine occurred in Bengal in the seventies of the last century. Sir Richard Temple who was then the Lt. Governor of Bengal recorded the period as follows in his book "Men and Events of My time": "The Indian correspondent of the London newspaper had weird pictures of the coming calamity, and he set forth many considerations. The moral of which was that the English sovereign and nation should hold the Government of India answerable to the utmost of its power, for consequences of the tragedy. The view was developed by the leading organs, and, so far as the authorities in India were concerned English opinion was becoming strongly excited and officers of Government began to feel that they would be impeached if any failures were to occur or lives were lost through shortcomings of theirs."

In the present case the public was kept in ignorance of the reality of the situation. It was not allowed to know the truth about the calamity that was developing in Bengal till about the middle of October. It was only then that it roused itself and compelled Mr. Amery to change his tone and agree to take measures that were necessary in order to restore the position of what it was a few months ago. The moral of the present situation is that millions of our countrymen are living so close on the verge of starvation that the equilibrium is at once upset. It is a major disaster for us, and it is not merely in respect of food that we have experienced serious trouble. We are living on starvation level in respect of all social services. We have not enough food nor enough education nor enough medical relief. We are being starved both physically and mentally. We have thus a great social task confronting us and that is to raise the standard of living of our people, to increase the vigour of the rural population, and to spread the light of knowledge in every nook and corner in the country. If we had a national government I am sure we can go ahead to achieve appreciable results within this generation. See what Russia has been able to achieve in the course of 25 years. The Viceroy is alive to the seriousness of the present situation but I venture to think that only a National Government can solve all the serious problems which urgently require solution at the present time. All the United Nations want peace not merely now but a peace for ever. What is it that has disturbed the peace of the world twice before? That was because of lack of freedom in large parts of the world and hunger. A free India, as a controlled population can be a great factor in the maintenance of peace, but a subject India which is neither free nor well fed will in conjunction with other nations in similar position, be always a great threat to the peace of the world. I hope, therefore, that the authorities will learn a lesson from the present disaster and help us in establishing National Government, which will give us an opportunity of tackling the major problems that await solution, with courage and patriotism.

Mr. B. N. Gokhale (Bombay) in seconding the resolution said Ladies and Gentlemen, you have just heard an elaborate analysis of the Bengal famine situation from the lips of our esteemed friend the Hon. Pandit H. N. Kunzru. It is but natural that so long all attention should have been concentrated on the talking of speedy relief measures in connection with the famine, and it is a matter of the deepest gratification that help poured in to distressed Bengal from all parts of the country and from the Dominions, England and America. It is, however, time to take stock of the situation calmly and dispassionately and to find out, if possible, where the responsibility lay, so that a tragedy of this nature may be averted in the future. The Liberal Party feels that the Provincial Government in Bengal as well as the Government of India and the British Government must all share in due measure the responsibility for the disaster which was as much the result of economic factors as of lack of foresight and vigilance on the part of the authorities concerned.

In the debate in the House of Commons on this question, when we were shocked to learn only about 50 out of more than 600 of our 'trustees' attended. Mr. Leopold Amery indulged in a number of economic platitudes known to every student of Indian economics. But he conveniently forgot the one lesson of war-time economy which has been scrupulously observed in England as well as America. It was the *Economist* which pertinently pointed out that. "In England and America, principles of war-economy give the bare necessities of civilian life as high a priority as munitions. In India, the belt has been tightened with less than no slack to take in."

The performances of Mr. Amery in recent times and of the provincial government in Bengal remind me of a story which I can not help telling you. In the days of a severe famine in one of the Deccan districts under a Mahomedan kingdom in the days of old, so runs an incident in a marathi drama, the Government despatched a deputation of grandees to investigate into the local conditions. The deputationists, treated with pomp and ceremony by the local officials to conceal their own incompetence and cupidity, expressed amazement that complaints were so loud about the famine. If there was no corn, they said, let the people make merry by eating ghee and sugar. Ladies and gentlemen, truth is oftener stranger than fiction. But what shall we say of the callousness of the local authorities when they allowed the sale of ice-cream and other milk-luxuries in urban centres like Calcutta when relief workers had to depend on imported supplies of condensed milk owing to the exorbitant prices of milk and its unavailability? It was said that ice cream manufactured in Calcutta was available in some of our restaurants here. Our local Government very wisely forbade not only the preparation of ice-cream from milk but also its sale. What then shall we say of the red tape which prevented river barges from being unloaded at their destination because Calcutta had failed to inform the local officials of their despatch, with the result that perishable things became inedible in course of time? What shall we say of the manner in which destitutes were rounded up which led not only to a large exodus from Calcutta but added to the difficulties of relief measures elsewhere? These and other instances can be multiplied, but I will not do so. Are we not justified then in demanding a thorough inquiry into all this at the hands of an independent tribunal composed of men in whom the public will have confidence.

The Bengal tragedy has thrown into bold relief the disparity that is bound to exist between professions and practice under a bureaucratic and undemocratic system of Government. When Lord Linlithgow was appointed the Viceroy of India, it was widely believed that he would usher in an area of great agricultural reform. Perhaps because of the war, he could not do anything in that direction. But it is an irony that in the expiring months of his tenure of office, we should have witnessed an agrarian tragedy of such colossal dimensions. As regards Mr. Amery, I do not wish to indulge in what our esteemed leader Sir Chimanlal Setalvad would call 'meaningless slogans'. But I will say this. Mr. Churchill, who we are all glad to see rapidly recovering from his malady, has often expressed that he would not like to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire. Personally I am beginning to doubt whether he sincerely believes in this declaration looking to the tenacity with which he has rejected all suggestions to make use of the undoubted attainments and abilities of Mr. Amery in other departments in the Premier's gift.

In conclusion I must not omit to mention how readily Indians appreciate the promptitude with which the new Viceroy has acted and the great assistance that has been rendered by the military authorities in the matter of distribution of food, and of medical aid by means of mobile dispensaries and first-aid posts. We are gravely concerned at the news that Bengal has been also affected by disease in an epidemic form and we hope that the present measures for medical aid will be continued and reinforced to save the unfortunate province from the ravages of disease. In this connection I am struck by the observation of Major General Stuart, Officer Commanding the military forces in Bengal, who says that the relation between the army and the people would be on a very much better footing than ever before as a result of the military effort to assist the civil authorities in administering famine relief. I wish the truth of this observation had struck the Government much earlier so that

the tragedy could have been averted or at least the suffering could have been considerably mitigated. There is nothing like sympathy, sincerity and mutual trust as means of winning lasting friendship and this is true not only in the case of the Bengal famine but in the wider sphere of our political and economic life.

With these words I commend this resolution to your acceptance.

Dr. R. B. Khambatta: (Bombay) In supporting the resolution said "I would like to give you my experience of public health in Bengal. I had the honour to serve as Director of Public Health under the late Sir Surendranath Banerjee, the first Indian Minister for Local Self-Government under the Government of India Act of 1919 and later on under Sir Bijoy Prasad Singh Roy when he was the Minister for Local Self Government. During the period of my office I had ample opportunity to study the problem of "disease" in Bengal and its relation to the economic condition of the people. Nearly 30 years ago my predecessor in office Dr. Charles Bentley, one of the great experts in Malaria, pointed out the intimate connection between "Malaria and Agriculture" in Bengal. More than two-thirds of Bengal is a "Delta". In the old days when railways were not in existence, the rivers during the time of floods used to overflow and inundate the low-lying lands on either side of the rivers. The flood water which contained rich silt acted as good manure for agricultural land and at the same time destroyed the anopheline larvae of mosquitoes. In fact the natural system of irrigation which existed before was disturbed by the construction of high embankments for roads and railways. To economise the cost Railway and Road engineers provided for as few culverts and sluice gates as possible, with the result that the natural drainage and irrigation of the land did not take place and as a consequence the agricultural land became deteriorated and malaria became rampant, thus establishing the vicious cycle of poverty and disease. It is true that much improvement has taken place since Dr. Bentley's first declaration and Government took active measures in preventing any further undue and ill-thought-out construction of roads and railway embankments. Bengal is one of the largest provinces producing rice and the main dietary of Bengalees is rice. Rice production in Bengal is not what it was before. Even in time of bumper harvest Bengal cannot afford to export rice to other provinces, and if it was true that the responsible authorities allowed export of rice, then it must be said that it was wrong of the authorities to do so and in all humility I suggest that a searching enquiry by the Provincial and Central Government should be made as early as possible. I have great pleasure in supporting the resolution. The resolution was passed unanimously.

5. Government's Food Policy

Prof. M. D. Altekar (Bombay) moved the following resolution.

"The National Liberal Federation of India regrets that the Government of India failed to realise in time the gravity of the food situation throughout the country or to check the unprecedented rise in the prices of the necessaries of life resulting in the hardship and suffering among all classes of the population. It is strongly of opinion that His Majesty's Government should arrange for the import of foodstuffs into India as recommended by the Food Grains Policy Committee until the shortage has been removed and prices have sufficiently fallen.

"The Federation considers that the present food situation in India as well as the rapid growth in population necessitates the early introduction of improved methods of agriculture, the bringing of culturable land into cultivation and the raising of the low standard of living among the masses. The Federation regrets that when belated steps were taken by the Government of India to introduce rationing and to encourage a proper distribution of food, these attempts were hampered by the attitude adopted by some Provincial Governments. It urges the Government of India to enforce a policy of rationing in large towns with special attention to the provision of milk and milk products for mothers and children and to insist on an equitable distribution of food in the best interests of masses. In this connection, the Federation views with concern the inadequate supply

throughout the country not only of milk but also of other protective foods such eggs, fish and vegetables. In the opinion of the Federation, the food problem in India must be tackled at least in urban areas in its entirety as in England and elsewhere."

He said: There is no doubt that Government have never given any serious consideration to this problem. In England, the prices have not gone up beyond 20 per cent over the pre-war prices and you know in Bombay what are the prices. One or two facts will illustrate this. Two years ago I was paying five or six annas per seer of milk in this town. Now I am paying from 12 annas to Rs. 1/-. Milk is a very important article in the vegetarian diet. That is the only vegetarian food we get and it is very essential for the health of all concerned. Now with the price at 12 annas and one rupee, what must be the condition of those dependent on milk? The usual allowance of vegetables is not obtainable and it has become very difficult to get vegetables. All this has been going on throughout the country and government came to the conclusion at a very late hour that rationing should be introduced in a few places. You have all listened to the speeches on the resolution regarding Bengal famine. In Bengal, the rationing is being postponed from month to month. We find the quality of rationed articles going down. A few days ago we were given the glad news that the price of rice would go down for the first quality. We leave aside the special quality which is reserved only for the millionaires in this town. The rice that cost Rs. 2/- per pylee is now obtained at Rs. 1/8. But what is lost in price is gained in quality, that seems to be the Government's position. I never knew that such bad rice was produced in my country. I never knew that such rotten wheat could be available in India. We were under the impression that this country produced rice and wheat of excellent quality in abundance and there were so many fine qualities available. But all these qualities have now, it seems, disappeared except for those who purchase in the black markets. Everyone of us today is suffering from bad food and to add insult to injury we have been told that we should not expect to get the food we are accustomed to. I wonder how we can teach Madras to eat wheat instead of rice and in Bombay I find it very difficult to get accustomed to the great virtue of eating Bajri. I have seen among the posters of the National War Front or of ration authorities, a picture in rich shades telling me that the man who takes one seer of rice and three seers of Bajri is a good man. Now in Bombay we must eat Bajri and the other day the Public Relations Officer and his staff were touring from one women's association to the other telling them how many things could be made from Bajri and this wonderful rationing officer knew it better than women. I hope if this Bajri is so very good it will be adopted by Mr. Amery and Mr. Churchill as their principal diet so that their health will be better and that Mr. Churchill will never suffer from the Flu. One has to conclude that what Government are doing is merely to cover up their incompetence. Seriously they never gave any consideration to this problem, when we suggested that certain steps to improve the condition in this country should be taken, they did nothing. Children today of two years and five years will after 20 years get a stunted growth and the whole population will suffer. The food ministry in England has allowed only 20 per-cent rise in the price of foodstuffs. Here in India it seems it was not possible for the Government of India with their staff of economists and specialists to do anything about prices. For anything and everything they talk of importing specialists from England, the land where, it appears, specialists are grown. It is the duty of Government not only to see that more food is grown but also to see that it does not leave the country. Look at the milk situation. There are certain classes of people who are imposed on this country and who must have cream. After the removal of the cream the milk is thrown away. It can be used. I ask why butter should not be imported and the milk released for the people? If the Government has genuine sympathy then they must move fast and solve this problem. It is no use simply advertising 'Grow More Food'. We may grow it but if we cannot keep it, then what is the use of growing it. People have become absolutely suspicious. I have joined this Federation when I was 25 years old and I have stuck to it. But

I must give a warning to the Government that they are doing a great harm to themselves by their food policy a greater harm than what all the agitation of Mahatma Gandhi's could do for them. Look at the long queues for Kerosene in Bombay. All the women who are there think ill of the Government and abuse them and curse them. Why should Government have this? Unless the food policy is changed and unless something is done immediately, trouble will start. It is not the rationing policy but the starvation policy of the Government—I ask the Government to change their food policy forthwith. Sufficient food must be imported and people should not be allowed to starve. The Government must create conditions so that the people will wholeheartedly co-operate with the peoples of the other United Nations in winning the war. We must feel that it is a war that will usher victory for the betterment of all.

Mr. G. C. Bhate. (Kolaba) in seconding the resolution, said :

I have great pleasure in seconding this resolution which my esteemed friend Prof. Altekar has so ably moved. From the beginning, the Government of India have ignored this question of food. The first time when they ought to have considered this question was at the time when they declared war. When they declared war on behalf of India, did they consider the question of food for the civilians? After four or five years of war, you are told that our food production is not sufficient for the population. All these things should have been brought before us before, not after four years of war. The first duty of the government when they declare war is to consider how the civil population would be kept living before they could consider about recruitment.

The second time was when the Government lost Burma. Did the Government take into consideration that rice was imported into India from Burma in thousands and thousands of tons? Did they consider what would be the position of India after the fall of Burma? And what measures did they take? For these reasons I say that the government from the very beginning showed no consideration for the civil population in the matter of their food policy.

As regards the second para of the resolution, it asks for equitable distribution of food in the best interests of the masses. In regard to this question I shall give you facts and figures as far as my own district Kolaba is concerned. The population of Kolaba district is 6,69,000 and production by tons of the main produce, namely paddy in Kolaba is 1,71,000. The government authorities fixed that 10 maunds would be sufficient for an individual during the whole year and they decided that in a year 33,000 tons could be exported from Kolaba district to other deficit districts and the remainder would be enough for the population. We put before the government through district authorities a statement when we met them in a body as representatives of the district saying that ten maunds for an individual for the whole year was not sufficient. At least there must be 18 maunds. If the figure of 18 maunds be taken, the total requirements of the district will be 1,72,000 tons, whereas the total production was only 1,71,000. Thus there was actually a deficit or the district was just self-sufficient at best.

The reply of the government authorities to this statement was that every year in the past the district always sent out some paddy to other districts. But if we did send out some paddy out of the district, along with that we must take into consideration the import of Burma rice into our district in normal years. We say on the basis of our figures that even if you reduce individual consumption to 15 or 16 maunds, still production is not sufficient for all the people and it is not safe to send 33,000 tons of paddy from our district. Still that is the policy followed by government so far as my district is concerned. Now they have issued orders that we could sell paddy only to the government or their agents. They have issued orders that if any one has more than one and one half kandy of paddy in his possession he should furnish a statement to Government. If we do not give information, prosecutions are launched. At present they have ordered that our produce will be purchased by government and they have fixed the prices of two varieties at Rs. 123 and Rs. 100.

This I say is not the best policy because all the masses are not taken into consideration. What we say is, in the matter of food policy the government must see to it that there is equitable distribution of food in the interests of the people on the whole.

Dr. Gope Gurbax (Sind) supporting the resolution said :

The resolution under discussion refers to two most important points which are, the failure of the Government of India to realise in time the gravity of the food situation and the failure of the provincial Governments to rise to the occasion. With regard to the first, the failure of the Government of India, you have already heard from the first two speakers how the Government of India in order to safeguard their own interests and in order to satisfy the military demands ignored the interests of the masses. It is also said that in certain parts of the country, country boats which are generally used to carry rice and other foodstuffs, were not allowed to ply because Government were afraid of Japanese invasion, with the result that the usual conveyance was not available to the cultivator to carry food to their proper destination and proper market. This is also responsible for the present famine to some extent.

Our Secretary of State, Mr. Leopold Amery seems to be a master in giving false facts. Just before the famine started, he noticed signs of overeating among Indians. He has since acquired the habit of making one statement, contradicting it in the second and revising it in the third and so on. Such a person occupies a responsible office in the British Cabinet. Such a person is not worthy to be the Secretary of State not only of this government but of any other government.

Now coming to the failure of the provinces, it is a pity that when one province is dying, the other is trying to benefit out of its woes. It is a pity that we Indians are not helping our own countrymen. We can understand any foreigner trying to benefit at our cost. But it is a pity that our own brethren try to fleece each other. With regard to the Sind Food policy, I may tell you that the Sind policy is not backed by the Sindhis generally. The Sind government has not the support of the Sindhis in general. The real representatives of the people are in jails and whatever others do, they do in order to satisfy the vested interests. In order to satisfy the zamindars they are having this profiteering policy which is deplorable. It is a pity. We should do something about it. With these remarks I support this resolution.

The resolution was passed unanimously.

e. INDIA & THE PEACE CONFERENCE.

Mr. T. R. Venkatarama Sastri moved the following resolution :

"The National Liberal Federation considers that India should be represented at the Peace Conference by duly accredited Indians on the same basis as other Dominions and be assigned a place worthy of her culture and her championship of the great cause of Universal Peace. At such a conference prominence should be given by the representatives of India to the abolition of the colour bar and to the establishment of full political and economic equality between the peoples of the East and the West."

Mr. Sastri Said :

This resolution relates to the Peace Conference and follows the two previous resolutions. It will be realised that this naturally follows from them. The first relates to the prosecution of the war. The second relates to the establishment of a National Government. The war has been fought and won. And in the meanwhile a National Government has been established. Peace Conference begins and the representatives of the various countries assemble. The representatives attending the Conference on behalf of India are not to be chosen as before by the Government of India or the Secretary of State. The National Government at the centre will be a composite Government representing all parties and in the Provinces too there will be a composite Government. This time it will not be that the Secretary of State represents India or leads the Indian deputation and the so-called Indian representatives merely

sit by and assist him. The only representatives will be representatives chosen by the National Government in the same manner as by the Dominion Governments. There should be no distinction between the representatives of India and the representatives of the Dominions at the Peace Conference. They will alike plead for the great cause of universal peace. India has always stood for peace and non-violence.

At the conference when the terms of peace have to be discussed, you must have representatives worthy of the Indian culture. You know that recently the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri in a letter addressed to the Press said that Mahatma Gandhi should be among our representatives at the Peace Conference. I suggest that there should also be another in that conference and that should be the Right Honourable Sastri himself.

This resolution states that at the conference certain principles enunciated in the resolution should be pressed upon the attention of the conference. If our representatives show for what kind of a future world India stands, they will make an impression on the representatives assembled who will realise what is due to India. Many writers have already said that in the future world war is to be eliminated and in the maintenance of peace in Asia India will have prominent role. I do not say that it will fall exclusively to India. It may be the joint role of India and China. It is necessary that our true representatives should go to the world conference and make it realise what India stands for and what her ideals are. These true representatives can only be sent by the National Government.

The two particular points which should be pressed at the Conference are stated in this resolution. One is the abolition of the colour bar and the other is the establishment of the full political and economic equality between the East and the West. At the present time the colour bar prevails all over the world. There is racial discrimination everywhere. Indians must have the right to go to every part of the British Commonwealth. There may be provision for residential and other qualifications for citizenship rights. Subject to such rules people of India as citizens of the British Commonwealth should be able to settle in any part of the Commonwealth with equal rights. The inequalities that now exist, political and economic, should also be abolished. It is said that Dominion Status has been promised and it is also sometimes said that Dominion Status is already in action. If so, there ought to be no difficulty in allowing our representatives chosen by a National Government being sent to this Peace Conference of all nations in terms of perfect equality with the representatives of the Dominions. To the Peace Conference which will be held at no distant date some say that the war will end in 1944 the representatives of India should be chosen by the National Government and should be those that will truly represent her culture. I accordingly move the resolution that I have already read.

Sardar P. S. Sodhbans (Punjab) : I commend this resolution so ably moved by Mr. Venkatrama Sastri. As one who had travelled in foreign lands I know what kind of colour bar prevails against us. In international gatherings we are nowhere and while the flags of every country are represented, a great nation like India has no flag of its own and I had felt the humiliation that India had no flag. On one occasion we felt it so much that a compromise had to be arrived at whereby the Union Jack with the Star of India was hoisted. It may be good or bad but the humiliation was there. Someday we will go to the peace conference strengthened by our gallant troops who fought victoriously at the Middle East, Lybia, Tripoli and Sicily and other places. Those victories had been mainly won by the Indian Army and the supplies that India had contributed because in those times communications in the Mediterranean was not possible. It was left to India to manufacture all the stores and arms which the armies in the Middle-east and in Egypt required and for the campaign in Abyssinia. We have done useful service to the British Empire and it is our right to demand equality. British statesman say that Dominion Status is in the making and recently Mr. Amery told us through Sir Wickham Steed that the Atlantic Charter applies to India. If so then it is essential that we should have a National Government

at the Centre and they alone shall have the right to appoint other representatives to the Peace Conference so that we may be able to assist what we desire for our post-war reconstruction. Our demand is natural. We in India are in no way inferior to anybody else in the world. Men to men we are equal if not superior. We demand therefore that our representatives to the peace conference should sit with the other nations of the world on terms of equality.

Dr. P. N. Daruwala (Bombay): It gives me very great pleasure to support the resolution for your acceptance. This resolution contains what everyone throughout the length and breadth of India and in fact throughout the world desires. India has contributed very successfully to the advancement and progress and the National War Front has been instituted with the object of furthering the war effort. The National Liberal Federation demands that the representatives from this country to the peace conference should be the truly and wisely chosen representatives of the country and that they should be given a place in consonance with the sacrifices made by India during this great world war. Indian soldiers have contributed to the victory in no small measure and therefore the real sons of India should be represented at the peace conference. During the last war, happily for us, Lord Sinha was one of the signatories to the treaty of Versailles. The late Maharaja of Bikaner was another signatory. At that time the Federation urged upon the necessity of sending duly accredited representatives of India to represent her culture and her humanitarian and ancient heritage at the peace conference and spread it throughout the length and breadth of the civilised world. They will, as they did then, represent the real interest of India and protest strongly against the prevalence of colour bar which has done a lot of harm to the progress of civilisation and culture. After all it is the mental attitude and the culture that constitutes civilisation and there is no difference between East and West. We are all children of one God and India has been the beacon light by torch bearer to the whole civilized world.

The resolution was put to the vote and carried unanimously.

Mr. Naushir Bharucha moved the following resolution on Indians Overseas.

7. INDIANS OVERSEAS

"The National Liberal Federation of India views with strong disapproval the continued anti-Indian agitation in South Africa and in particular, at the present time the recent "Pegging Act", which limits still further the already restricted rights of acquisition by South African Indians of immovable property and is a breach of the spirit of the Cape Town Agreement of 1927. Such legislation is particularly deplorable at a time when Indian soldiers are fighting for the freedom of all the peoples of the world from injustice and oppression.

While the Federation feels that there will be no real solution of the problem of Indians in South Africa or indeed in other British Dominions and possessions where discrimination against Indians exists till India is a self-governing country and till the rights of full citizenship are given to Indians in South Africa and elsewhere, it offers its full support to the Government of India in any retaliatory measures which they may think fit to adopt against the Union of South Africa or other Governments which do not accord full civic rights to Indian colonists."

He said:

Mr. President, brother delegates, Ladies and gentlemen: In April 1943 the Government of India learnt from the Government of the Union of South Africa that they desired to proceed with what was known as the Interim Act of Transval. It was to be made applicable in the first instance to Durban and then later generally if circumstances so required. The news came to us in India as a shock for the feats of arms of the Indian troops at that time in North Africa convinced us that this would help us in some measure to remove the colour bar which was prevalent in South Africa. But considerations of the blood shed by our countrymen did not weigh with

the Union of South Africa. On the 14th of April 1943 Mr. H. G. Lawrence, Minister of the Interior, read the Bill a second time in the Union Assembly. In support of his resolution he said that from the appointment of the Broome Committee it was clear that there was considerable penetration by Indians in the areas which were predominantly European. He argued that the attempts made voluntarily to segregate Indians had not succeeded and therefore some sort of statutory discrimination had become inevitable. He argued also that according to the second Broome Commission report Indians in Durban had acquired as many as 326 sites for a price of six hundred thousand pounds. I cannot tell you what sites were acquired but I believe that the acquisition, of 326 sites by Indians certainly could not be regarded as alarming penetration by Indians in predominantly European areas. It is interesting to note that Dr. J. H. Hofmeyr, minister of Finance and Education, speaking a few days before the second reading of the Bill stated that he condemned the propaganda of racialism and colour prejudice. He said something interesting namely that if the administration of justice first looked to the interests of Europeans then they could not any longer call it trusteeship. Within eight days of the above speech he again spoke in the Union Parliament when he said: "I do support this Pegging Act as it is set before you, applicable first to Durban and later to be made applicable to other areas in Natal but I am against its application to Transvaal where conditions do not warrant it." It is rather disappointing that a person on whom India looked at one time as the champion on their cause, only eight days before the second reading of the Bill should talk in the Assembly in a different vein espousing this Bill. He said he had threatened to resign but did not do so because Smuts told him that at that critical time presentation of a united front was necessary. There was another gentleman, Col. Stallard, who said that Durban must be kept a European city and that if Europeans had penetrated into Benares the people of Benares would not have allowed it! The next speaker in the Union Parliament, Dr. Malan, the Opposition leader, had something more interesting to say. He observed that the appointment of the Agent - General for India had made things difficult and his presence in South Africa was not desirable. "The presence of the High Commissioner for India was unfair and an interference in the affairs of South Africa." Ladies and Gentlemen: you now get a clear indication of the psychology of the Europeans in South Africa at the time this bill was moved. Dr. Malan's amendment that there must be a comprehensive measure for effecting segregation of Europeans and non-Europeans was defeated on technical grounds. He was followed by Field Marshal Smuts, the Prime Minister, who wound up the debate. He paid a compliment to Indians. He could not do otherwise because at that time Indian soldiers were blasting their way through Tunisia. He said it was a pity that eighty percent of the Indians were Union born and that a measure of the type had to be enacted. But added, that his Government was determined to maintain Durban as a European city.

Hitler propagated a theory which was condemned by us and for which the war is being waged—namely the theory of a super race. I am sure if Indian soldiers had heard what Smuts said they would have felt that all their sacrifices were made in vain if a new South African super - race was about to be resurrected. Once more when the Government of India made urgent representations to the Government of the Union of South Africa requesting them to hold up the proposed legislation even without having the courtesy of replying to that representation the Pegging Bill was placed before the Union Parliament. Ladies and Gentlemen: The resolution that has been circulated to you demands retaliatory measures by the Government of India against Dominions which practise discrimination against Indians and that the Federation offers its full support to the Government in any retaliatory measures which they may think fit to adopt against the Union of South Africa or other Governments which do not accord full civic rights to Indian colonists. Retaliation in a case like this is extremely difficult but we must pay due credit to the efforts made by Dr. Khare in passing the Reciprocity Act and his efforts to enforce the Act. Of course it was defective. Dr. Khare said, "If all the provisions of the

Reciprocity Act were applied against South Africa it would not amount even to a flea bite." The Indian Fiscal Commission of 1922 recommended that discriminatory measures must be taken against all countries which have on their statute books racially discriminatory measures. If India tried to retaliate we are convinced that we would lose a good deal. I believe even if it recoils on us it is desirable that we must adopt these measures only if for the preservation of our self-respect. I appeal to those present here that when you go back to your provinces carry on propaganda in this respect. So long as the self-respect of Indian Nationals abroad is not vindicated this country will never be worthy of the complete independence which she claims."

Sirdar P. S. Sodhbans who seconded the resolution said :

Ladies and Gentlemen. I second the resolution which has been moved by Mr. Bharucha and in doing so I want to state in brief the case of Indians overseas. In time immemorial when India was holding all the seven seas in its palm, we carried on trade all over the Universe and Indians had settled in the East and South Africa, in Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Siam, China, Bali and Malaya. In Sumatra and Java you have Hindu names. In Java you have Madura and number of cities with Sanskrit names though unfortunately in our own country Sanskrit is not known to us. If you read the book named Periplus of the Erythrean Sea written in 1st century of Christian era, translated from the original Greek and annotated by Mr. Wilfred H. Schoff of Philadelphia Commercial Museum, published by Messers. Longmans, Green & Co., you will find that Indians were carrying on trade all over the world. In another book on Indian Shipping by Dr. Radhakamand Mukerji you will also find that Indians were carrying on trade with all countries bordering the Indian Ocean. There could be no branches as we have now and therefore in carrying on trade activities the Indians settled in those countries from time immemorial. We were peaceful people and never wanted to conquer the territories where we settled. We in this country had become slaves due to internecine wars between ourselves. Those Indians who had settled abroad were not in a position to look to their mother country for help. In South Africa the white settlers oppressed us so much and it was one of the reasons that led to the Boer war. When the Dutch settlers maltreated our nationals you all know Mahatma Gandhi started his civil disobedience movement. The position in the Union is still bad. Indians are not allowed in cinemas and restaurants and in other places of enjoyment and our worthy President will bear testimony to these facts. Even in Zanzibar, Indian travellers could not visit the country and even Indian soldiers in King's uniform were not allowed to land in the Union. A friend of mine—a doctor in England who has an English wife went to Mombassa on a visit. The wife was admitted into a restaurant and the husband was made to wait outside. This is the case in most British Dominions. You all know the valuable work done by the late Rev. C. F. Andrews for the Indians in Fiji. Look what Ceylon is doing to us. We must depend on our efforts to help our nationals in other lands. The Government of India have no doubt appointed Agent-Generals but they cannot do much. Till such time we attain our proper place in the British Commonwealth we will continue to suffer. With these words I second the resolution.

Major S. A. Paymaster in supporting the resolution said :

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: The distinguished speakers before me have given ample justice to the resolution before us, leaving me very little to add in the way of support.

One important cause adduced by the British Government of the day for the Boer War was the great concern of Her Majesty's Government for the welfare and safety of her beloved Indian subjects. The so-called oppression of the Indian subjects in that Boer colony apparently, but the splash, brilliancy, lustre and shine of the Kimberley mine diamonds in the markets of Amsterdam, London, Paris and New York in reality brought on the South African War! And ladies and gentlemen, today our Indian Nationals are more in an awful plight than ever before 45 years ago!

The question is very complicated and our redress is very feeble in our own helpless condition at home and it is not yet properly understood in this country that a majority of our Indian countrymen in South Africa today are *Union Subjects and Caste*, born and bred in South Africa of parents born too in that country for generations. Union Government has, therefore, more legal and more hold on them than we can claim and Union Government must be pressed to carry out their sacred duty towards them, but unfortunately their Dominion Status under the Statute of Westminster affords them all immunity from outside pressure, move a little finger in the internal affairs of a self-governing Dominion under the statute of Westminster! We have, therefore, the only recourse left to us is giving all moral and material support to our Indian countrymen there and take all retaliatory measures, but tactfully and carefully applied, and taking care that they may not react vigorously on our own nationals there and send them from frying pan to fire.

Our best and conscientious advice to them would be to hold fast a bit longer till our motherland-Hindustan Hamara...assumes and develops all the power and freedom to act freely under the Dominion Status under the Statute of Westminster. The Adam's apple ensured and pledged to us! Then at that time we will not fail forget or delay to give all and full relief and restore and reinstate them to full-citizen rights and all self-respect to our beloved Indian Nationals in South Africa!

The resolution was put to vote and carried unanimously.

Sir Vithal Chandavarkar moved the following resolution on Post-War Reconstruction :

8. POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION

The Federation, while noting the action of the Government of India and certain Provincial Governments in creating Committees for the consideration of problems of post-war reconstruction, is of opinion that the main functions of such Committees which so far do not appear to be active, apart from suggesting important adjustments consequent on the return of numbers of Indian soldiers on the restoration of Peace, will be to lay the foundations of a well-planned economy which will increase the cultivation of productive crops, improve agricultural methods, expand rural reconstruction and liquidate illiteracy. Among other essential requirements are the improvement and extension of communications and works of irrigation, the creation of an Indian mercantile marine, increased medical aid, the establishment of better health conditions, the provision of social services such as insurance against sickness and unemployment, and a general improvement in the standard of living.

The Federation further considers that it should be the settled policy of the Government to assist in the establishment of new industries and in the development of the natural resources of the country. It will also be essential after the War to protect nascent industries from foreign competition and to see that such industries as have been established during the War survive the post-war economic struggle. Full use should be made in this connection of the services of Indians with technical qualification and experience after their release from military duties.

The Federation gives its general support to the scheme adumbrated by the Educational Adviser to the Government of India for a national system of education, and to the Committee appointed to frame proposals for the improvement of health conditions in India, but trusts that a reasonable time limit will be prescribed for the execution of their re-commendations and that the very large sums of money required will be forthcoming.

Sir Vithal said: Mr. President, delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I am at a great disadvantage in speaking on this resolution for several reasons. The resolution has been crafted in such an all-embracing form that it is very diffi-

cult to do justice to it in the short time at my disposal. Full justice can be done to such a resolution only at an industrial or economic conference. I shall only touch on a few points relevant to the resolution.

First with regard to the action taken by the Government of India. In October 1941, the Roger Mission visited India and made certain recommendations. The Government of India later formed a Consultative Committee of Economists. But unfortunately plans for postwar reconstruction and development were not placed before the Consultative Committee. Government have so far appointed five committees: the first is the labour and demobilisation committee to draw up plans to meet the situation created by demobilisation after the war; the second is on industrial development to provide ways and means to industry to meet the new changed conditions and to counteract post-war slump and to provide for gradual change over of the industry from war production to peace-production; the third is the nation-building and public works; the fourth represents agricultural and rural reconstruction and fifth is the co-ordinating committee consisting of the secretaries of the various departments of the Government of India. One other committee has also been formed and that is the committee I have already referred to, the Consultative Committee of Economists.

Now temperamentally I do not think that I am a fit person to speak on this resolution. Temperamentally I am opposed to taking a long view of things. I always hesitate to draw longterm plans. Whenever the word planning is used, I feel very nervous because we can only plan for a long time when we can anticipate the events. If you can always know what our circumstances are to be and also the people who are to be in control we can then prepare plans. So far as India is concerned we are so far away from the centre of administration, and so far detached from the centre of administration which is New Delhi or Simla, which itself is so far away from the controlling authority in England, so far even from the theatre of war, that it is very difficult for us to know what is happening in all these places from day to day. The Government of India is out of touch with the provincial governments and both are out of touch with the people. Whatever representative character the Cabinet had, has disappeared with the resignations of Mr. M. S. Aney, Sir H. P. Mody and Mr. N. R. Sarker. Today with a cabinet consisting of such members who have no influence in the country and with another man to help or frustrate their work in the shape of the Secretary of State for India, what is the use of having committees to discuss about vague subjects of postwar development? When such a government is functioning, it is impossible to think about any plans for post-war reconstruction. Even if they could work out plans for post-war reconstruction who is to know how the people will take them? There is no means of knowing what the people want. The Government of India have only their departmental secretaries to keep in touch with the people outside. There is no healthy democratic principle underlying the Government. And what about finance? Who is to finance all these post-war schemes? We have no control over the fiscal policy of the Government of India. We have no organisation of industrialists who could work out some of these schemes. All these circumscribe the value of our discussion and we cannot visualise these facts when we talk about reconstruction. When we talk about post-war reconstruction, we are talking of something of which we are not aware and we cannot be aware.

Secondly I believe in the principle of never worrying too far ahead. I want generally to take care of the present. The present we have to face is a very unpleasant present. In these circumstances to expect me to talk about reconstruction is not fair to me and not fair to you. But because the President insisted that I should speak on this resolution you find me here.

We are talking in this resolution of the national system of education as adumbrated by the Educational Adviser to the Government of India and this resolution gives general support to this scheme. Unfortunately we have no copy of the scheme. The Inter-University Board and the Educational Conference have given support to the scheme. With what little experience, I have of education in this country, I cannot think how any educational system can be devised without

at the same time thinking out ways of providing employment to the young men who will come out of schools and colleges in that educational scheme. When the young men of our country come out of their schools and colleges the problem of employment looms large in their minds. It is all right for statesmen to talk of education for the sake of education and with the Army closed to him, with the Navy closed to him, with the airforce closed to him, in other Imperial services fifty percent reserved for Britishers, the field of employment to a young man is so narrow, that in devising any system of education, the problem of opening new channels of employment has to be borne in mind.

It is very difficult to understand how people from abroad can evolve a system of education for us which will inspire people with the confidence that the whole policy is in the interests of the people. That is the real difficulty about it.

What should we do? In the first place our attention should be directed to try and get control of the government. The second thing is we should press in asking for measures of social security and we must see that the economic condition of the country is not unbalanced or upset. In devising social security measures we have to be realistic. Naturally urban labour will be better organised than rural labour. The tendency in recent years when any one talks of social security measures is to devise measures only for industrial labour. Only the other day when there was a labour conference, there was a proposal that the Beveridge report principle should be applied to India. I am not opposed to having a Beveridge plan for India but my contention is that if you want to adopt the principle underlying the Beveridge report, you must adopt it more or less on the same scale.

The Beveridge report does not deal with only one kind of labour. It deals with the whole national economy of Britain. My contention is that if you do not raise the conditions of agricultural labour any attempt to raise the standard of living of industrial or other labour will be futile, as could be seen from the results of measures taken after the last war, in England. Why should we omit agricultural labour from our social security measures? Being consumers, agricultural labour must have the purchasing power to buy industrial products. If they do not or cannot afford to buy our goods, we cannot afford to manufacture our industrial goods at the increased cost. My contention is that any measures taken by the Government of India to raise the standard of living should be applied to both urban and agricultural labour if they want to avoid chaotic conditions. Even in England labour legislation such as setting up of wage boards etc. was first applied to agricultural labour and then only to other classes of labour like coalminers. Agriculture was first taken up even in a country like England which is highly industrialised. Here the labour conference was only thinking of industrial labour and nothing was said of agricultural labour and my proposal was that they should also include agricultural labour in the scope of any measures adopted to raise the standard of living. The only response I got was that my amendment was ruled out of order.

We want the health of the nation to improve. We want people to realise what it is to have good health, food and sanitary conditions. But there must be a general rise in the standard of wages and living conditions.

But what is happening? Our middle class is getting poorer and poorer while our richer classes are getting richer and richer. The backbone of the country, the middle classes are hard hit by the war. They do not share in the war prosperity, they do not reap any profits out of this inflation and war. The result is that the economy of the country has become unbalanced.

The Government of India are now gradually realising the gravity of the situation and are trying to meet it by having recourse to desperate measures and are issuing ordinance after ordinance to cope with the situation. But not one of their ordinances is able to cope with the situation and they cannot devise any effective measure in controlling inflation or lowering the price level. Increased profits of industry is offset by increased expenditure in the way of increased wages and dearness allowance, which are upsetting the economy of the country and when normal condi-

tions set in, we are going to pass through a very bad time. It would have been much better if the government had listened to us from the very beginning and controlled prices and currency also. They left everything to chance till the last moment and then they resorted to hap-hazard measures.

In all measures of reconstruction, I want you to realise that uniform conditions are essential and our object should be to see that the economy of the country is so based that there is no difference between sections or groups of people, the difference between sections of people should be narrowed down and the wealth of the country should be properly distributed.

The health of the country should be improved. There should be sickness insurance and unemployment relief for people of this country. All these things we want. But my contention is that all these measures should be taken to include all classes of the population and should not be confined to one particular section or area or group.

For this, the most important thing is that a popular government of the country must control the financial and fiscal policy of the government in the interests of the people of India, not in the interests of an alien country. What is happening today is all our financial and fiscal policies are controlled not only in Delhi or Simla, but in London by the Government of Britain. The present members of government are not free masters of their own destinies. They are not free heads of their own departments.

Government have appointed five committees. But of these only one committee, that on international industrial policy, has ever met so far. Not being free from interference, the results of the deliberations of even this committee are nil. Of the rest, not one committee is working. The Secretary of the Reconstruction Committee is an army general; perhaps there was no place for him in the army. People who are interested and connected with economics and industries are there but the whole machinery is controlled by the I. C. S. and the cabinet members. If the government really want to reconstruct the country, they ought to have another separate committee with a separate member in charge of reconstruction, who is conversant with industrial and economic problems and progress, who must be an Indian, and who will be able to select his own secretaries and advisers and who will be allowed full scope. If that is done, some work will be done. But as far as the present measure is concerned, although I agreed to move this resolution, I am a very great pessimist."

Rao Bahadur D. L. Sahasrabudhe seconding the resolution said :

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen,

I have great pleasure in seconding the proposal which has been so ably moved by Sir Vithal Chandavarkar. He has pointed out that there will be a number of difficulties that we have to face in dealing with this proposal. It is a proposal which covers a very wide field. But I shall restrict myself to only one section of it namely, reconstruction of rural areas. Many of our people in cities have no proper idea of the conditions which prevail in villages. Many of them think that there is fresh air, quantity and quality of food in villages are excellent, good milk and butter and fresh vegetables are available. But sitting in Bombay, it is impossible to know the situation in villages. The actual conditions in villages are far from satisfactory.

It is found that in many villages the food that they grow is not enough for more than six months. Their clothing is in tattered condition. Sometimes, there are people who feel that since India is a hot country, it is not necessary to have much clothing. In many villages I have seen, they do not get even good water suitable for drinking purposes. They have to go long distances of a mile or two in search of a water well or tank. And even there, very often, they have to scoop out water from small pools and fill their pots from the beds of the rivers or tanks, and carry the water in small quantities. Such conditions are certainly deplorable for any government and for any nation, certainly more deplorable are they in a country where we have a government which calls itself civilised.

In order to remove all these difficulties, we must have proper reconstruction of rural areas if we wish our country to go forward. The first and foremost work of reconstruction must be with regard to water. There are many places in the West coast where they get rainfall to the extent of 100 or 150 inches during the rains. But it is in these very areas that people experience great difficulty in getting drinking water in summer. I think every drop of water that comes down from the skies must be properly collected and utilized for the benefit of human beings, cattle and crops and the soil and for the purposes of starting industries in rural areas.

Then there is the question of soil. When water comes down in showers, the showers remove fine particles of fertile soil and this goes on year after year. It is no wonder, therefore, that our crops are getting poorer and poorer every year. It is necessary to see that the rain water is properly absorbed in the soil and utilised by the crops. Later we must also see that the fertility of the soil is maintained by proper supply of manures and fertilisers. And finally we must also see that there is enough medical assistance and supplies always available in all villages, to prevent diseases not only of human beings, but also diseases of cattle, crops and even soils, whether these diseases are due to insects, or bacteria or viruses.

There are a number of other proposals that can be mentioned. For instance, we must utilise all the energy we get from water works to start new industries in rural areas. Unless we have rural village industries started, we cannot really increase the standards of living of the village population.

We want a scheme of free and compulsory primary education, for unless we teach these people and educate them properly, we cannot make them strive for higher standards of living. It is no use merely telling them to go to schools. We must first of all improve their economic conditions and then ask them to turn their eyes to the higher benefits of education. Unless we have all these measures taken in the country, it will be very difficult to reconstruct the villages in the proper way.

There is one other question and that is, the increase in population. We know that in recent years, population has increased by leaps and bounds. Left to myself I would certainly have proposed that this increase in population should be the first question to be tackled and I would have recommended wider knowledge of birth control. But I do not think that my view will be acceptable to all members of the Federation and that is why I do not take up that question here.

There is the question of finance. How are we to get money to get all these schemes through? When the government can raise big loans for war purposes, I think there should be no difficulty in raising loans for these reconstruction purposes. Rich people who now subscribe freely to war loans can easily afford to subscribe to such reconstruction loans which are meant for improvement of the conditions of the people of the country.

There is one small point, that is about this consultative committee. As far as the committee consists of Indians, I have absolutely no objection and I am sure they will take all questions into proper consideration. But many a time it happened and it is likely to happen again that when a committee is appointed, a certain number of foreign experts are imported who take away a big slice of our budget. I am terribly afraid of all European experts. When they make their reports, their proposals always contain several schemes for the working of which they suggest the names of other European experts. We must take care that no outsiders are appointed on these committees. With these suggestions, I heartily second the resolution."

Mr. K. R. Pradhan, Jalgaon, supporting the resolution said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I have great pleasure in supporting this resolution. For any real post-war reconstruction plan, it is absolutely essential that India should be governed on national lines in the interests of the people of the country, and not to serve any imperial interests, or in the interests of the home government.

I shall refer to our system of education. The present system of education is entirely unsuited to young men in that when they finish their education, they are not

at all equipped to take their place and secure employment in the modern competitive world, in that we do not consider giving them vocational or industrial training. I think in devising any system of national education, this aspect of fitting our young men for future employment should be borne in mind and greater attention should be paid to giving education a greater vocational bias in order to meet the problem of unemployment.

When our young men finish their school education, say at 16 or 17 years, when they come out, the big problem that looms large before them is how to get employment. New avenues of employment must be opened before them if their full and profitable employment is to be secured. For this apart from India's present status in the commonwealth of Nations where she has no equal place among other dominions and in other parts of the world, new industries should also be started in the country which can absorb a large number of our young men. For starting any new industries, government support is essential. It is the duty of the government to bear the cost of nascent industries. Unless government is prepared to help industries in the initial stages, no development of new and competitive industries is possible in any scheme of reconstruction.

With these words, I heartily support the resolution."

The resolution was put to the vote and carried unanimously.

9. INDIAN STATES.

Mr. B. N. Gokhale (Bombay) said: Mr. President, Fellow-Delegates, ladies and gentlemen: The resolution which stands in my name reads thus:—

In view of the close ties existing between the people of Indian States and the people of British India and the impossibility of the former remaining unaffected by political progress in British India the National Liberal Federation considers that the rulers of Indian States should declare as their policy the preparation of their people as rapidly as possible for full responsible Government. This should be carried out by extended facilities for mass education, the extension of local self-Government, the creation or enlargement of State Assemblies and other representative institutions vested with responsibility as well as power. At the same time the Federation hopes that the subjects of Indian States will resort only to constitutional methods for securing reforms and the redress of their grievances and assures them of its full support.

I may remind you, ladies and gentlemen, that in the sessions of our Federation held at Bombay in 1938 and in Allahabad in 1939, resolutions were passed welcoming proclamations by the rulers of several Indian states promising to grant their subjects an increasingly greater association with their administrations developing into responsible government. Unfortunately those excellent examples were not followed by other states with the result that barring a few liberal administrations, in the large majority of the States to-day there is not even the semblance of responsible or constitutional government. Even in those states whose rulers have shown more liberal inclinations, the progress has been so slow and the limitations on the powers granted to the subjects so numerous, that it cannot be said that the rulers have given a sincere interpretation to their declarations. I remember visiting an enlightened Indian state where a student asked me my impressions about the conditions there. I said: "Looking to your roads, lighting and sanitation, you seem to have an efficient local self-government and the people seem to be happy." The student, not satisfied with this, pointed out that visitors like me only got their impressions from the cities, but that if I were to visit the interior, I would find the administration rotten. His view may be exaggerated, but the Liberal Party must call upon the rulers of the states to remove all just causes of complaint on the part of their subjects. The grounds on which we call upon the Princes to liberalize their government are stated in the resolution itself. Between the people of British India

and of the Indian states, there exist very close ties and the rulers must realise that their subjects cannot be expected to remain unaffected by the political progress and currents in British India.

But that is not the only reason why we are anxious that the princes should move with the times and make suitable changes in their administration. The late Sir C. Y. Chintamani speaking on a similar resolution at the Lucknow session of the Federation, made it clear that the Liberals sympathised with the subjects of the native states not because they wished any ill to the rulers but because they were convinced that the recognition of the rights of their subjects would be in the interests of the princes themselves. Cannot the rulers realise that their position would be firmer if they became constitutional heads of their states and gave up the autocratic aspects of their administration ?

Let us look at the question from another point of view. The princes in India have come forward, and rightly so, to help the war effort. By doing so they have aligned themselves on the side of the democracies which are fighting the Fascist powers. Can their support of the democracies be regarded as sincere if they refuse to change their own administrations with a view to making them conform to the democratic standards. You, Sir, referred in your presidential speech to Burke's dictum on compromise. Fellow-delegates, may I remind you that Lord Morley in his celebrated essay on 'Compromise' explains Burke's observation by saying that compromise can under no circumstances mean giving comfort and strength with one hand to an institution whose death warrant you purport to sign with the other ? Our charge against the British Government is that their present policy is entirely incompatible with their professed aims, and we must request the Princes also to look at the question from a similar point of view.

The second part of the resolution makes it clear how we wish the Princes to implement their policy of progress towards responsible Government. We want them to provide more extended facilities for mass education, adequate powers of local self-government, and to concede to their subjects such fundamental rights as liberty of speech, freedom of the press and association and an independent judiciary. We had favoured the grant of these rights in our past resolutions and though some of them do not find a place in today's resolution, it is abundantly clear that we are in favour of those rights also.

In the final part of the resolution we assure the subjects of the native states of our full sympathy with their aspirations and request them to stick to constitutional methods for securing political advancement. There are bound to be cheap sneers at what might be described as a piece of gratuitous advice on the part of the Liberals to subjects of the states. Our critics however, conveniently forget that during the darkest days of the last war and thereafter, constitutional methods brought about political advance and enabled the old Congress to establish complete communal harmony in the country. The results of the change of methods are too fresh to need any recapitulation. It is on this ground that we appeal to the subjects of the native states to follow constitutional methods.

I, therefore, commend this resolution to your acceptance.

Prof. R. H. Kelkar (Poona) seconding the resolution said: The proposal is so full of explanations and it has been explained so clearly and details have been so brought out that there is very little for me to add to it. I am going to confine myself to certain general considerations which have induced me to support this proposition.

This war is being fought for the victory of democracies. The last war was also fought for the same cause. We can see that in the last war several princes had gone down in Europe. Even in this war several princes have tumbled. These are Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece and the tide of democracy is going ahead. In fact even the best friend of the Princes, the Viceroy in his last speech, made before he left the country, had warned Jagirdars and petty rulers that

their days were very nearly over. Almost immediately it was followed by the merger scheme. Rulers of the third and fourth class states were asked to be absorbed by the bigger states. The Princes secured legal advice and discovered a technical flaw. The Ajmere decision has saved them for the time being but they are not to remain content. The merger scheme will come one way or other. One of the ways of the Political Department is that they will get round the technical difficulties. They would persuade, or put pressure if they fail in the method of persuading the rulers. There are some politicians amongst us who say that the princes are the representatives of the military class of this country and some-how or other they are looked upon as pillars of the autocratic system. Surely we are going to fight autocracy. The Princes may choose to defy. If they don't take the warnings of the time into consideration then they cannot be wise. Look at the late Ruler of Bikaner. He not only accepted the Federal scheme in theory but also wanted to put it in practice. What the Princes should do is to have an evolved merger scheme on their own initiative instead of being forced by the Political Department or by other politicians. If the princes could form their own sub-federations now, they could join the future Federation when it comes with its benefits. By having federations of the states now, we will be doing away with one of the biggest flaws which we find in the states today namely the whims of the rulers and their intrigues. If Federations come, then they will have to work as a whole and single intrigues cannot do and there will be others to check. Further the merger scheme will do away with economic disabilities. States with a revenue of two lakhs and a population of fifty thousands, cannot very well enjoy a proper judiciary and other privileges. Their rule is very inefficient and if they want to survive they have got to get together. They must prepare a merger scheme of their own. They have rendered great services in this war and to certain extent they have raised our name in the world. The temporary advantages from the war will soon disappear. Time and tide will not wait for them and they must recognise the sign of times and act accordingly. An advice given by an organisation, so friendly as the Liberals, must be taken into account by the rulers. The Bombay states have announced reforms. Such examples are very few. Over 500 States have not yet fallen in line. I do not think that there are over a dozen who could boast of progress. Liberals as we are, we look to a much faster pace of progress. Things won't be good for them if they continue to do as at present and plain speaking has become very necessary at this stage.

The resolution was passed unanimously.

10. CIVIL DEFENCE

Mr. Naushir Bharucha moved the following resolution :

The Federation views with concern the decision of the Government of India to abolish practically the whole of the paid A. R. P. personnel in some coastal towns and cities of India not yet reasonably immune from hostile attacks from the sea or air and urges on the Government the need for maintaining an adequate paid nucleus of the A. R. P. organization, particularly for reporting air raid damage, fire fighting, rescue and clearance of debris and rendering Blitz first aid. The Federation is of opinion that as the war with Japan is yet in its initial stages and as enemy seacraft and aircraft can approach coastal towns and cities, the provision of a reasonably sufficient paid A. R. P. organisation will contribute to the necessary maintenance of the public morale in such areas which by the reason of their importance are likely to become enemy targets. The Federation also calls upon the people of the country regardless of their political convictions to co-operate in civil defence measures for the security of their hearths and homes.

He said : In this country nobody took Civil Defence seriously until on the morning of December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbour. In spite of

the fact that military aviation has so much advanced in this war it is a peculiar commentary on the official mentality that the authorities were absolutely complacent about the probability of any attack from Japan. They argued that Pearl Harbour was 3,300 miles from Japan. On December 6th the air raid warning at Pearl Harbour was discontinued! Even when hostile aircraft appeared the self-complacent people could hardly believe them to be enemy aircraft. On December 7, Pearl Harbour was attacked. Then only people began to think of Civil Defence in India in concrete terms. Japan's progress in the Pacific was alarming and sweeping. Within ninety days two million square miles of territory were conquered and our authorities in India then put civil defence in the forefront of their programme. It was never adequate and somehow or other training was rushed through. A huge personnel had to be trained and illiterate people asked to co-operate. Before civil defence made any progress the victory of the Allies on the Russian Front again induced in our officials in charge of civil defence a sense of self complacency. Many of you in Bombay are aware of the fact that the Government of India have decided with regard to Bombay and several other coastal towns that they could be regarded as safe from hostile attacks and from sea and air. There is one thing which this war has shown us and that is no ground or anti-aircraft defence can be so adequate that modern bombers cannot penetrate them. We hear of the R. A. F. daily going over Berlin with comparatively small loss. This establishes beyond doubt that modern bombers can penetrate strong ack-ack defences. If today Japan does not choose to attack the eastern frontiers of India it is not because Japanese bombers cannot penetrate the peninsula. It is not because our A-A defences are likely to keep them away. It is not certainly from humanitarian motives. It is, it may be that Japan carries on a "phoney" war and one day she might attack. It is rather unfortunate that the Government of India have decided to disband the A. R. P. personnel before war has taken a more favourable turn. The city of Bombay is so open to attack that if any craft attacks her from the Arabian sea, and believe me there are Japanese craft in the Indian Ocean, it can have more than nuisance value. The Government's latest policy in regard to civil defence is one of complacency which has proved more than once fatal to the Allies. This Federation has done well in voicing its protest against the Government's policy in regard to civil defence. Even today it does not mean that the enemy cannot strike at India if he wants. The R. A. F. undertakes a 1,500-mile trip to and from Germany almost everyday. If you see the map of India there is a town on the Madras coast called Ongole. If an enemy aircraft carrier can sneak up to within a hundred miles of Ongole the Mitsubishi bombers could easily deliver blows right up to Bombay or to towns in the peninsula. I hope the Government will reconsider their policy and not neglect the civil defence organisation until Japan is routed from Burma and the Bay of Bengal. I trust this resolution of the Federation will convey to the Government that at the moment we do not share the optimism which has permitted the Government to neglect the civil defence.

Mr. M. S. Sirdar (Sholapur) in seconding the resolution said: I have great pleasure in seconding the resolution so ably moved by Mr. Bharucha. The resolution raises three or four points. In protesting against the discontinuance of the A. R. P. activities in certain coastal towns of India, I am sure the Federation is voicing not only the sentiments of those here but also those who are outside the Federation. People are surprised why in the midst of war Government have disbanded the A. R. P. staff. The A. R. P. has been disabanded not only in coastal towns but also similar and cognate organisations in the interior have become absolutely dormant. The Civic Guards and village Defence organisations have been disbanded sometime ago. It is necessary that the disbanded staff should be reinstated. The Japanese menace has not yet died down. In fact India is going to be made the vast base in the attack against the Japs. Moreover, what recently took place in Calcutta, where daylight bombing was carried out by the Japanese, should be borne in mind. Under the circumstances the A. R. P. should not have been disbanded. It is wrong to have disbanded the civic and village guards in the interior also. I do not want to digress but I must mention that even political sabotage has

not yet died down. Only this morning we read of a dacoity in a mail van near Miraj. Such acts are still going on in the interior and public co-operation should be sought in strengthening the civic and village guards organisations. I support the resolution heartily.

Mr. Burjor J. Shroff (Bombay) supporting the resolution said: This is the most important resolution which the Federation has discussed and to my mind this should have been taken first. I ask you what will happen if some aircraft carrier comes along and drops some bombs over this city. You will then think only of the A. R. P. I have not prepared any notes but I shall speak a few words. First the word "civil defence" is itself a misnomer. The civil defence portfolio has been transferred from one member to another member in the Viceroy's Council. The civil defence includes rescue work, fire fighting, first aid, demolition squads etc. Notwithstanding the fact that civil defence has come into being only recently a large number has joined it. A. R. P. and civil defence is a matter of life and death question. It is a grave wrong to have disbanded the A. R. P. organisation.

The resolution was put to the vote and passed unanimously.

11. DEFENCE

"The National Liberal Federation of India reiterates its demand for a radical change in the defence policy of the country. It is of opinion that the war has shown that for making adequate preparations for the security of India it is essential that (1) the defence portfolio should be entrusted to an Indian who commands the confidence of the people and that (2) the defence forces of India should be organised on fully national basis. It urges in particular that (3) the policy of Indianisation in all grades of the Army, Navy and Airforce should be accepted and that the large number of Indian commissioned officers already in the defence forces who have acquired valuable experience should be fully utilised to bring about complete Indianisation at an early date. The Indian Emergency Commissioned Officers should not be demobilised after the war merely in order to restore the pre-war proportion between Indian and British officers. No non-Indian officer should be appointed to any post so long as an Indian officer with requisite qualification is available. The Federation further urges that the army should be recruited from all provinces and classes to a much greater extent than at present."

Sir Raghunath Paranjpye (Poona) moving the above resolution said :

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Our National Liberal Federation has always insisted upon this question of defence and Indianisation of our defence forces much more strongly than many other organisations. It does not believe in the mere policy of say and do nothing. Now we are not in a position to defend our own country. We must have somebody else to defend our country against any aggression at the present moment. But we cannot go on like this. We should be prepared to shoulder our defence against any attack whatsoever. The policy of the government in the past has not been directed with a view to build up a national army which will be ready to take up the defence of the country. Just now necessities of war has made government go some steps forward and our resolution today asks that those steps should not be retraced as soon as the necessity is over. We want that the beginning that has been done should be further extended in order that India should be capable of shouldering her own defence. And for that purpose what are the things necessary? The first and most important thing is that there should be complete Indianisation of the various branches of defence forces of the country. The time has gone by when we can depend upon a foreign country for shouldering our defence. We may take their help for training our men in certain branches. This war has developed new weapons of war which did not exist before. You must realize the difference between modern

defence services from what they were in olden times. We must have a strong navy in these days to defend our coastline. Then there is the airforce which our people did not dream of. In all these branches there is a certain proportion of Indians as officers and ranks already. We want all these officers and personnel should be utilised even after the war in order that India should be ready always to shoulder her own defence. In order to achieve that policy underlying defence in consonance with the needs and feelings of India, we want that the defence portfolio should be held by an Indian gentleman who will be able to represent fully the aspirations of Indians. At present the policy is entirely directed by foreigners whose one eye is always directed towards the security and interests of Britain and other dominions and the other eye may then be directed towards India. I do not want that kind of thing to continue. We want someone who will lay down the policy of defence which should be directed mainly with their eyes in the interests of India. We are fully prepared to co-operate with the government in all their steps but on an equal footing so that we shall be able to get back as much as we give. We have seen from this war that we shall not be able entirely to depend on our own armies for defence in these modern days but we ought to bear our full share in the defence of the country, not merely because we have no sympathy with aggressors and our sympathy for the allies' cause demands it, but because we want to equip ourselves for our own defence. Our resolution is only for planning after the war.

Planning for defence should not be delayed for one moment. It should be taken up before anything else. If we are not prepared for our own defence, if we do not plan properly for defence, all other planning would be more or less futile. To that, I say that we should plan for defence even before we plan for anything else. On account of the war, opportunities nowadays are somewhat more numerous. Formerly, twenty years ago, the officer ranks of the navy and the army were entirely closed to Indians. We began to have a certain small number in the officer ranks about twenty years ago. War conditions have made it necessary to have more Indian officers than before. But most of them are only in the lower ranks of officers; very few of them have risen to be a lieutenant, colonel and none to be a general or any such higher rank. But we hope that these people who have been trained and have undergone all the ordeals of war will have their place in the future defence of the country. We insist that all these people should not be demobilised and their experience should not be left to go waste but they should after the war have a controlling voice in directing the policy of defence of the country.

There is one point which is particularly mentioned here, that no non-Indian should be appointed to any post for which Indians with requisite qualifications are available and Indian officers should not be demobilised after the war merely in order to restore the prewar proportion of Indian and British officers in the services. There is at present a substantial number of Britishers who are officers in the Indian army. Perhaps we can understand that; but at least in the medical corps, this is not necessary. We do not agree that there should be a substantial number of British officers in the medical corps for which enough Indians could always be found. We hope that at least in the Indian Medical Service, all the officers should be Indians. We also want that at the end of war there should be no proportion of British to Indian officers in the Indian services and we ask that no non-Indian should be appointed to any post for which an Indian officer with the necessary qualification is available, or if appointed, should be appointed only temporarily until Indians are properly trained to take their places.

So far as recruitment to the defence services is concerned, we want that they should be recruited more evenly from all provinces than is done at present. Everybody should be given an equal opportunity to get training in defence and fit himself to be able to participate in the defence of the country when the time comes. I do not know whether it is possible to introduce compulsory military training for all but at any rate I want that in every village a certain number of people should have had military training. Such training and recruitment should not be restricted to certain

provinces or sections of Indians which are supposed to be martial provinces or martial races but should be open to all sections and provinces in the country. That idea of martial province and race has been now given up probably because sufficient number of men are not available in such provinces. Consequently other provinces are being called on to supply army personnel. I hope that policy will be continued. I do not see any reason why people from any class or any province in this country should not become capital soldiers or officers. I hope that even if a number of present officers and men in the services have to be demobilised, their training will be made use of to train people in their own places and then we shall have a very large number of reserve even if a vast standing army is not found possible, so that India will be prepared to shoulder her defence at any time.

This question of defence is the most important of all questions and all other questions are subordinate to defence. All those would be needed but before everything else, defence will be necessary. If the country is not prepared to defend itself, all other plans are of no value. In the world as it is at present, with human beings as they are, pure non-violence is not going to succeed, for as long as we can visualise. When that comes we shall all be glad to welcome it. But until the world recognises non-violence as the only weapon to settle all quarrels, the consequences of our sticking to non-violence will be terrible. We are a peaceful nation; India certainly has no aggressive intentions; but we must be prepared to defend ourselves against any aggressor. And it is in this spirit that we suggest in this resolution that attention should be paid to making India able to shoulder her own defence and fit India to take her proper place in the comity of nations of the world. I have great pleasure in commending this resolution for your acceptance.

Dr. G. S. Mahajani. (Poonā) seconding the resolution said :

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen : You observed yesterday, when we discussed the political situation, that the rule under Sec. 93 in provinces has put back the political clock of the country by over fifty years. I believe that the measure of complete Indianization of the Army, which in essence is the subject matter of the present resolution will, more than anything else, advance us further towards complete self-rule. It is because of my conviction that this policy will put forward the political clock that I accepted with pleasure the call to second the resolution.

The proposition urges that Government should lose no time in issuing a statement of policy that will touch the imagination of the public and produce the psychological atmosphere ensuring a continuous flow of men for entry into the three arms of the fighting services—the army, navy and the air-force. I shall confine myself mainly to the first and the last clauses of the proposition.

Standing on the intellectual plane of cold reason, it is an unexceptionable proposition to say that the country needs more democratization, a greater degree of industrialization and militarization : the first to secure the stability of the state, the second to secure its economic self-sufficiency and the third to ensure its safety and preservation. This is indeed so obvious. And yet speaking only of the last aspect, I have to say, in the light of my experience as a member of a Selection Board for recruitment of Commissioned Officers, that there is something in the atmosphere about us, which makes the present resolution absolutely essential. The old distinction between the martial and non-martial races has been done away with. And you may take it from me that caste and creed considerations also do not enter into the question. The new tests of selection are in their nature objective and yet, the sad experience is that, of the candidates coming up before the Boards, the percentage of acceptances is only about thirty and often below twenty-five. The large number of rejections could be explained either on the supposition that young men of this country are particularly of a poor calibre or that those of the right stamp are not coming forward. I am convinced on facts that the trouble lies in the indifference of the young men of the right kind and their reluctance to join the Army. We had, while at Lucknow, among our visitors some members of the Public Service Commission. One of them—Khan Bahadur Abdul Aziz—who sat with us and watched

the performance of the candidates under the new tests, observed that the candidates that go before the Public Service Commission for even such civil posts as those of Tahsildars, showed merit of a really high order. The unmistakable conclusion is this: not that our young men are inferior to those of other countries; not that the new tests are too severe; but that the right kind of material is not coming forward for the Army. That again brings up the question, Why? There are various reasons. First, as Sir Raghunath Paranjpye pointed out, no effort has yet been made to rouse the imagination of the youth. If only we had the Defence portfolio in the hands of an Indian member who commanded the general confidence, what a tremendous change it would make in the situation! Government sends no doubt propoganda officials to Colleges and Universities but they cannot succeed in bringing about a change, as the appointment of an Indian Defence member would.

I may as well mention two factors which, to put it mildly before the minds of the young on this important question of the Army, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, speaking at the Lucknow University (8th Dec. 1941) observed:

"If I were asked with whom my sympathies lay in this war, I would unhesitatingly say: with Russia, China, America and England. But inspite of my sympathy for the group, there is no question of my giving help to British. How can I fight for a thing which is denied to me—freedom?"

Statements like these do weigh with the young. Now, on the plane of cold reason, the answer to the above is not difficult. It is not merely a question of helping Britain. It is as well a question of helping the interests of our country. If you do not come forward to become officers in the Army,—that is what I say to students,—who loses? Do you think that the Australians will not come forward? Do you think that the South Africans will hold back? Recruits are every day joining in numbers; battalions will be formed. And if you do not officer them, young men of other countries will take those posts. And surely it is not in the interests of India that her armies should continue to be officered by non-Indians.

Again Mr. Gandhi, in the first public speech after his arrival in Bardoli declared (on 10th Dec. 1941): "I have no doubt that in spite of the opinion of some of the leaders to the contrary, the large mass of the people will continue the present programme of opposition to all wars."

It seems, I admit, somewhat difficult to meet this argument. But not really. Gandhi is not the only pacifist in the world nor is he the originator of pacifism. In fact, barring the Fascists and the Nazis who glorify war—all the people of the democratic nations have already outlawed, in their conscience, war as an instrument of national policy. We are essentially—all of us and Liberals particularly—pacifists. But surely there is time for everything. When the agressor nations have started a total war by virtually raising the question of world supremacy, any pacifist propaganda as that of Gandhi can lead to only two results: it will disorganize the very people whose first duty is to oppose aggression and secondly it will simply invite the agressors to proceed unhampered with their destructive mission.

But Sir, as I said, argument alone cannot touch the hearts of men. The resolution, therefore, urges by its first clause the appointment of an Indian Defence Member. The last clause is also very significant. I have been told by several people when I mentioned to them the fact that proper type of young men are not coming forward,—I have been told by them that things would change if Government gave a guarantee that after the war people that have joined the army will not be cast adrift but necessarily absorbed in some services, if not in the army itself. Now, Sir, all honour to those—officers and men who have joined the army in spite of the various voices and distractions to the contrary. The Federation has already publicly expressed in a resolution the country's gratitude to them for keeping the war and ravages of war at a distance. All honour to them, I repeat, as they have joined in spite of the unkindest out of being dubbed "mercenaries" (Sir Raghunath Paranjpye: hear, hear). Yes, but do we not owe them—does not Government owe them a duty? They have joined with an ideal before them—that the Indian army will be nationalised.

Should they not be then assured that their services and their skill will be retained for the Indian Army, even after the war? Should they not be at least relieved of their anxiety by the assurance that they will be definitely absorbed in some service? The last clause of the resolution urges this upon the Government.

With these words, I second the resolution.

Mr. R. J. J. Mody. (Bombay) supporting the resolution said:

I have very great pleasure in standing before you with a view to support as shortly as possible the resolution which has been so ably moved and seconded by my friends Sir Raghunath Paranjpye and Dr. Mahajani. Ladies and gentlemen, my humble conviction is that our nation is not worthy of self-government, if she is not in a position to defend herself. I respectfully agree with Sir Raghunath Paranjpye when he says that all of us should support this resolution in spite of all our grievances against the government. A nation like us, a great nation like us Indians cannot be expected to go on for all times to be ruled and defended by a foreign nation. There were times when we were enjoying as Indians a great position and had a great reputation, a great trade and equal trade with every nation in the world but it was God's wish that we should fall from that high pedestal, that we should fall to such a low level, that other nations should rise up in the intervening period between our rise and prosperity as a nation and our present position. We were during this period on the downgrade as far as national boundary is concerned. I think it was Sir Surendranath Bannerjee—when he was in England, he was once pained to be reminded and taunted about the past reputation of Indian nation and her present lowly position. It was too much for a patriot like him and it is said that he retorted in these words: "My dear friend when we were enjoying the greatest possible civilisation that the world has ever seen, we in India enjoyed the sight of you Britons hanging from bushes of trees in your country."

There is nothing to be ashamed of. We agree we have not marched forward with times. That is why we are now taking our cue from our so-called better civilised brethren in the west. Now we agree that defence is the most important thing which should occupy our mind and our whole attention and Britishers have taken for granted that we Indians are mollycoddled all our lives and that we are not in a position to defend ourselves. But what do we say? The call of duty has drawn all our soldier sons of India and they have to acknowledge what our sons have achieved. We have achieved successes and we need not yield one point to the British, Australian or American soldier on the battlefield. They have so to say worked wonders. What has been achieved by these soldier sons has allowed us to march from strength to strength, from stage to stage and one day we will come into our own.

We have been given certain promises that certain allowances and privileges will be allowed to our young men who join the army and the military forces. Now is it not natural if they ask what shall posterity get when the war is won and the world is made secure, is it not natural that he should like to play his part in planning the brave new world. He is not content to play the second fiddle to anyone in the world. In the world to come India must have her own army; she must be able to defend her gigantic coastline against Japan or any other foes.

As Sir Raghunath has said, we must be prepared for all events. We have made a small beginning; let us go from stage to stage and there will be a time when we will be creating an army, a navy and an airforce which will be a match to any of the most powerful countries in the West.

With these few words, I take the liberty of most heartily supporting the resolution which has been placed before you.

The resolution was put to the vote and carried unanimously.

Council and Office-bearers for 1944.

The President then moved and declared carried resolution in regard to the Council and Office-bearers for 1944.

- (a) The Federation elects Messrs. M. D. Altekar, Naushir Bharucha and Surendra Nath Verma as its General Secretaries for the year 1944.
- (b) The Federation elects the undermentioned Council for the year 1944. (See Appendix A).

Resolution No. 14.

Sirdar P. S. Sodhbans (Punjab) in moving the last resolution of the National Liberal Federation inviting the 25th Session to Lahore during Christmas week in 1944 said:

" I feel it a privilege to request the whole assembly here to accept our humble invitation to hold the next session in the Punjab. We Punjabis are very poor people (laughter). I am glad that at the present session a veteran scion of an old sikh family is presiding. We extend the invitation of the next session to be held in the Punjab. We Punjabis are not millionaires and you will find at this time there great cold. I hope delegates from all parts of India will visit Lahore for the session and we will leave no stone unturned to make their stay comfortable. "

Pandit Haridutt Sharma seconding the motion said: "I heartily support the resolution moved by Sardar Saheb. I do so because I am confident that Punjab Liberals cordially and warmly welcome this Federation there. We will do our best to make the session a great success. I would request the leading lights of the Liberal Federation to co-operate actively with us to attend the next session in large numbers and to help us in making the people of Punjab take to national liberal politics. "

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Vote of thanks to the Chair.

In proposing a vote of thanks to Sir Maharaj Singh, President of the Liberal Federation, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad said :

" If falls to my lot to perform the pleasant duty of proposing a hearty vote of thanks to our worthy President. Ladies and Gentlemen, we have not taken our President in procession in a carriage drawn by fifty elephants or fifty horses or camels. Though we were not so very demonstrative we offer our heartfelt thanks to him. Sir Maharaj Singh by his unfailing courtsey coupled with his good humour and firmness has conducted the proceedings very successfully and in this I am echoing the feelings of you all.

Ladies and Gentlemen: We all deeply deplore the present political deadlock in the country. But who is really responsible for that state of affairs? Although want of unity among ourselves has contributed to it, in the ultimate analysis, the British Government themselves are responsible. Because of the great distrust created in the minds of the people by their past actions nobody is prepared to take their promises and professions on their face value. One cannot forget that for nearly a hundred years they insisted on holding the civil service examinations in Britain thereby making it almost impossible for Indians to compete in that service. One cannot forget again that for 30 years and more they imposed upon the infant textile industry in this country an iniquitous excise duty in order that Lancashire goods may sell in this country. They never took up seriously the question of the Indianisation of the Army. Coming to recent times when we were there for the Round Table Conference and the Government of India Act was under preparation, they stoutly refused even to mention in the preamble of the Act that the political goal of India was Dominion Status. When the Parliamentary Committee sat on the bill we had the Indian delegation headed by His Highness the Aga Khan and though all of them unitedly made certain proposals not one was accepted. Not only that, but they introduced many stringent safeguards for protecting the British interests in India that disfigure the Act of 1935. It was only under the stress of war that they offered Dominion Status and Cripps was sent out to negotiate. The distrust created by their past actions cannot be forgotten in a short time. That distrust caused the failure of the Cripps proposals.

Ladies and Gentlemen: In the long history of the British they have never done the right thing at the right time. They have been always too late in doing the right thing. That is how they lost the American colonies and how they lost Ireland. This failure to do the right thing at the right time has caused all the distrust in the minds of the people of this country in British intentions and professions. All the same we all have the best interests of the country and therefore it behoves us all to unite as much as we can and bring united pressure to bear upon the British Government to give independence to this country at the proper time.

Ladies and Gentlemen: Sir Maharaj Singh is very wellknown in this country as the distinguished scion of a distinguished family. He has conducted the proceedings of the Federation during the last three days as you have seen with good ability. I on behalf of you all tender to him our heartfelt thanks.

Mr. D. G. Dalvi, in seconding the vote of thanks proposed by Sir Chimanlal Setalvad said:—"We owe a debt of gratitude to Sir Maharaj Singh for the lead he has given to the Liberal Federation in the difficult times through which our country and our party are passing. He has taken the trouble to come all the way from Lucknow to preside over our deliberations and has so conducted our proceedings that no member can complain that he was not fully heard. He has made some valuable suggestions in his presidential address and I am glad, some of them have been embodied in our resolutions. I hope, he will strive to give effect to some of them in the next year. Among the several suggestions made by him, I may refer to one or two, incorporated in our resolutions. The food resolution regarding Bengal contains the proposal that a Committee should be appointed to inquire into the muddle. The resolution about the political deadlock demands that there should be an unconditional release of the detenues and then a Conference should be convened. I draw your attention to this suggestion because it shows that Sir Maharaj Singh has examined the question from a statesman's point of view. He has shown that he has the correct appreciation of the working of the human mind and the psychology of the human nature. Having worn official clothes all these years, it is a surprise to me, how well he has preserved his patriotism and statesmanship. As regards the suggestions about a conference of leaders, I think, the Viceroy should convene it. There is a precedent for it, when during the last war, the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, had convened such a conference and Lord Willingdon, as Governor of Bombay had convened it at Bombay. You will remember that Lord Linlithgow had called for interview fiftytwo public men individually. If he had called them jointly in a conference there would have been better results. You will also remember that Dr. Jayakar recently revealed that a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council had urged upon Sir S. Cripps that he should invite leaders of the various political parties jointly for a Conference. It seems that since the R. T. C. the British Government fight shy of such conferences.

Our resolution on the political deadlock has come at a very opportune time. Lord Wavell has so far refused to open his mouth though he assured us that he had many things hidden in his mental bag. In his address at Calcutta, he refrained from touching on the question of the deadlock because he did not believe that talking at the present time would help the situation. He will soon address the Central Legislature at Delhi on 17th February when he may formulate his policy and I trust our resolution will help him in formulating it. I am not at all certain about it, but let us all hope for the best.

It is our good fortune that we have a President like Sir Maharaj Singh to guide us at this juncture and we are justified in feeling that we can fully rely on him to implement our resolutions. We have complete confidence in him (Cheers.).

The Chairman of the Reception Committee put the resolution to the vote and the same was carried with acclamation.

The President, Raja Sir Maharaj Singh, in his concluding remarks said:

"My friends, I thank from the bottom of my heart my friend, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, and my friend, Mr. Dalvi for the very kind and generous and, and may I

say, undeserved remarks that they have made about me. I asked in the beginning of my presidential address for your good wishes and your co-operation. You have given both to me in abundant measure and for that I am truly grateful. There are certain persons in Bombay whom I am sure you will wish me to thank. In the first place, there are the Chairman and Members of the Reception Committee. Give them a cheer! (Cheers). They have done much to make our stay in Bombay enjoyable. I am specially indebted to my friend, Sir Cowasjee Jehangir. He is a wellknown figure, not only in Bombay but throughout the whole of India and I have no doubt, in other countries as well. I am grateful to him on my behalf and also on behalf of our ex-president Sir B. P. Singh Roy, and, may I add, to Lady Jehangir also.

Next I must not omit to thank the office-bearers. What would any association do without its office bearers? The National Liberal Federation is fortunate in having as its Secretaries Prof. Alteker and Mr. Naushir Bharucha and as the Assistant Secretary, Mr. V. R. Bhende. All of them have been most courteous, obliging and useful.

I am sure that you will not allow me to conclude without also expressing our gratitude to the girls from the Indian School of Music who opened our proceedings two days ago with singing. The volunteers have been of considerable help to members of the Reception Committee and to us. They also deserve our thanks.

Last but not least I thank the authorities of the Cama Oriental Institute who have allowed us the use of this hall. For this we are particularly indebted to Mr. R. J. J. Mody.

Ladies and Gentlemen: This has been a very pleasant, and I think that you will all agree with me, a very useful session. A high level of debate has been maintained. It was a joy to us, particularly to me, to find that our session was graced by the presence of Rt. Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastri, who in spite of his illhealth travelled the long distance to Bombay from not benighted but distant Madras. I remember, when I was in South Africa, on more than one occasion, hearing of the admirable work done by the first Agent-General for India. Tributes were often paid to the two best speakers in the English Language—neither of whom was English—One was the Rt. Hon'ble Sastri and the other was Mr. Hofmeyer of Boer extraction. I think that we are fortunate in having had sympathetic treatment from the Bombay Press which gave full publicity to the proceedings of our Session and to our resolutions. I refer particularly to the 'Times of India' and the 'Bombay Chronicle.'

One thing is striking about us Liberals and our resolutions. We never ask anything for ourselves. We want concessions in the country for our countrymen and not for Liberals as such. And then we are non-communal body. As I said in my presidential speech, we do not and cannot indulge in communal or political slogans which generally carry little conviction outside the meetings at which they are uttered. I am very glad to hear that a branch of the Liberal Federation has been started—or rather, revived—in Lahore. Give them a Cheer! (Cheer). With Punjabis, especially of the calibre of Sardar Sodhbans, you may be sure that they will carry their efforts to a successful conclusion. It will be a pleasure to many of us to meet next year in Lahore.

In conclusion I hope, ladies and gentlemen, that each of you will try to increase the membership of the Liberal Federation but what is more important—that each of you will spread our views, which are the views of thousands of intellectuals in this country although they may disown the appellation of Liberals. And I would implore you to do everything to inculcate a spirit of unity in a country, in which unfortunately there are discordant opinions. You can do that by never saying unkind words about any other political party. There is nothing so easy as sarcasm or unkindness. Both these have been applied to us. As Liberals we can safely ignore them and not retaliate. On the contrary let us do everything in our power to narrow the difference between India's various groups such as Hindus, Muslims and others and political parties such as the Congress and the Muslim League.

I thank you all again most cordially.

The President then dissolved the meeting.

APPENDIX A.

THE NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION OF INDIA

COUNCIL FOR 1944

President.

1. Raja Sir Maharaj Singh, Kt., C. I. E., M. L. A., 10, Mall Avenue, Lucknow.

Vice-Presidents.

2. Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyer, K. C. S. I., LL. D., "Sudharma," Edward Elliot Road, Mylapore, Madras.
3. The Rt. Hon' V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, P.C., C.H., "Svagatam," Mylapore, Madras.
4. Sir Moropant Joshi, Kt., Advocate, Nagpur.
5. Sir Raghunath Paranjpye, M. A., D. Sc., "Purushottam Ashram" Poona 4.
6. Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, K. C. I. E., LL. D., 113, Esplanade Road, Bombay 1.
7. Mr. Jatindra Nath Basu, M. L. A., Temple Chambers, 6, Old Post Office Street, Calcutta.
8. The Hon'ble Pandit Hirdaya Nath Kunzru, Servants of India Society, Allahabad.
9. Mr. T. R. Venkatarama Sastri, B. A., B. L. Advocate, Mylapore, Madras.
10. Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Bart., K.C.I.E., M. L. A., Nepean Sea Road, Bombay.
11. The Hon'ble Mr. P. N. Sapru, Bar-at-Law, 19, Albert Road, Allahabad.
12. Sir Vithal Chandavarkar, Kt., M. L. A., 41, Pedder Road, Bombay 6.
13. Sir Bejoy Prasad Sing Roy, Kt., M. L. A., 15, Lansdowne Road, Calcutta.

Hon. General Secretaries.

14. Mr. M. D. Alteker, 165, Shivaji Park, Cadell Road, Bombay 28.
15. Mr. Naushir Bharucha, Advocate, 468, Kalbadevi Road, Bombay 2.
16. Mr. Surendra Nath Verma, Advocate, 7, Elgin Road, Allahabad.

Nominated by the President.

17. Rao Bahadur R. G. Mundle, Yeotmal (Berar)
18. Pandit Manmohanlal Zutshi, 10, Beli Road, Allahabad.
19. Mr. A. S. N. Moorthi, Vishnu Bhuvan, Beharampore.
20. Mr. D. V. Ambekar, Servants of India Society, Poona 4.
21. Prof. R. H. Kelkar, M. A., 289, Narayan Peth, Near Lakdi Pool, Poona 2.

Bombay.

22. Sir Homi Mehta K. B. E., Mehta House, Apollo St., Bombay 1.
23. Mr. A. D. Shroff, Bombay House, Bruce St., Fort, Bombay.
24. Mr. Nusserwanji H. C. Dinshaw, 121, Meadows St., Bombay 1.
25. Mr. J. R. B. Jeejeebhoy, Alice Building, Hornby Road, Bombay 1.
26. Mr. Vasentrao S. Ravut, J. P., French Bridge, Chaupaty, Bombay.
27. Mr. B. D. Lam, Solicitor, 113, Esplanade Road, Bombay 1.
28. Mr. N. R. Wadia, Motlabai Building, Parsi Bazar St., Bombay 1.
29. Mr. D. G. Dalvi, Advocate, Temple View, Hughes Road, Bombay 7.
30. Mr. K. J. Dubash, B. A. LL. B., (Solicitor) 79, Meadows St, Bombay 1.
31. Prin. J. R. Gharpure, Advocate, Angre's Wadi, Girgaum Bombay 4.
32. Mr. B. N. Gokhale, M. A. LL. B., (Advocate) Opp., Majestic Cinema, Girgaum Bombay 4.
33. Mr. Jehangir P. Katgara, Katgara House, Nepean Sea Road, Bombay 6
34. Dewan Bahadur C. M. Gandhi, B. A. LL. B., Nanpura, Surat.
35. Mr. V. M. Apte, B. A. LL. B., Pleader, Dhulia (West Khandesh).
36. Mr. M. S. Sirdar, B. A., (Oxon) Bar-at-law, Sholapur.
37. Mr. S. G. Vaze, B. A. Servants of India Society, Poona 4.

38. Prof. D. D. Kapadia, M. A. I. E. S. (Rtd.) 6, Taunton Road, Poona 1
39. Dr. G. S. Mahajani, M. L. C., Fergusson College, Poona 4.
40. Prof. D. G. Karve, M. A. Commerce College, Poona 4.
41. Mr. H. G. Gharpure, I. C. S. (Rtd.) 344, Shanivar Peth, Poona 2.
42. L. X. Rego, 48, Nesbeit Road, Mazagaon, Bombay 10.
43. Mr. K. T. Engineer, Bancoo Mansion, Cumballa Hill, Bombay.
44. Mr. K. R. Pradhan, Advocate, Jalgaon, (East Khadesh).
45. Dr. Gope Gurubux, Ph. D., Simla.

Bengal.

46. Mr. N. K. Basu, Advocate, 12, Asu Biswas Road, Calcutta.
47. Mr. K. C. Neogy, M. L. A. (Central) Southern Avenue, Calcutta.
48. Mr. H. M. Bose, Bar-at-Law, 18A, Lansdowne Road, Calcutta.
49. Mr. Satinath Roy, 15, Panditia Place, Rashbehari Avenue, P. O. Calcutta.
50. Mr. P. N. Singh Roy, O. B. E., 15, Lansdowne Road, Calcutta.
51. Mr. Sudhansu Kumar Mitter, 34/1, Elgin Road, Calcutta.
52. Kumar Rajendra Narain Roy, 79, Upper Chitpore Road, Calcutta.
53. Rai Nagendra Nath Mookerjee Bahadur, O. B. E. Ranaghat, Calcutta.
54. Rai Keshab Chandra Banerjee Bahadur, Satrapur, Dacca.
55. Mr. Jastindra Mohan Datta, 45, Barrackpore Trunk Road, Calcutta.
56. Mr. Manmathanath Sen, Solicitor, 44, Ramkanto Bose, St., Calcutta.
57. Mr. B. K. Chaudhari, Advocate, 99/1/C, Cornwallis St., Calcutta.
58. Lord Sinha of Raipur, 7, Lord Sinha Road, Calcutta.
59. Raja Bhupendra Narayan Sinha Bahadur, M. L. C., of Nashipur, 54, Gari-ahat, Road, Calcutta.
60. Mr. D. C. Basu Mallik, 18, Radhanath Malik Lane, Calcutta.
61. Mr. Shivaprasanna Ghose, 75, Beadon Street, Calcutta.
62. Mr. Bhagvandas Kalla, 29, Clive St., Calcutta.
63. Mr. Shivkissen Bhattar, 30, Clive St., Calcutta.
64. Mr. Gostha Behari Mondal, Nawabganj, Barrackpore, Bengal.
65. Nirmal Chandra Ghose, " Rajbati " Sheoraphuli, Hooghly (E. I. R.).
66. Kumar Sarabindu Narayan Roy, M. A. 11, Braunfeld Row, Calcutta.
67. Mr. D. C. Ghose, Bar-at-Law, 23, Debendra Ghose Road, Calcutta.
68. Mr. Kiran Chandra Dutt, M. R. A. S. (London) 1, Laxmi Dutt Lane, Calcutta.
69. Mr. Anil Chandra Dutt, Solicitor, 6, Brindabad Pal Bye Lane, Shyambazar, Calcutta.

United Province.

70. Pandit Iqbal Narayan Gurtu, Hamilton Road, Allahabad.
71. Rai Bahadur Lala Behari Lal, Rani Mandi, Allahabad.
72. Rai Bahadur Dr. Brijendra Swarup, Civil Lines, Cawnpore.
73. Rai Braj Narain Gurtu, George Town, Allahabad.
74. Babu Bodh Raj Sahney, Advocate, Civil Lines, Jhansi.
75. Pt. Krishna Prasad Kaul, Ganga Prasad Memorial Building, Lucknow.
76. Pt. Gopi Nath Kunzru, Advocate, Clive Road, Allahabad.
77. Mehta Krishna Ram, Leader Buildings, Leader Road, Allahabad.
78. Rai Bahadur Babu Braj Nandan Lal, Fatehgarh.
79. Babu Vishnu Nath, B. A. LL. B., Advocate, 3, Cawnpore Road, Allahabad.
80. Rao Raja Rai Bahadur Dr. Shyam Behari Misra, 105, Gola Gunj, Lucknow.
81. Mehta Mahipat Ram, Leader Office, Leader Road, Allahabad.
82. Rai Bahadur Pt. Parmeshwar Nath Saparu, Advocate, Fyzabad.
83. Rai Bahadur Ram Narain, Civil Lines, Cawnpore.
84. Rai Bahadur Bhagwati Saran Singh, Chandra Bhavan, Outram Rd, Allahabad.
85. Rai Bahadur B. Kamta Prasad Kakkar, Rani Mandi, Allahabad.
86. Raja Maheshwar Dayal Seth, Taluqdar, Kotra, Sitapur, District.
87. Rai Bahadur Kunwar Guru Narain, Maurawan (Unao), Oudh.

88. Rai Bahadur Pt. Badri Dutt Joshi, Vakil, Almora.
89. Pandit Raj Nath Kunzru, Chili Int. Agra.
90. Mr. Ayodhya Dass, Bar-at Law, Anand Bhavan, Gorakhpur.
91. Pandit Rameshwar Nath Zutshi, Leader Office, Allahabad.
92. Kunwar Sukhbir Singh, Surajpur Estate, via Hathras, Aligarh.
93. Rai Bahadur Pt. Sukhdeo Behari Misra, Mall, Lucknow.
94. Mr. E. Thomas Choudhri, Lucknow.

Madras.

95. Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiyar, Chettinad Palace, Adyar, Madras.
96. Rao Bahadur Dr. C. B. Ramarao, Kanti Nivas, Basavengudi, Bangalore City.
97. Rao Bahadur M. R. Ramaswami Sivan, Coimbatore.
98. Mr. E. Vinayaka Rao, Advocate, 23, East Mada St., Mylapore, Madras.
99. Mr. K. Balasubramania Iyer, "The Ashram" Luz, Mylapore, Madras.
100. Dewan Bahadur M. Balasundaram Naidu, C. I. E., Ritherdon Road, Madras.
101. Mr. R. Suryanarayan Rao, Servants of India Society, Royapetta, Madras.
102. Mr. S. R. Venkataraman, Servants of India Society, Royapetta, Madras.
103. Mr. V. M. Nayanar, Servants of India Society, Royapetta, Madras.
104. Mr. C. R. Somayajulu, Journalist, Vizianagaram S. I.

Punjab.

105. The Hon'ble R. B. Lala Ramsaran Das, C. I. E. Lahore.
106. The Hon'ble Dr. Sir Manohar Lal Kt., LL. D., M. L. A., Club Rd., Lahore.
107. Mr. B. L. Rallia Ram, Y. M. C. A., Lahore.
108. Sardar Bahadur Ujjal Singh, M. L. A. Upper Mall, Lahore.
109. Khan Bahadur Sardar Habibullah, Bar-at-Law, Davis Road, Lahore.
110. Sardar P. S. Sodhbans, Moleod Road, Lahore.
111. Mr. C. L. Anand, Bar-at-Law, Principal, Law College, Lahore.
112. Bhagat Govind Das, Advocate, Model Town, Lahore.
113. Mr. Abdul Qayum Malik, Bar-at-Law, Begum Road, Lahore.
114. Main Mohd. Sharif, Advocate, Anarkali, Lahore.
115. Diwan Bahadur S. P. Singha, M. L. A. University House, Lahore.
116. R. B. Labhohand Mehra, Amritsar.
117. Pandit Heradutta Sharma, Servants of India Society, 27, MacLagan Road, Lahore.
118. Mr. Banwarilal Sharma.

Central Provinces & Berar.

119. Dewan Bahadur K. V. Bramha, C. I. E., M. B. E., Advocate, Nagpur.
120. Mr. P. Kodanda Rao, M. A., Servants of India Society, Nagpur.
121. Mr. N. A. Dravid, Servants of India Society, Craddock Town, Nagpur.
122. Mr. A. D. Mani, Servants of India Society, Craddock, Town, Nagpur.
123. Mr. K. K. Mankeswar, Auditor, Dhantoli, Nagpur.
124. Mr. J. V. Deshpande, C/o Sir M. B. Deshpande Mahal, Nagpur.
125. Mr. K. S. Bharadwaj, Manager, The "Hitavad", Nagpur.
126. Mr. N. B. Chandorker, Advocate, Dhantoli, Nagpur.

Behar, Orissa & Assam.

127. Mr. L. N. Sahu, M. A., Servants of India Society, Cuttack.
128. Rai Bahadur K. L. Barua, Shillong.
129. Mr. Chandra Barua, Jorhat, Assam.